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Harper Lee's Biography Example

Harper Lee had a very interesting life full writing and fame. She had childhood experiences, grew up in Alabama, life experiences, friendships that shaped her as a writer, and a critical analysis on To Kill a Mockingbird. This also contributed to her winning the Pulitzer Prize for To Kill a Mockingbird in 1961 (Anderson 1). In her life she did many incredible things that not many people have done before. For example, writing a book about racial injustice, especially in Alabama, her home town, where the book takes place.

Harper Lee was born and raised in Alabama starting her life's journey in 1926 when she was first-born. Lee was born in Monroeville on April 28, 1926, the youngest child of Amasa Coleman Lee, a lawyer, and Frances Finch who struggled with episodes of mental illness (Anderson 1). This showed that Lee's fiction book To Kill a Mockingbird was certainly influenced and shaped by her childhood experiences (Anderson 1). Lee also had a brother and a sister and fellow author to be, Truman Capote (Anderson 1). Truman Capote was a frequent summer visitor of Monroeville and they were close friends. Harper Lee grew up in Alabama and this shaped her and To Kill a Mocking Bird. Since she grew up in Alabama and did not have a wealthy family she lived a simple life. "We had to use our own devices in our own play, for our own entertainment. We didn't have much money . . . We didn't have

toys, nothing was done for us, so the result was that we lived in our imagination most of the time.” (Anderson 1). Also, Lee grew up in Alabama where they had racial injustice. Therefore, she saw it first hand at what was happening in her own backyard. Harper Lee’s writing education also had an impact on her writing career. Lee attended public grammar school and high school in Monroeville (Anderson 1).

While she was there she continued her passion by writing columns (Anderson 1). After she dropped out she left Alabama and went to New York to pursue her literary career and follow her dreams (Anderson 1). Harper Lee also had many life experiences that shaped her as a person and as a writer. After her first novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she began to retreat from all media (Coats 1). This meant that she declined requests for interviews because she preferred a more quiet lifestyle (Coats 1). So, she lived between her childhood home in Monroeville, Alabama, and her apartment in New York City (Coats 1). This was so that when she needed a break from the bustling city of New York, she could reside at her true home in the much more quieter Monroeville. Along with the life experiences she had friendships that shaped her writing styles and stories. She shared many of her childhood experiences with Truman Capote. Capote was a frequent summer visitor of Monroeville who was about the same age as her. Since they didn’t have toys they played pretend to amuse themselves. After those summers they had a life long friendship. This led to them working together on the book *Cold Blood* and in the end he dedicated the book to her (Anderson 1).

To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee mostly portrays what growing up in the 1930’s in the South was like (Nair 2). The main character in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is Jean Louise “Scout” Finch, Jem which is her brother, and their father Atticus Finch (Nair 2). This story shows three years of Scout’s life that had significant changes (Nair 2). Scout is a tomboy who likes to make friends with boys and prefers to settle arguments with her fists (Nair2). Scout tries to make sense of the world telling her to act like a lady, her brother telling her not to act like a girl, and her dad who accepts her the way she is (Nair 2). Atticus is a local lawyer of Maycomb who tries to balance being a single parent and raising his children to have honor and respect using himself as an example (Nair 2). This book took place during the Depression making times hard and no money to be found anywhere in town (Nair 2). They spent their time together by acting out stories (Nair 2). As time went on, Dill becomes fascinated with the spooky Radley place

(Nair 2). The house is owned by Mr. Radley, whose brother, Boo has never went outside (Nair 2). They even went as far as to create a play on Boo's life (Nair 2). Shortly after, Atticus forbid them to do anything involving Mr. Radley (Nair 2). Once Scout starts school she immediately hates it so she ends up gaining her most valuable knowledge on her own street from her father (Nair 2). Since she is starting school she has to walk to and fro every day. When Dill came back they began to act out Boo's life again (Nair 2). As before Atticus put a stop to it (Nair 2).

Dill's inquisitiveness grew, so on the last day of his stay they decided to sneak onto the Radley property (Nair 2). They were soon shot at because Mr. Radley thought they were thieves trying to steal his crops. Jem loses his pants during the escape and the next day he found them sewn up on the fence (Nair 2). The next winter they begin to find gifts in the tree again, which they presume to be left by Boo Radley (Nair 3). Nathan Radley eventually sees them finding the gifts and fills the tree with cement (Nair 3). Shortly after, the house next door turns ablaze and as Scout is watching the flames someone puts a blanket on her shoulders (Nair 3). They are convinced it was Boo so they decided to show Atticus the pants, the blanket, and the presents (Nair 3). Meanwhile, Atticus is going to defend Tom Robinson, a black man, in court because he was accused of rape to Mayella Ewell (Nair 3). The town immediately finds Tom at fault and they start to look at Atticus in a negative way for doing the right thing (Nair 3). Consequently, the children are tormented at school, but their father reminds them to stay collected in this hard time (Nair 3). Atticus knows that he will not win the case but he proceeds to go through with it to show the townspeople how unfair and prejudice they are being (Nair 3). The trial begins and Tom is put in a holding cell, after people hear of this they begin to form mobs outside intending to hurt Mr. Robinson (Nair 3). So, Scout and Jem appear and ask one of the men a polite question about his son (Nair 3). This makes them ashamed and they leave Tom alone.

On the day of the trial Atticus does not want the kids to be there, but they sneak out anyway. Since there is no place to sit on the main floor Rev. Sykes invites them to sit on the colored balcony (Nair 3). Since Tom is crippled, there is no way he could have beaten Mayella on the right side (Nair 3). This clearly proves that Tom did not Rape Mayella rather her father beat her for kissing Mr. Robinson (Nair 3). Tom is sentenced to prison and is soon fatally shot (Nair 3). After the trial is over Bob Ewell begins to threaten Atticus for embarrassing him in court (Nair 3). He

soon attacks Jem and Scout while they are on their way home at night (Nair 3). Jem broke his arm and is passed out (Nair 3). Luckily, someone heard their screams and came to save them and carried Jem home, where Scout realizes that it was Boo Radley (Nair 3). When the sheriff came he found Bob Ewell dead under a tree and the medic announced that Jem would be all right (Nair 3). Scout walked Boo home and she realized that all this time he was watching over them all along and just for a little while she is able to stand in his shoes (Nair 4).

To Kill a Mockingbird represents how people know what is wrong from right, but they choose to do the wrong thing anyway (Nair 4). In To Kill A Mockingbird we see people struggling to make the correct decision (Nair 4). Atticus tries to win Tom's case even though he knows he will get backlash from it (Nair 4). Boo, is also a hero because he saves the children even though he is forbidden to leave the house (Nair 4). By saving the kids, he is putting his life and reputation on the line (Nair 4). So, both the sheriff and Atticus risk getting caught lying to save Boo from the wrath of the townspeople (Nair 4).

In conclusion, Harper Lee's writing styles were very much inspired by her childhood and the people that she knew. Through the trial, the children learned that their town is extremely prejudiced and will turn a blind eye to anything that has to do with someone that is not like them. They also learned that some people are different like their father, Miss Maudie and Mrs. Dubose. These are all people who knew what was right and acted on it. There will always be people who know what is right, but it is those who do the right thing that are the courageous ones.

Works Cited Page

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