



Go set a watchman

By Harper Lee

First published in 2015

Genre & subject

Race relations

Fathers and daughters

Legal fiction

Synopsis

Twenty years after the trial of Tom Robinson, Scout returns home to Maycomb to visit her father and struggles with personal and political issues as her small Alabama town adjusts to the turbulent events beginning to transform the United States in the mid-1950s. This book is an historic literary event: the publication of a newly discovered novel, the earliest known work from Harper Lee, the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning classic, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Originally written in the mid-1950s, *Go Set a Watchman* was the novel Harper Lee first submitted to her publishers before *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Assumed to have been lost, the manuscript was discovered in late 2014. *Go Set a Watchman* features many of the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* some twenty years later. Returning home to Maycomb to visit her father, Jean Louise Finch -- Scout -- struggles with issues both personal and political, involving Atticus, society, and the small Alabama town that shaped her. Exploring how the characters from *To Kill a Mockingbird* are adjusting to the turbulent events transforming mid-1950s America, *Go Set a Watchman* casts a fascinating new light on Harper Lee's enduring classic. Moving, funny and compelling, it stands as a magnificent novel in its own right

Author biography

Nelle Harper Lee (April 28, 1926 – February 19, 2016) was an American novelist best known for her 1960 novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize and has become a classic of modern American literature. Lee published only two books, yet she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2007 for her contribution to literature. She also received numerous honorary degrees, though she declined to speak on those occasions. She assisted her close friend Truman Capote in his research for the book *In Cold Blood* (1966). Capote was the basis for the character Dill Harris in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

The plot and characters of *To Kill a Mockingbird* are loosely based on Lee's observations of her family and neighbors, as well as an event that occurred near her hometown in 1936 when she was 10. The novel deals with the irrationality of adult attitudes towards race and class in the Deep South of the 1930s, as depicted through the eyes of two children. It was inspired by racist attitudes in her hometown of Monroeville, Alabama. She also wrote the novel *Go Set a Watchman* in the mid-1950s and published it in July

2015 as a sequel to *Mockingbird*, but it was later confirmed to be her first draft of *Mockingbird*.

Discussion starters

- Who is Jean Louise Finch? How has she changed since *To Kill a Mockingbird*?
- Describe the relationship between Jean Louise and Henry?
- Analyse the scene in which Uncle Jack slaps Jean Louise. How does this scene change the tone of the novel?
- Compare Atticus Finch's reception of Jean Louise to Alexandra's?
- How do Atticus and Jean Louise feel about the latest Supreme Court decision? Why?
- How did Jem's death affect the household?
- What does Jean Louise and Henry's about women and marriage reveal about each of them?
- Who is Dill? Why do you think the memory of Tarzan and the Baptism stood out to Scout?
- Why is Jean Louise upset to learn that Finch's Landing is now part of a country club?
- Discuss the significance of Jean Louise's visit to Calpurnia. Why does Calpurnia react the way she does towards Jean Louise?
- Discuss the presence of religion in the novel. How does religion have both a light-hearted and a serious role?

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