

(ATTICUS nods agreement with this, turns to MR. GILMER as though saying, 'Your witness,' and goes back to his chair. MR. GILMER is rising and moving toward TOM. As this happens, a VOICE calls from the SPECTATORS, or from off.)

VOICE (off). I want the whole lot of you to know one thing right now. Tom Robinson's worked for me eight years an' I ain't had a speck o' trouble outa him. Not a speck.

JUDGE TAYLOR (*rapping angrily with his gavel*). That's enough, Link Deas. If you have anything to say, you can say it under oath and at the proper time. (*To the JURY*) You're to disregard the remark from Link Deas. (*Turning to MR. GILMER*.) Go ahead, Mr. Gilmer.

MR. GILMER. You were given thirty days for disorderly conduct, Robinson?

TOM. Yes, suh.

MR. GILMER. What'd the nigger look like when you got through with him?

TOM. He beat me, Mr. Gilmer.

MR. GILMER. Yes, but you were convicted, weren't you?

ATTICUS (*from his chair*). It was a misdemeanor and it's in the record, Judge.

JUDGE TAYLOR. Witness'll answer, though.

TOM. Yes, sir. I got thirty days. (MR. GILMER looks significantly at the AUDIENCE/JURY then turns back to TOM.)

MR. GILMER. You're pretty good at busting up chiffarobes and kindling with one hand, aren't you?

TOM. Yes, sir. I reckon so.

MR. GILMER. Strong enough to choke the breath out of a woman.

TOM. I never done that, sir.

MR. GILMER. But you're strong enough?

TOM. I reckon so, sir.

MR. GILMER. Had your eye on her for a long time, hadn't you, boy?

TOM. No, sir. I never looked at her.

MR. GILMER. Then you were mighty polite to do all that chopping and hauling for her, weren't you, boy?

TOM. I was just tryin' to help out, sir.

MR. GILMER. That was mighty generous of you. Why were you so anxious to do that woman's chores?

TOM (*hesitating*). Looked like she didn't have nobody to help her.

MR. GILMER. With Mr. Ewell and seven children on the place, boy?

TOM. Well, I says it looked like they never help her none.

MR. GILMER. You did all this chopping and work for sheer goodness, boy?

TOM. Just tried to help her.

MR. GILMER. You're a mighty good fellow, it seems—did all this for not one penny.

TOM. Yes, sir. I felt right sorry for her. She seemed to try more'n the rest of 'em.

MR. GILMER (*got him*). You felt sorry for her! You felt sorry for her! (*The SPECTATORS are shifting uncomfortably at this. To the JURY*) He felt sorry for her. (*Turning back to TOM*.) Now you went by the house as usual last November twenty-first and she asked you to come in and bust up the chiffarobe?

TOM. No, sir.

MR. GILMER. Do you deny you went by the house?

TOM. No, sir.

MR. GILMER. She says she asked you to bust up the chiffarobe. Is that right?

TOM. No, sir, it ain't.

MR. GILMER (*his tone is dangerous*). You say she's lying, boy? (*ATTICUS is rising to protest, but TOM handles the question.*)

TOM. I don't say she's lying, Mr. Gilmer. I say she's mistaken in her mind. (*ATTICUS sits again.*)

MR. GILMER (*his tone rougher*). Tell me, boy. Why did you run away?

TOM. I was scared, sir.

MR. GILMER. If you had a clear conscience, boy, why were you scared?

TOM. Like I says before, it weren't safe for any nigger to be in a—fix like that.

MR. GILMER (*sarcastically*). But you weren't in a fix. You testified you were resisting her advances. Were you scared she might hurt you—a big buck like you?

TOM. No, sir. I was scared I'd be in court, just like I am now.

MR. GILMER (*his voice rising*). Scared you'd have to face up to what you did?

TOM. No, sir. Scared I'd have to face up to what I didn't do.

MR. GILMER. You bein' impudent to me, boy?

TOM. I didn't go to be.

MR. GILMER (*walking away*). No more questions.

JUDGE TAYLOR. You can step down, Mr. Robinson.

(*As TOM finds his way back to his chair, the light on the court scene dims as a spot of light comes up DR into which DILL comes, followed by SCOUT. DILL is upset.*)

SCOUT. 'smatter with you?

DILL (*with an effort*). I'm okay.

SCOUT. The heat got you? Ain't you feeling good?

DILL (*getting himself in hand*). Said I was okay.

SCOUT. Then why'd you run out?

DILL (*covering*). It's just I'm beginning to understand some things. Like why Boo Radley stays shut up in his house—it's because he wants to stay inside.

SCOUT. That don't make any sense.

DILL. Maybe he found out the way people can go out their way to despise each other. (*Bursting out of him.*)

Why'd Mr. Gilmer have to do Tom Robinson that-away?

Why'd he talk so hateful?

SCOUT. Dill, that's his job.

DILL. But he didn't have to sneer, and call him 'boy.'

SCOUT. That's just Mr. Gilmer's way. They do all defendants that way, most lawyers, I mean.

DILL. Mr. Finch doesn't.

SCOUT. He's not an example, Dill, he's—well, the same in the courtroom as he is at home—or on the street.

(*DILL nods patiently, making SCOUT speak with a slight edge.*) Might be better if Atticus was a little more—if he was—

DILL (*exasperated*). Don't you realize yet—your father's not a run-of-the-mill man.

SCOUT (*dubiously*). Most people—

DILL (*cutting in with a snort*). Whatta you care about most people? Can't you realize—

SCOUT (*not liking DILL's superiority*). If you've got over your cryin' fit, I guess I can take you back in.

DILL. Wasn't a cryin' fit. (*Going to her.*) Just didn't like the way Mr. Gilmer—(*SCOUT and DILL return to their seats.*)