# Courage with Consequences

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# “[I look to a day](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/martinluth297516.html)[”](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.brainyquote.com%2Fquotes%2Fquotes%2Fm%2Fmartinluth297516.html&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFp4TNAbBzdFtQK8jjI3rEYn48A3w)said Martin Luther King J[r,](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/martinluth297516.html) [“](http://www.google.com/url?q=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.brainyquote.com%2Fquotes%2Fquotes%2Fm%2Fmartinluth297516.html&sa=D&sntz=1&usg=AFQjCNFp4TNAbBzdFtQK8jjI3rEYn48A3w)[when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character”](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/martinluth297516.html). The early nineteen thirties were a tempestuous time for races in America. White Americans believed they had a superiority among others with a difference in skin color, leading to many social conflicts and events in history. The historical fiction novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* written by Harper Lee emphasizes the beliefs of Americans through a fictional story based on the emotions and practices of developing societies in the South . An African American man is charged of the rape of a white woman, and a courageous lawyer steps in in an attempt to save the innocent man. Through the story, readers witness Mr. Dolphus Raymond, Tom Robinson and Atticus Finch find courage when faced with the opportunity to leave their mark on society . Courage is the bravery to defy society to stand up for one another, and personal beliefs, even if the cost is great.

Mr. Dolphus Raymond, a white man married to an African American woman pretends to be an alcoholic in order to find an excuse for the marriage. By pretending to act so, Mr. Raymond masks his love for his wife, in order to prevent society’s indignation towards him and his family. ”Folks can say Dolphus Raymond's in the clutches of whiskey....He can't help himself, that's why he lives the way he does” (183), Mr. Dolphus Raymond explains to Scout, Dill and Jem. By acting drunk, Mr. Raymond can blame the alcohol for his actions and live a happier life with his wife and children. “Secretly, Miss Finch, I’m not much of a drinker, but you see they could never, never understand that I live like I do because that’s the way I want to live” , (184) he attempts to explain to Scout. Mr. Raymond chooses to live a life of happiness and love, instead of being dictated by societal beliefs and living a life of superficial joy.

Tom Robinson, an innocent African American charged of the rape of a white woman, is forced to endure the misery of the current racial injustice and discrimination in the early nineteen thirties. “Funny thing, Atticus Finch might've got him off scot free, but wait-? Hell no. You know how they are”(125), Scout narrates. Mr.Robinson knew he had little chance against Maycomb, yet he continued to fight for his rights and those of his rationality. “ If there's just one kind of folks, why can't they get along with each other? If they're all alike, why do they go out of their way to despise each other? “ (291) Jem asks Scout. Tom Robinson and Atticus fought hard to destroy the belief of racial superiority. “I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand” , (116)Atticus tells his children. Although readers hear very little directly from Tom Robinson, they are provided with characterization necessary to make this assessment of his morals. Robinson’s courage and persistence, had an impact on Maycomb as an African American dared to stand up for his rights and the rights of people his race.

Strongly against the idea of racial injustice , Atticus steps in as Tom Robinson's lawyer to attempt to provide the resources any white man would receive. A common name which the community developed when referring to Atticus, “nigger lover” (87), is a discriminatory term used for those which believe in racial equality. Thus, Atticus’ social status was immediately undermined when he fought for his beliefs, against the practice of racial superiority. “The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience” (55) Atticus explains to his children. Atticus had great courage to disregard the majority of the public’s collective conscious and create his own opinions. Appointed Tom Robinson’s lawyer, Atticus’ social status was undermined as he defies the public’s opinion.

To disregard society’s dominating perspective and opinions, took great courage. Mr. Raymond, Tom Robinson and Atticus all faced the consequences of their defiance, however made their statement on what their personal beliefs. Thomas Jefferson once said “ One man with courage is a majority”. Although society is an influential power, individuals still have the internal strength to make their own decisions, as Mr. Dolphus Raymond, Atticus and Tom Robinson displayed.

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