***To Kill a Mockingbird – Chapter 11***

**Mrs. Dubose: very old, racist and cruel. Her insults upset Jem to the point where he destroyed her flower garden. His punishment was to read to her every day for a month.**

* **We find out later that she was a *morphine addict,* but was determined to overcome her addiction before she died. Jem’s reading to her helped in this regard.**
* **Despite the fact that she was quite unpleasant, and that she said bad things about him, Atticus knew that Jem’s behaviour was unacceptable. She was old, she was an adult, and Jem had to learn to get his temper under control – especially with the upcoming trial. *He explains the importance of this to Scout on pages 104-105.***
* **Atticus also wanted his children to understand her courage – a trait he greatly admired. She was old, and in pain. Her death was inevitable, and morphine might have given her some relief from the pain. No one would have questioned her taking the easy route, given her age and condition. However, she was determined to fight, and to die on her own terms. That meant *free from addiction.***
* **This, to Atticus, was courage: knowing that the outcome is inevitable, but refusing to accept the status quo. The struggle is important. This is what Atticus intends to do with the Tom Robinson trial.**
* **It also illustrates how misleading it can be to label people. There exists within all of us the capacity for *contrasting qualities.***
* **(108): Atticus explains the meaning of “nigger-lover.” He calls it “a common, ugly term” and goes on to say that people who use such derogatory language only reveal their own moral and intellectual shortcomings.**

***Chapter 12***

* **Jem is growing up; Scout doesn’t understand the changes.**
* **(115-118): Calpurnia’s affections towards both children – especially Scout.**
* **Atticus is away; the children accompany Cal to her church. Churches were also segregated.**
* **For the most part, they received a warm and cordial welcome. However, the character of Lula illustrates that unsavoury people can be found anywhere.**
* **Scout notices a change in Calpurnia’s language and demeanour when dealing with Lula.**
* **Many allusions to Tom Robinson (his family, why he is in trouble, the Ewells...)**
* **The description of the black church offers a contrast to the pervasive racist attitudes in the white community.**

***Chapter 13***

* **Alexandra arrives, and explains how she will be living there “for a while.” There are references to increased demands on Atticus, as well as a difficult summer ahead. It seems as if Alexandra has decided this. *Note: she disapproves of her brother’s activities, but has a tremendous amount of pride in her family.***
* **She immediately fits into the neighbourhood.** ***Her preoccupation with socializing and appearances tell us that her disapproval isn’t based necessarily on innate feelings of disdain for blacks. She didn’t want to stand out, and feared change.***

***Chapter 14***

* **Tension mounts: the family comes under closer scrutiny. Atticus and Alexandra disagree on some important points. She feels he is too lenient with the children. She also feels that Calpurnia should be dismissed (recall from chapter 13 how she thought the children needed “feminine influence.” Scout was puzzled, and thought the obvious: Cal’s a girl).**
* **Conflict deepens. Jem is maturing and tries to advise Scout on her behaviour. She reacts angrily.**
* **Dill appears, having run away from home. He believes his parents don’t love him – that he is weird and unworthy.**
* **Note the Boo Radley reference on page 144. Scout wonders why Boo (who appears to be strange and tormented) has never run away. Dill’s response: “Maybe he doesn’t have anywhere to run off to...” In other words, he is alone in the world – trapped and lonely.**

***Chapter 15***

* **Tom Robinson is being held in the local jail, and some concerned community members worry that a lynch mob may come in the night and try to take him. They discuss this with Atticus (a lynch mob would normally consist of a group of white men, sometimes in disguise, who would take a black person who had been accused of some crime, torture and kill them).**

***There are some people in this community who think like Atticus. Even among people who are racist, it seems there are differing levels. Alexandra seems racist, but even she would probably not condone something so vile as lynching.***

* **Jem (a little older) understands that lynch mobs have been known to exist in this part of the world. He fears for his father. This is why he wants to sneak out and follow his father downtown.**
* **Atticus calmly keeps watch** **perched in front of the jail. A car full of men approaches. They confront Atticus. Their intentions are clear: they want Tom.**
* **Scout runs to the group, not understanding the seriousness of the situation. *This is in keeping with her character.***
* **More family unity: Jem refuses to leave, despite Atticus’ pleas. Atticus is afraid, not only for his children’s safety, but also for the horrible thing they might witness.**
* **Walter Cunningham Sr. is in the crowd. Scout recognizes him and innocently strikes up a conversation. She is still innocent enough to see past this situation (which she doesn’t fully understand) and see the essence of the man: his child, his property, his solidarity with Atticus, his essential *goodness***. **It is enough to embarrass him, and the situation is diffused.**

***Chapter 16***

* **Atticus confirms Calpurnia’s importance, and points out to his sister that the gossip in the black community isn’t nearly as bad as the things that go on in the white community.**
* **He also explains why people sometimes adopt a mob mentality, and the role innocence has in diffusing such things.**
* **Downtown Maycomb has a carnival type atmosphere. There is a morbid fascination with the upcoming trial.**