

MR. GILMER (calling). Mayella Violet Ewell. (As MAYELLA approaches, the COURT CLERK administers the oath.)

CLERK. Swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.

MAYELLA (nodding softly). Yes. (MAYELLA sits.)

MR. GILMER. Please tell the jury in your own words what happened on the evening of November twenty-first. (MAYELLA does not reply.) Where were you at dusk on that evening?

MAYELLA. On the porch.

MR. GILMER (trying to prod her along.) What were you doing on the porch? (MAYELLA hesitates.)

JUDGE TAYLOR. Just tell us what happened. You can do that, can't you? (MAYELLA does not reply.) What are you scared of? (MAYELLA whispers something to him from behind her hand.) What was that?

MAYELLA (pointing to ATTICUS). Him. Don't want him doin' me like he done Papa, makin' him out left-handed.

JUDGE TAYLOR (perplexed). How old are you?

MAYELLA. Nineteen-and-a-half.

JUDGE TAYLOR. I see. Well, Mr. Finch has no idea of scaring you, and if he did, I'm here to stop him. Now sit up straight and tell us what happened. (MAYELLA takes a breath, and starts nervously.)

MAYELLA. Well—I was on the porch and—he came along and, you see, there was this old chiffarobe in the yard Papa'd brought in to chop up for kindlin'. Papa told me to do it while he was off in the woods, but I wasn't feelin' strong enough then, so he came by—

MR. GILMER. Who is 'he'?

MAYELLA. That'n yonder. Robinson.

MR. GILMER. Then what happened?

MAYELLA. I said, 'Come here, boy, and bust up this chiffarobe for me, I gotta nickel for you.' So he came in the yard an' I went in the house to get him the nickel. An' fore I knew it, he was on me. He got me 'round the neck. I fought, but he hit me agin and agin.

MR. GILMER (as MAYELLA collects herself). Go on.

MAYELLA. An' he took advantage of me.

MR. GILMER. Did you scream and fight back?

MAYELLA. Kicked and hollered loud as I could.

MR. GILMER. Then what happened?

MAYELLA. Don't remember too good, but Papa come in the room and was hollerin' who done it? Then I sorta fainted, an' the next thing I knew Mr. Tate was helpin' me over to the water bucket.

MR. GILMER. You fought Robinson hard as you could —tooth and nail?

MAYELLA. I positively did.

MR. GILMER. You are positive he took full advantage of you?

MAYELLA (holding back a sob). I already told ya. He done what he was after.

MR. GILMER. That's all for now. But stay here. I expect big, bad Mr. Finch has some questions.

JUDGE TAYLOR (primly). State will not prejudice the witness against counsel for the defense.

(ATTICUS, smiling, has risen. HE opens his coat, hooks his thumbs in his vest and without looking directly at MAYELLA, speaks casually to her.)

ATTICUS. Miss Mayella, I won't try to scare you for a while, not yet. Let's get acquainted. How old are you?