

Color Marking Annotation Activity, Ch. 16 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*

The club began its stiff-jointed climb and ran into Dill and Jem on their way down looking for me. They squeezed past and Jem called, "Scout, come on, there ain't a seat left. We'll hafta stand up."

"Looka there, now," he said irritably, as the black people surged upstairs. The old men ahead of them would take most of the standing room. We were out of luck and it was my fault, Jem informed me. We stood miserably by the wall.

"Can't you all get in?"

Reverend Sykes was looking down at us, black hat in hand.

"Hey, Reverend," said Jem. "Naw, Scout here messed us up."

"Well, let's see what we can do."

Reverend Sykes edged his way upstairs. In a few moments he was back. "There's not a seat downstairs. Do you all reckon it'll be all right if you all came to thenbalcony with me?"

"Gosh yes," said Jem. Happily, we sped ahead of Reverend Sykes to the courtroom floor. There, we went up a covered staircase and waited at the door. Reverend Sykes came puffing behind us, and steered us gently through the black people in the balcony. Four Negroes rose and gave us their front-row seats.

The Colored balcony ran along three walls of the courtroom like a second-story veranda, and from it we could see everything.

The jury sat to the left, under long windows. Sunburned, lanky, they seemed to be all farmers, but this was natural: townfolk rarely sat on juries, they were either struck or excused. One or two of the jury looked vaguely like dressed-up Cunninghams. At this stage they sat straight and alert.

The circuit solicitor and another man, Atticus and Tom Robinson sat at tables with their backs to us. There was a brown book and some yellow tablets on the solicitor's table; Atticus's was bare. Just inside the railing that divided the spectators from the court, the witnesses sat on cowhide-bottomed chairs. Their backs were to us.

Judge Taylor was on the bench, looking like a sleepy old shark, his pilot fish writing rapidly below in front of him. Judge Taylor looked like most judges I had ever seen: amiable, white-haired, slightly ruddy-faced, he was a man who ran his court with an alarming informality—he sometimes propped his feet up, he often cleaned his fingernails with his pocket knife. In long equity hearings, especially after dinner, he gave the impression of dozing, an impression dispelled forever when a lawyer once deliberately pushed a pile of books to the floor in a desperate effort to wake him up. Without opening his eyes, Judge Taylor murmured, "Mr. Whitley, do that again and it'll cost you one hundred dollars."

He was a man learned in the law, and although he seemed to take his job casually, in reality he kept a firm grip on any proceedings that came before him. Only once was Judge Taylor ever seen at a dead standstill in open court, and the Cunninghams stopped him. Old Sarum, their stamping grounds, was populated by two families separate and apart in the beginning, but unfortunately bearing the same name. The Cunninghams married the Coninghams until the spelling of the names was academic—academic until a Cunningham disputed a Coningham over land titles and took to the law. During a controversy of this character, Jeems Cunningham testified that his mother spelled it Cunningham on deeds and things, but she was really a Coningham, she was an uncertain speller, a seldom reader, and was given to looking far away sometimes when she sat on the front gallery 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, "Champertous 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 to our seats Mr. Heck Tate was already on it.