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2nd hour- Honors English

*A Yearning for Compassion*

“What kind of fun would it be if I just got everything I ever wanted just like that, and it didn’t mean anything?” This was asked by Coraline Jones in the movie Coraline, in which her character gets everything except for the greatest gift she could ask for, to be payed attention to. Just like coraline, Dill Harris from the book To Kill A Mockingbird, by Harper Lee, happens to feel the same way and is in a similar situation. Of the many topics to come out of this book, Lee focuses on the importance of being loved. Through the journey of Dill’s character he tries to get attention by making up stories, trying to have Boo Radley come out, and considering Atticus as a father figure. As for the main message, Harper Lee points out that no matter how much money and material items are bought for satisfying, there will never be enough to replace the love and compassion needed in life.

While reading the story, To Kill A Mockingbird, one character stuck out most and that was Dill. He is very outgoing and seems to come up with the most out-of-the-blue, unrealistic scenarios. “No, I mean I can smell somebody an’ tell if they’re gonna die, an old lady taught me how” (48). Again, the things Dill says are random, but he gets what he wants and that is to be listened to. In conjunction with this, Dill was talking about his parents and he says, “they buy me everything I want, but it’s now-you’ve-got-it-go-play-with-it” (191). They don’t give him any attention or affection, but if his parents won’t listen to him he know his friends Jem and Scout will.

Throughout the book, Jem, Scout, and Dill’s big focus was to get the neighbor, Boo Radley, to come out of his house, who is said to never be seen. In fact, Dill is the one who is most anxious in wanting him to come out and always tries to be making up plans. Similarly, this is because they all feel he isn’t staying in the house by choice. “We’re askin’ him real politely to come out sometimes, and tell us what he does in there-we said we wouldn’t hurt him and we’d buy him an ice cream,” Dill said (62). Along with knowing that Dill is yearning for attention it can easily relate to him feeling a connection with Boo, which is both of them not feeling the love that is needed and being, in a way, neglected as outcasts. “It’s my idea. I figure if he’d come out and sit a spell with us he might feel better” (62). In other words, after reading what Dill said, it was easy to see he wanted Boo to feel more comfortable and to not be afraid.

Not only did Dill like being at the Finch’s to play with Jem and Scout and make plans about Boo, but he also liked the fact Atticus was there too. Significantly it is noticeable that Dill feels Atticus is like a father figure to him. “Whoa, son,” said Atticus. “Nobody’s about to make you go anywhere but to bed pretty soon. I’m just going over to tell miss Rachel you’re here and ask her if you could spend the night with us-you’d like that, wouldn’t you?” (188) Atticus is already a kind and caring man, so Dill latches on to that characteristic about him because he shows concern and compassion towards Dill. “Scout, we can do better than a pan of cold corn bread, can’t we? You fill this fellow up and when I get back we’ll see what we can see” (188). Once Dill showed up at the Finch’s after running away, the first thing Atticus was worried about was getting Dill food and making sure he was taken care of, not investigating why he ran away. Therefore, this shows Atticus is acting like a father to Dill and that makes Dill want to stay at the Finch’s even more because he feels the love and attention Atticus portrays towards him.

Frequently, to touch on this topic once more, it was continuously seen that Harper Lee’s message on the importance of getting love and attention was constantly shown through Dill and his actions. Amid his story telling, gaining a connection with Boo, and seeing a father out of Atticus, Dill was able to get the affection he wanted. He had friends who cared deeply about him. Although his parents didn’t show compassion to Dill, Atticus and his friends did, which made Dill happy. Again, Lee has shown that enjoyment in life comes through love itself because nothing is greater in the world or can satisfy like companionship can.