

## To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 18

19-year-old Mayella Ewell was called to the stand next and she seemed fragile at first. She corroborated her father's story about the rape. She explained that she'd been on the front porch that evening while her father was gone. He'd left a chiffrrobe for her to chop into kindling, but she said she wasn't feeling well. So when Tom walked by, she offered him a nickel to come in and chop it up for her. She said that when she went inside to get the money, he followed her in. She said he ran up behind her and got her around the neck. She said he hit her again and again. Then she said he flung her down and had his way with her. The next thing she claimed to remember was her father standing over her. Then she thought she fainted because the next thing that happened was Mr. Tate helped her up.

It was Atticus' turn to cross-examine the witness, and Mayella was stubborn. Atticus began questioning her about her home life, establishing for the jury, without her realization, that her father was a drunkard who wasted the little money the family got from the state on liquor. When Atticus asked her if her father was good to her and easy to get along with, Mayella said that he was except when . . . but she didn't finish her sentence. She realized what Atticus was up to and denied that she'd started to say anything. Atticus then asked if her father had ever beat her when he was drunk. She denied that as well.

Atticus asked Mayella if she'd ever called on Tom Robinson to do odd chores before. After she denied it repeatedly, she admitted that she might have asked him to before because she'd had a few Negroes do odd jobs, but she couldn't remember whom. Atticus asked if she remembered Tom hitting her in the face. She didn't answer for a while and then said that he did hit her, but she didn't remember it because it all happened so fast. Atticus told her to identify the man who raped her and she pointed to Tom, so Atticus made him stand up. The jury and the people in the courthouse were aghast to see that useless and limp arm at his side, Tom's left arm was twelve inches shorter than his right one with a withered hand at the end of it. Reverend Sykes explained to Jem and Scout that Tom had gotten it caught in a cotton gin as a child.

Atticus shot a rapid-fire barrage of questions at Mayella then concerning how Tom could have held her down and raped her if she'd been fighting as hard as she could. And if she'd been screaming, why didn't her brothers and sisters come from the dump to see what was happening? Atticus presented the idea that maybe she didn't scream until she saw her father in the window. He asked her, "'What did your father see in the window, the crime of rape or the best defense to it?'" Chapter 18, Pg. 190 Mayella didn't answer any of his questions for a moment, and then she told him that she'd been raped and if he and all the yellow men in Maycomb County weren't going to do anything about it, then they were cowards. She refused to answer any questions after that. Then Atticus called his only witness.