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Atticus got up from his chair, but he was moving so slowly, like an old newspaper editor very carefully adjusting his glasses, adjusting his fingers. They were trembling a little. "Go home, Jem," he said. "Take Scout and Dill home." We were accustomed to prompt, but always cheerful acquiescence to Atticus's instructions, but from the way he stood Jem was not thinking of budging. "Go home, I said." Jem shook his head. "Atticus's fists went to his hips, so did Jem's, and as they faced each other I could see little resemblance between them: Jem's soft brown hair and eyes, his oval face and snuff-gritting ears were our mother's, contrasting oddly with Atticus's graying black hair and square-cut features, but they were somehow alike. Mutual defiance made them alike. "Son, I said go home." Jem shook his head. "I'll send him home," a burly man said, and grabbed Jem roughly by the collar. He yanked Jem nearly off his feet. "Don't you touch him!" I kicked the man swiftly. Barerefot, I was surprised to see him fall back in real pain. I intended to kick his shin, but aimed too high. "That'll do, Scout." Atticus put his hand on my shoulder. "Don't kick folks. No —" he said, as I was pleading justification. "Ain't nobody gonna do Jem that way," I said. "All right, Mr. Finch, get 'em outa here," someone growled. "You got fifteen seconds to get 'em outa here." In the midst of this strange assembly, Atticus stood trying to make Jem mind him. "I ain't going," was his steady answer to Atticus's threats, requests, and finally, "Please Jem, take them home." I was getting a bit tired of that, but felt Jem had his own reasons for doing as he did, in view of his prospects once Atticus did get him home. I looked around the crowd. It was a summer's night, but the men were dressed, most of them, in overalls and denim shirts buttoned up to the collars. I thought they must be cold- natured, as their sleeves were unrolled and buttoned at the cuffs. Some wore hats pulled firmly down over their ears. They were sullen-looking, sleepy-eyed men who seemed unused to late hours. I sought once more for the familiar face, and at the center of the semi-circle I found one. "Hey, Mr. Cunningham." The man did not hear me, it seemed. "Hey, Mr. Cunningham. How's your entailment gettin' along?" Mr. Walter Cunningham's legal affairs were well known to me; Atticus had once described them at length. The big man blinked and hooked his thumbs in his overall straps. He seemed uncomfortable; he cleared his throat and looked away. My friendly overture had fallen flat. Mr. Cunningham pushed up his hat, and the top half of his forehead was white, in contrast to his sunscorched face, which led me to believe that he wore Jem most days. He shifted his feet, clad in heavy work shoes. "Don't you remember me, Mr. Cunningham? I'm Jean Louise Finch. You brought us some hickory nuts one time, remember?" I began to sense the futility one feels when unacknowledged by a chance acquaintance. "I go to school with Walter," I began again. "He's your boy, ain't he? Ain't he, sir?" Mr. Cunningham was moved to a faint nod. He did know me, after all. "He's in my grade," I said, "and he does right well. He's a good boy," I added, "a real nice boy. We brought him home for dinner one time. Maybe he told you about me, I beat him up one time but he was real nice about it. Tell him hey for me, won't you? Atticus he said he was the polite thing to talk to people about what they were interested in, 'not about what you were interested in. Mr. Cunningham displayed no interest in his son, so I tackled his entailment once more in a last-ditch effort to make him feel at home. "Entailments are bad," I was advising him, when I slowly awoke to the fact that I was addressing the entire aggregation. The men were all looking at me, some had their mouths half-open. Atticus had stopped poking at Jem: they were standing together beside Dill. Their attention amounted to fascination. Atticus's mouth, even, was half-open, an attitude he had once described as uncouth. Our eyes met and he shut it. "Well, Atticus, I was just sayin' to Mr. Cunningham that entailments are bad an' all that, but you said not to worry, it takes a long time sometimes... that you all'd ride it out together..." I was slowly drying up, wondering what idioy I had committed. Entailments seemed all right enough for livingroom talk. I began to feel sweat gathering at the edges of my hair; I could stand anything but a bunch of people looking at me. They were quite still. "What's the matter?" I asked. Atticus said nothing. I looked around and up at Mr. Cunningham, whose face was equally impassive. Then he did a peculiar thing. He squatted down and took me by both shoulders. "I'll tell him you hey, little lady," he said. Then he straightened up and waved a big paw. "Let's clear out," he called. "Let's get goin', boys." As they had come, in ones and twos the men shuffled back to their ramshackle cars. My dammed engine coughed and they were gone, turned to Atticus, but Atticus had gone to the jail and was leaning against it with his face to the wall. I went to him and pulled his sleeve. "Can we go home now?" He nodded, produced his handkerchief, gave his face a going-over and blew his nose violently. "Mr. Finch?" A soft husky voice came from the darkness above. "They gone?" Atticus stepped back and looked up. "They've gone," he said. "Got some sleep. Tom. They won't bother you any more." From a different direction, another voice cut crisply through the night. "You're damn tootin' they won't. Had you covered all the time, Atticus." Mr. Underwood and a double-barreled shotgun were leaning out his window above the Maycomb Tribune office. It was long past my bedtime and I was growing quite tired; it seemed that Atticus and Mr. Underwood would talk for the rest of the night. Mr. Underwood out the window and Atticus up at him. Finally Atticus returned, switched off the light above the jail door, and picked up his chair. "Can I carry it for you, Mr. Finch?" asked Dill. He had not said a word the whole time. "Why, thank you, son." Walking toward the office, Dill and I fell into step behind Atticus and Jem. Dill was encumbered by the chair, and his pace was slower. Atticus and Jem were well ahead of us, and I assumed that Atticus was giving him hell for not going home, but I was wrong. As they passed under a streetlight, Atticus reached out and massaged Jem's hair, his one gesture of affection. Chapter 16 Jem heard me. He thrust his head around the connecting door. As he came to my bed Atticus's light flashed on. We stayed where we were until it went off; we heard him turn over, and we waited until he was still again. Jem took me to his room and put me in bed beside him. "Try to go to sleep," he said, "it'll be all over after tomorrow, maybe." We had come in quietly, so as not to wake Aunt. Atticus killed the engine in the driveway and coasted to the carhouse; we went in the back door and to our rooms without a word. I was very tired, and was drifting into sleep when the memory of Atticus calmly folding his newspaper and pushing back his hat became Atticus standing in the middle of an empty waiting street, pushing up his glasses. The full meaning of the night's events hit me and I began crying. Jem was awfully nice about it: for once he seemed to understand me. "He still is." "But last night he wanted to hurt you." Atticus placed his knife and pushed his plate aside. "Mr. Cunningham's basically a good man," he said, "he just has his blind spots along with the rest of us." Jem spoke. "Don't call that a blind spot. He'da killed you last night when he first went there. "He might have hurt me a little," Atticus conceded, "but son, you'll understand folks a little better when you're older. A mob's always made up of people, no matter what. Mr. Cunningham was part of a mob last night, but he was still a man. Every mob in every little Southern town is always made up of people you know— doesn't say much for them, does it?" "I'll say not," said Jem. "So it took an eight-year-old child to bring 'em to their senses, didn't it?" said Atticus. "That always something—that a gang of wild animals can be stopped, simply because they're still human. Hmp, maybe we can make a police force of children... you children last night made Walter Cunningham stand in my shoes for a minute. That was enough." Well, I hoped Jem would understand folks a little better when he was older; I wouldn't. "First day Walter comes back to school'll be his last," I affirmed. "I don't want you touch him," Atticus said flatly. "I don't want either of you bearing a grudge about this thing, no matter what happens." "You see, don't you," said Aunt Alexandra, "what comes of things like this. Don't say I haven't told you." Atticus said he'd never say that, pushed out his chair and got up. "There's a day ahead, so excuse me, Jem. I don't want you and Scout downtown today, please." As Atticus departed, Dill came bounding down the hall into the diningroom. "It's all over town this morning," he announced, "all about how we held off a hundred folks with our bare hands..." Aunt Alexandra stared him to silence. "It was not a hundred folks," she said, "and nobody held anybody off. It was just a nest of those Cunninghams, drunk and disorderly." "Aw, Aunt, that's just Dill's way," said Jem. He signaled us to follow him. "You all stay in the yard today." "You all stay in the yard today," she said, as we made our way to the front porch. It was like Saturday. People from the south end of the county passed our house in a leisurely but steady stream. Mr. Dolphus Raymond lurchted by on his roughbored. "Don't see how he stays in the saddle," murmured Jem. "How c'n you stand to get drunk fore eight in the morning?" A wagonload of ladies rattled past us. They wore cotton sunbonnets and dresses with long sleeves. A bearded man in a wool hat drove them. "Yonder's some Mennettes," Jem said to Dill. "They don't have buttons." They lived deep in the woods, did most of their trading across the river, and rarely came to Maycomb. Dill was interested. "They've all got blue eyes." Jem explained, "and the men can't shave after they marry. Their wives like 'em to tickle 'em with their beards." Mr. X Billups rode by on a mule and waved to us. "He's a funny man," said Jem. "X's his name, not his initial. He was in court one time and they asked him his name. He said X Billups. Clerk asked him to spell it and he said X. Asked him again and he said X. They kept at it till he wrote X on a sheet of paper and held it up for everybody to see. They asked him where he got his name and he said that's the way his folks signed him up when he was born." As the county went by us, Jem gave Dill the histories and general attitudes of the more prominent figures: Mr. Tensaw Jones voted the straight Prohibition ticket; Miss Emily Davis dipped snuff in private; Mr. Byron Waller could play the violin; Mr. Jake Slade was cutting his third set of teeth. A wagonload of unusually stern-faced citizens appeared. When they pointed to Miss Maudie Atkinson's yard, ablaze with summer flowers, Miss Maudie herself came out on the porch. There was an odd thing about Miss Maudie—on her porch she was too far away for us to see her features clearly, but we could always catch her mood by the way she stood. She was now standing arms akimbo, her shoulders drooping a little, her head cocked to one side, her glasses winking in the sunlight. We knew she wore a grin of the uttermost wickedness. The driver of the wagon slowed down his mule, and a shrill-voiced woman called out: "He that cometh in vanity departeth in darkness!" Miss Maudie answered: "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance!" I guess that the foot-washers thought that the Devil was quoting Scripture for his own purposes, as the driver speeded his mules. Why they objected to Miss Maudie's yard was a mystery, heightened in my mind because for some one while during the daylight hours outdoors, Miss Maudie's countenance was formidable. "You goin' to court this mornin'?" asked Jem. We had strolled over. "I am not," she said. "I have no business with the court this mornin'." "Aren't you goin' down to watch?" asked Dill. "I am not. It's morbid, watchin' a poor devil on trial for his life. Look at all these folks. It's like a Roman carnival." They hafta try him in public, Miss Maudie. "I said, "Wouldn't he right if they didn't." "I'm quite aware of that," she said. "Just because it's public, I don't have to go, do I?" Miss Stephanie Crawford came by. She wore a hat and gloves. "Um, um, um," she said. "Look at all those folks—you'd think William Jennings Bryan was speakin'!" "And where are you going, Stephanie?" inquired Miss Maudie. "To the Jitney Jungle." Miss Maudie said she'd never seen Miss Stephanie go to the Jitney Jungle in a hat in her life. "Well," said Miss Stephanie, "I thought I might just look in at the courthouse, to see what Atticus's up to." "Better be careful he doesn't hand you a subpoena." We asked Miss Stephanie to elucidate: she said Miss Stephanie seemed to know so much about the case she might as well be called on to testify. We held off until noon, when Atticus came home to dinner and said they'd spent the morning picking the jury. After dinner, we stopped by for Dill and went to town. It was a gala occasion. There was no room at the public hitching rail for another animal, mules and wagons were parked under every available tree. The courthouse square was covered with picnic parties sitting on newspapers, washing down biscuit and syrup with warm milk from fruit jars. Some people were gnawing on cold chicken and cold fried pork chops. The more affluent chased their food with drugstore Coca-Cola in bulb-shaped soda glasses. Greasy-faced children popped-the-whip through the crowd, and babies lunched at their mothers' breasts. In a far corner of the square, the Negroes sat quietly in the sun, dining on sardines, crackers, and the more vivid flavors of Nehi Cola. Mr. Dolphus Raymond sat with them. "Jem," said Dill, "he's drinkin' out of a sack." Mr. Dolphus Raymond seemed to be so doing; two yellow drugstore straws ran from his mouth to the depths of a brown paper bag. "Ain't ever seen anybody do that," murmured Dill. "How does he keep what's in it?" Jem giggled. "He's got a Co-Cola bottle full of whiskey in there." That's so's not to upset the ladies. You'll see him sip it all afternoon, he'll sit out for a while and fill it back up." "Why's he sitting with their collied folks?" "Always does. He likes 'em better 'n he likes us," I reckon. Lives by himself way down near the county line. He's got a scatter bits of newspaper, cellophane, and wrapping paper. Children came to mothers, babies were cradled on hips as men in sweat-stained hats collected their families and herded them through the courthouse doors. In the far corner of the square the Negroes and Mr. Dolphus Raymond stood up and dusted their breeches. There are few women and children among them, which seemed to dispel the holiday mood. They waited patiently at the doors behind the white families. "Let's go in," said Dill. "Now, we better wait till they get in, Atticus might not like it if he sees us," said Jem. The Maycomb County courthouse was faintly reminiscent of Arlington in one respect: the concrete pillars supporting its south roof were too heavy for their light burden. The pillars were all that remained standing when the original courthouse burned in 1856. Another courthouse was built around them. It is better to say, built in spite of them. But for the south porch, the Maycomb County courthouse was early Victorian, presenting an unoffensive vista when seen from the north. From the other side, however, Greek revival columns clashed with a big nineteenth-century clock tower housing a rusty unreliable instrument, a view indicating a people determined to preserve every physical scrap of the past. To reach the courtroom, on the second floor, one passed sundry sullen county cubbyholes: the tax assessor, the tax collector, the county clerk, the county solicitor, the circuit clerk, the judge of probate lived in cool dim hatches that smelled of decaying record books mingled with old damp cement and stale urine. It was necessary to turn on the lights in the daytime; there was always a film of dust on the rough floorboards. The inhabitants of these offices were creatures of their environment; little gray-faced men, they seemed untouched by wind or sun. We knew there was a crowd, but we had not bargained for the multitudes in the first-floor hallway. I got separated from Jem and Dill, but made my way toward the wall by the stairwell, knowing Jem would come for me eventually. I found myself in the middle of the Ilders Club and made myself as unobtrusive as possible. This was a group of white-shirted, khaki-trousered, suspended old men who had spent their lives doing nothing and passed their twilight days doing nothing in the evening. After nine hours of listening to the eccentricities of Old Sarum's inhabitants, Judge Taylor threw the case out of court. When asked upon what grounds, Judge Taylor said, "Champeritous connivance," and declared he hoped to God the litigants were satisfied by each having had their public say. They were. That was all they had wanted in the first place. Judge Taylor had one interesting habit. He permitted smoking in his courtroom but did not himself indulge: sometimes, if one was lucky, one had the privilege of watching him put a long dry cigar into his mouth and munch it slowly up. Bit by bit the dead cigar would disappear, to reappear some hours later as a flat slick mess, its essence extracted and mingling with Judge Taylor's digestive juices. I once asked Atticus how Mrs. Taylor stood to kiss him, but Atticus said they didn't kiss much. The witness stand was to the right of Judge Taylor, and when we got our seats Mr. Heck Tate was already on it. Chapter 17 "Jem," I said, "are those the Howells sittin' down yonder?" "Hush," said Jem. "Mr. Heck Tate's testifyin' for." Mr. Tate had addressed the occasion. He wore an ordinary business suit, which made him look somehow like every other man: gone were his high boots, lumber jacket, and bullet-studded belt. From that moment he ceased to terrify me. He was sitting forward in the witness chair, his hands clasped between his knees, listening attentively to the circuit solicitor. The solicitor, a Mr. Gilmer, was not well known to us. He was from Abbottsville; we saw him only when court convened, and that rarely, for court was of no special interest to Jem and me. A balding, smooth-faced man, he could have been anywhere between forty and sixty. Although his back was to us, we knew he had a slight cast in one of his eyes which he used to his advantage; he seemed to be looking at a person when he was actually doing nothing of the kind, thus he well hid injuries and weakness. The jury, thinking themselves under close scrutiny, paid attention; so did the witnesses, thinking likewise. "... in your own words, Mr. Tate," Mr. Gilmer was saying. "Well," said Mr. Tate, "mying his glasses and speaking to his knees. "I was called—" "Could you say it to the jury, Mr. Tate?" Thank you, Who called you?" Mr. Tate said, "I was fetched by Bob—by Mr. Bob Ewell yonder, one night..." "What night, sir?" Mr. Tate said. "It was the night of November twenty-first. I was just leaving my office to go home when B—Mr. Ewell came in, very excited he was, and said get out to his house quick, some nigger'd raped his girl." "Did you go?" "Certainly. Got in the car and went out as fast as I could." "And what did you find?" "Found her lying on the floor in the middle of the front room, one on the right as you go in. It was pretty well beat up, but I heaved her to her feet and she washed her face in a bucket in the comer and said she was all right. I asked her who hurt her and she said it was Tom Robinson—" Judge Taylor, who had been concentrating on his fingernails, looked up as if he were expecting an objection, but Atticus was quiet. "... asked her if he beat her like that, she said yes he had. Asked her if he took advantage of her and she said yes he did. So I went down to Robinson's house and brought him back. She identified him as the one, so I took him in. That's all there was to it." "Thank you," said Mr. Gilmer. Judge Taylor said, "Any questions, Atticus?" "Yes," said my father. He was sitting behind his table; his chair was skewed to one side, his legs were crossed and one arm was resting on the back of his chair. "Did you call a doctor, Sheriff? Did anybody call a doctor?" asked Atticus. "No sir," said Mr. Tate. "Didn't call a doctor?" "No sir," repeated Mr. Tate. "Why not?" There was an edge to Atticus's voice. "Well I can tell you why I didn't. It wasn't necessary, Mr. Finch. She was mighty banged up. Something sho' happened, it was obvious." "But you didn't call a doctor? Who were there did anyone send for one, fetch one, carry her to one?" "No sir." Judge Taylor broke in. "He's answered the question three times, Atticus. He didn't call a doctor." Atticus said, "I just wanted to make sure, Judge," and the judge smiled. Jem's hand, which was resting on the balcony rail, tightened around it. He drew in his breath suddenly. Glancing below, I saw no corresponding reaction, any understanding of Jem was trying to be dramatic. Dill was watching peacefully, and so was Reverend Sykes beside me. "What is it?" I whispered, and got a terse, "Sh— Sheriff." Atticus was saying, "you say she was mighty banged up. In what way?" "Well," Just describe her injuries, Heck." "Well, she was beaten around the head. There was already bruises comin' on her arms, and it happened about thirty minutes before—" "What night, sir?" Mr. Tate grinned. "Sorry, that's what they said. Anyway, she was pretty bruised up when I got there, and she had a black eye comin'." "Which eye?" Mr. Tate blinked and ran his hands through his hair. "Let's see," he said softly, then he looked at Atticus as if he considered the question childish. "Can't you remember?" Atticus asked. Mr. Tate pointed to an invisible person five inches in front of him and said, "Her left." "Wait a minute, Sheriff," said Atticus. "Was it her left facing you or her left looking the same way you were?" Mr. Tate said, "Oh, yeah, that'd make it her right. It was her right eye, Mr. Finch. I remember now, she was bunged up on that side of her face..." Mr. Tate blinked again, as if something had suddenly been made plain to him. Then he turned his head and looked around at Tom Robinson. As if by instinct, Tom Robinson raised his head. Something had been made plain to Atticus also, and it brought him to his feet. "Sheriff, please repeat what you said." "It was her right eye, I said." "No..." Atticus walked to the court reporter's desk and bent down to the furiously scribbling hand. It stopped, flipped back the shorthand pad, and the court reporter said, "Mr. Finch. I remember now she was bunged up on that side of the face." Atticus looked up at Mr. Tate. "Which side again, Heck?" "The right side, Mr. Finch, but she had more bruises—you wanta hear about 'em?" Atticus seemed to be bordering on another question, but he thought better of it and said, "Yes, what were her other injuries?" As Mr. Tate answered, Atticus turned and looked at Tom Robinson as if to say this was something they hadn't bargained for. "... her arms were bruised, and she showed me her neck. There were definite finger marks on her gullet—" All around her throat? At the back of her neck?" "I'd say they were all around, Mr. Finch." "You would?" "Yes, sir. Mr. Ewell, would you tell us in your own words what happened on the evening of November twenty-first, please?" Jem grinned and pushed his hair back. "That was my father's trademark. We often wondered who else's words Mr. Gilmer was afraid his witness might employ. "Well, the night of November twenty-one I was comin' in from the woods with a load o'kindlin' and just as I got to the fence I heard Mayella scream in4 like a stuck hog inside the house —" Here Judge Taylor glanced sharply at the witness and must have decided his speculations devoid of evil intent, for he subsided sleepily. "What time was it, Mr. Ewell?" "Just 'fore sundown. Well, I was sayin' 'Mayella was screamin' fit to beat Jesus —" another glance from the bench silenced Mr. Ewell. "Yes? She was screaming?" said Mr. Gilmer. Mr. Ewell looked confusedly at the judge. "Well, Mayella was raisin' this holy racket so I dropped m'load and run as fast as I could but I run into th' fence, but when I got dangled I run up to th' d'window and I seen—" Mr. Ewell's face grew scarlet. He stood up and pointed his finger at Tom Robinson. "I seen that black nigger yonder ruttin' on my Mayella!" So serene was Judge Taylor's court, that he had few occasions to use his gavel, but he hammered fully five minutes. Atticus was on his feet at the bench saying something to him. Mr. Heck Tate as first officer of the county stood in the middle aisle quelling the packed courtroom. Behind us, there was an angry muffled groan from the colored people. Reverend Sykes leaned across Dill and me, pulling at Jem's elbow. "Mr. Jem," he said, "you better take Miss Jean Louise home. Mr. Jem, you hear me?" Jem turned his head. "Scout, go home. Dill, you n'Scout go home." "You gotta make me first," I said, remembering Atticus's blessed dictum. Jem scowled furiously at me, then said to Reverend Sykes, "I think it's okay, Reverend, she doesn't understand it." I was mortally offended. "I most certainly do, I c'n understand anything you can." "Aw hush. She doesn't understand it. Reverend, she ain't nine yet." Reverend Sykes's black eyes were anxious. "Mr. Finch know you all are here? This ain't fit for Miss Jean Louise or you boys either." Jem shook his head. "He can't see us this far away. It's all right, Reverend." I knew Jem would win, because I knew nothing could make him leave now. Dill and I were safe, for a while: Atticus could see us from where he was, if he looked. As Judge Taylor banged his gavel, Mr. Ewell was sitting smugly in the witness chair, surveying his handiwork with his knees. "I was called—" "Could you say it to the jury, Mr. Tate?" Thank you, Who called you?" Mr. Tate said, "I was fetched by Bob—by Mr. Bob Ewell yonder, one night..." "What night, sir?" Mr. Tate said. 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