

ACT TWO

SCENE: *Revealed is the trial scene with EVERYONE back in place after the short recess declared by JUDGE TAYLOR. BOB EWELL is in the witness stand, MR. GILMER stands near him waiting, ATTICUS sits at his table with TOM ROBINSON, and the SPECTATORS are seated, as before. The JURY is considered to be in the audience and when addressed, the SPEAKER speaks to the AUDIENCE.*

JUDGE TAYLOR (*looking about; dryly*). I see we still have a few with us. Well, let's get on. (*HE raps casually with his gavel and turns to EWELL.*) Mr. Ewell, you will keep your testimony within the confines of Christian English usage, if that's possible. (*Nods.*) Proceed, Mr. Gilmer.

MR. GILMER (*uneasily*). Where were we? We were—JUDGE TAYLOR (*to the point*). Mr. Ewell, did you see the defendant having sexual intercourse with your daughter?

BOB EWELL. Yes, I did.

MR. GILMER (*to the JUDGE*). Thank you, sir. (*To EWELL.*) You said you were at the window?

BOB EWELL. Yes, sir.

MR. GILMER. Did you have a clear view of the room?

BOB EWELL. Yes, sir.

MR. GILMER. How did the room look?

BOB EWELL. All slung about, like there was a fight. MR. GILMER. What did you do when you saw the defendant?

BOB EWELL. I run around the house to get in, but he run out the front door just ahead of me. I sawed who he was, but I was too distracted about Mayella to run after him. Mayella was in there squallin', so I run in the house.

MR. GILMER. Then what did you do?

BOB EWELL. I run for Heck Tate quick as I could. I knowed who it was all right, passed the house every day, lived down yonder in that nigger-nest. (*Turning to the JUDGE.*) Jedge, I've asked this county for fifteen years to clean out that nest down yonder. They're dangerous to live around. (*Speaking as a "put-upon" citizen.*) 'Sides devaluin' my property.

MR. GILMER (*wincing; hurriedly*). That's all. Thank you. Mr. Ewell.

(*Well-satisfied with himself, EWELL hops down, smiling as HE goes. HE bumps into ATTICUS, who is approaching. There is a stir of amusement from the SPECTATORS, which EWELL construes as approval.*)

ATTICUS (*meanwhile; genially*). Just a minute, sir. Could I ask you a question or two? (*EWELL darts a glance at the JUDGE, who nods his head toward the witness chair.*)

BOB EWELL (*going back*). Sure—go ahead.

ATTICUS. Thank you, Mr. Ewell. Folks were doing a lot of running that night. Let's see, you say you ran to the house, you ran to the window, you ran inside, you ran

for Mr. Tate. Did you, during all this running, run for a doctor?

BOB EWELL. Wadn't no need to.

ATTICUS. Didn't you think the nature of your daughter's injuries warranted immediate medical attention?

BOB EWELL. Never called a doctor in my life. If I had, would've cost me five dollars. That all the questions?

ATTICUS. Not quite. Mr. Ewell, you heard the sheriff's testimony, didn't you?

BOB EWELL (*deciding it is safe to answer*). Yes.

ATTICUS. Do you agree with his description of Mayella's injuries? Her right eye blackened, that she was beaten around the—

BOB EWELL. Yeah. I hold with everything Tate said.

ATTICUS. He said her right eye was blackened.

BOB EWELL. I holds with Tate.

ATTICUS. Mr. Ewell, can you read and write?

MR. GILMER. Objection. Can't see what witness's literacy has to do with the case, irrelevant 'n' immaterial.

ATTICUS (*quickly*). Judge, if you'll allow the question, plus another one, you'll soon see.

JUDGE TAYLOR. All right. But make sure we see, Atticus. (*To MR. GILMER*.) Overruled.

ATTICUS (*to EWELL*). Will you write your name and show us?

BOB EWELL. I most positively will. How do you think I sign my relief checks? (*There is an amused stir among the SPECTATORS. ATTICUS is taking an envelope from his pocket and then unscrewing his fountain pen.*)

SCOUT (*while this is happening; a worried whisper*). Jem—do you think Atticus knows what he's doin'?

JEM (*uncertainly*). Seems like he knows.

SCOUT. Far back as I c'n remember, he said never, never, never ask a question on cross-examination unless you already know the answer.

JEM (*he remembers, too*). 'Cause you might get an answer that'll wreck your case.

SCOUT (*watching again; nervously*). Looks to me like he's gone frog-sticking without a light.

(*ATTICUS has presented the envelope to BOB EWELL, shaken the fountain pen and given him that, too.*)

ATTICUS. Would you write your name for us? Clearly now, so the jury can see you do it. (*With a flourish, EWELL finishes writing his name.*)

MR. GILMER (*curiously*). What's so interestin'?

JUDGE TAYLOR. He's left-handed.

ATTICUS (*nodding*). That's it.

BOB EWELL (*outraged*). What's my bein' left-handed have to do with it? (*To JUDGE TAYLOR*.) He's tryin' to take advantage of me. Trickin' lawyers like Atticus Finch take advantage of me all the time with their trickin' ways. But it don't change what I saw, and I'll say it again—I saw that nigger—

ATTICUS. That's all, Mr. Ewell. (*The furious LITTLE MAN is stalking back to his seat.*)

JEM (*meanwhile*). I think we've got him.

SCOUT. Don't count your chickens.

DILL (*hushed, eager*). Her right eye was blacked so it had to be someone left-handed.

SCOUT (*hushed in reply*). Maybe Tom Robinson's left-handed.