



Alabama Spitfire: The Story of Harper Lee and To Kill a Mockingbird

Bethany Hegedus , Erin Mcquire (Illustrator)

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Nelle Harper Lee grew up in the rocky red soil of Monroeville, Alabama. From the get-go she was a spitfire.

Unlike most girls, Nelle preferred overalls to dresses and climbing trees to tea parties. Nelle loved to watch her daddy try cases in the courtroom. And she and her best friend, Tru, devoured books and wrote stories of their own. More than anything, Nelle loved words.

This love eventually took her all the way to New York City, where she dreamed of becoming a writer. Any chance she had, Nelle sat at her typewriter, writing, revising, and chasing her dream. Nelle wouldn't give up—not until she discovered the right story, the one she was born to tell.

Finally, that story came to her, and Nelle, inspired by her childhood, penned To Kill a Mockingbird. A groundbreaking book about small-town injustice that sold over forty million copies, Nelle's novel resonated with readers the world over, who, through reading, learned what it was like to climb into someone else's skin and walk around in it.

From Bethany Hegedus and Erin McGuire comes the inspiring true story of Harper Lee, the scrappy tomboy who grew up to be one of the most beloved writers of the twentieth century.

Alabama Spitfire: The Story of Harper Lee and To Kill a Mockingbird Details

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From Reader Review Alabama Spitfire: The Story of Harper Lee and To Kill a Mockingbird for online ebook

Susan says

Well told which is why I gave it 4 stars. Having said that, this is yet another picture book being published this year that will be more interesting to adults than it will be for children.

Stephanie Anze says

Nelle Harper Lee was not like the other girls. She preferred climbing trees over tea parties and overalls instead of frilly dresses. What she liked most however, was writing and she started doing that alongside her dear friend Tru. Lee did not know it then but she was to author one of the most iconic books ever written.

Harper Lee is a legend among us readers. 'To Kill a Mockingbird' is more than a classic, it's a great book all around. Prior to reading this, I had no idea how much Lee's hometown played into the creation of 'Mockingbird'. I absolutely love this gem of a book. The format may be aimed at children but this book is perfect for anyone that loves Ms. Lee's great novel. With bright and beautiful illustrations this novel brings to life the one and only Harper Lee. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize in 1961, Lee kept away from the public eye and rarely granted interviews following her success. She also notoriously never published again (and no 'Go Set a Watchman' does not count, at least not in my view). Lee did in fact continue to write but deemed that that work was not suitable to be published. I happened to come by this work by chance and I am so glad I did. I really think Ms. Lee would have loved it. It pays homage in a most wonderful way. Highly recommended!

Upon reading more into Ms. Lee's life, I came upon a great fact. While filming the movie adaptation of 'Mockingbird', Lee and Gregory Peck (who portrayed Atticus Finch) became great friends. Lee stayed in touch with Peck's family even after his death and remained a great friend to them as well. The feeling was mutual as Peck's grandson is named Harper Peck Voll, after Ms. Lee herself.

Brooke says

With the famous quote, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view...until you climb into his skin and walk around in it." Is spoken by a well beloved character named Atticus Finch who is based off of Harper Lee's father.

Nelle Harper Lee grew up in the rocky red soil of Monroeville, Alabama. From the get-go she was a spitfire. Nelle loved words more than anything and her and her best friend Tru would devour books and write stories together in their special place: her tree house. Here they would spy on the neighborhood; especially a particular house whose shutters were always closed.

"To Kill a Mockingbird", will always have a special place in my heart. It goes without saying how beloved this novel is, but it deserves the love and should be cherished forever.

I loved learning more about how Harper Lee came to write such a beautiful story, full of so many lovely

characters. It's always interesting and fun to see how certain characters reflect real people.

This book is simple, but I found the information to be fascinating and heartwarming.

poppy says

This is a great children's biography of Harper Lee, and I was delighted throughout reading it. The illustrations will keep kids engaged to the gracefully and simply written story of Harper Lee's life. It made me want to re-read it right away, and then to reach for To Kill a Mockingbird again.

Jeremy says

None of the girls know this story yet, but it's a good way to prepare them for it. 3.5 stars.

Julie says

Inspiring children's book that examines Harper Lee's writing life, with an author's note at the end that sets her story in the context of 20th century history. Although the title places her firmly in the Alabama of her roots, the book also describes her life in New York as an independent writer and friend of celebrated author Truman Capote. The author also discusses how some events in Capote's and Lee's youth shaped the story of To Kill a Mockingbird, and she emphasizes Harper Lee's passion for reading and writing. The illustrations are colorful and realistically drawn. I especially liked how the illustrator, Erin McGuire, sketched stacks and stacks of the novel in a bookstore, and scenes in school and on the town square with everyone reading and reacting to the book. By depicting its prevalence and importance when it was released (July 11, 1960), she convincingly demonstrated the impact the book had on readers and on American culture, one that has proved to be significant and lasting.

Michele Knott says

Interesting to learn more about Lee's early years, but I'm wondering how young readers, who probably haven't even heard of MOCKINGBIRD will react to this book.

KC says

A wonderful biography of Nelle Harper Lee and how the best selling novel To Kill a Mockingbird come to fruition.

Erin says

Lovely and inspired picture book about the little spitfire Nelle Harper Lee who grew up to write the great American novel To Kill a Mockingbird. Reading this book made my ten year old want to read Harper Lee's work, and it resulted in him asking lots of questions about civil rights and authors. This is a fantastic biography for anyone who loves TKAM or wants to introduce a new generation of readers to Harper Lee.

Glo says

Alabama Spitfire is a lovely and compelling story for kids and adults. It is beautifully written and illustrated. It captures the life of Harper Lee which inspired TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD, one of America's important books. I loved it and I know my granddaughters and other kids will as well.

Sarah says

It's a given that a book about Harper Lee is going to pique my interest. Alabama Spitfire, a new picture book biography about the reclusive author and the publication of To Kill a Mockingbird gets two thumbs up from this Mockingbird fan.

I thought this was well done. The biography adequately summarizes the author's childhood and journey towards becoming a published author. As I have read nearly everything about Harper (Nelle) Lee I can get my hands on, I will say it seems accurate as far as I can tell. The colorful illustrations appear to be drawn to mirror images from the movie, such as Scout (Harper) rolling along in an old tire. Although the subject is much to my liking I am a little apprehensive about how it will be received. The picture book format suggests it is for a young child yet the text itself is geared towards a school-age child able to comprehend non-fiction text. I suspect it is most likely going to be used in classrooms although the reading level is below that of students who generally read To Kill a Mockingbird. Regardless, fans ought to check out Alabama Spitfire.

Linda says

For middle-grade readers and older, Bethany Hegedus offers a brief look at the life of Harper Lee, from childhood to her death. Clearly, Harper Lee was a unique person, in childhood on. She set herself apart from what she termed the "'pink penitentiary' of girlhood", played in overalls with her brother, did sit in her father's lap reading the newspaper with him, and was not afraid to defend her friend, Tru, who visited his aunts in the summer. Sound familiar? It's part of Harper Lee's beautiful novel, To Kill A Mockingbird. I enjoyed the realistic illustrations and the extra bits (of information) added by Erin McGuire, like pages flying as she re-wrote her book and one book with Gregory Peck's name. I enjoyed it thoroughly, though imagine kids liking it much more after they have read To Kill A Mockingbird.

Anne says

I just loved this book! I found the story engaging and interesting, but the wonderful illustrations won the day. And extra bonus points for including the Flatiron Building in the scenes of Nelle in NYC!

Jason Gallaher says

Due to Harper Lee's history of being reclusive, I didn't know much about her, so I learned a ton about Lee's life in ALABAMA SPITFIRE. I had NO IDEA she was besties with Truman Capote! Erin McGuire's illustrations go so well with the story. I especially loved her depiction of setting. I could feel the slower pace of Alabama compared with the hustle and bustle of New York City.

Wanda says

A mini biography of Harper Lee told in a child's picture book format. It tells of her childhood wish to write stories and how she came to be able to do just that.
