



*To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee

Review by Sonia Yang

Altrincham Grammar School for Girls

*To Kill A Mockingbird* is one of those classic books that almost everyone reads at some point in their lives, whether it's because you've been forced to read it at school, or you've had a look because everyone's been urging you to. Most people have their own personal experience of reading the novel but I'm here to tell you about mine and why I believe you should read it.

The book revolves around Atticus Finch and his two young children. He appears frequently as an unconventional hero and role model due to his virtuous moralities and his own formidable capabilities. The theme of morals is apparent throughout the whole novel, (especially in relation to religion and perception of sin), but the ongoing matter of racism, empathy, society standards and stereotypes are also revealed as the book progresses.

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel by Harper Lee. It is set in the mid-30s in the small town of Maycomb, Alabama, during the Great Depression in the US. It is narrated by 6-year-old Scout Finch who lives with her lawyer father Atticus and her brother Jem. During the novel Scout, Jem and their new friend Dill try to make their reclusive neighbour Arthur 'Boo' Radley, leave his house. Boo has not been seen outside of his house since a teenager and numerous rumours have surrounded his reputation, which lead to society interpreting him as a monster. During the novel, Atticus is asked to defend Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman. Atticus takes on the case, though everyone knows he has little hope of winning. The reader sees the story develop through the childlike eyes of Scout, as gradually both she and her brother learn some valuable life lessons from their father about tolerance, empathy and understanding.

I personally loved reading the book and was surprised to find myself enjoying it more than I had initially expected, after previously hearing less optimistic comments from friends. The issues Scout deals within school and in society are very real, raw, and relatable for all genders and ages, even in the 21st century. I love the fact that TKAM is based on Harper Lee's actual childhood, she expressed what she'd witnessed through the character of Scout. Her father was a lawyer, and similarly to the Finch family, the two also went throughout trial, the Scottboro Boys trial, which was an infamous trial of racial injustice. The title of TKAM also made me realise how meaningful the true message was. Initially it had very little literal connection to the storyline, but it carries a great deal of symbolic weight in the book. In this story of innocents destroyed by evil, the "mockingbird" represents the idea of innocence. Thus, to kill a mockingbird is to destroy innocence. Throughout the book, numerous characters can be identified as mockingbirds — innocents who have been wounded through contact with evil (the weight of power society holds). It truly has taught me so much about society's power and its true colours, innocence, and injustice, as well as many more issues. I cannot recommend this book enough and I do hope, if you haven't already, that you will read TKAM and appreciate this masterpiece that Harper Lee has written!