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Dill’s Message

As defined by Webster’s Dictionary, affection is a fond or tender feeling towards someone or something. Lack of this tender feeling can lead to the bitter awareness of isolation. In Harper Lee’s historical fiction novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*,the character of Dill who is the protagonist's best friend, tells partial truths in order to fulfill the part of his life of abandonment and sorrow. Dill accompanies the protagonists on their journeys through a town full of racism and moral values. Dill continually proves that he feels isolated by the stories of his parents, running to the Finch’s, and his partial truths. Harper Lee uses her character of Dill to convey her message that his lack of affection from close family, can trick him into believing that he is alone and isolated.

Dill’s parents chased him into the thought that he was not wanted. “They buy me everything I want, but it’s now-you’ve-got-it-go-play-with-it” (191). Dill interprets this distant behavior from his parents as a sign that he is not needed in his own home. The lack of affection shown to Dill makes him want to fill the void with something that will show the compassion he yearns for. “Scout, let’s get us a baby” (191). Dill went to the extent of bringing up a child with Scout, one of the two stories protagonist, all because he feels neglected by his parents.

Once his parents ignore Dill, he is left with no sense of home, which is why he usually runs to the Finch’s. Dill constantly tells different stories about his father, one including that he is the “president of the L & N Railroads” (48). The reason Dill tells so many stories of his father that are not closely related is because he does not know his father. Lacking a fatherly figure in his life, Dill runs to the place where he can find one, Atticus Finch’s house, the protagonist's father. “Suddenly a filthy brown package shot from under my bed. Jem raised the broom and missed Dill’s head by an inch when it appeared” (186). When things got tough at home, Dill ran and hid under Scouts bed. When he seeks comfort from a loved one that he does not have, he goes to the place that he is accepted.

Throughout *To Kill a Mockingbird* Dill drops partial truths that have a much deeper meaning. Dill lies for two major reasons, one being that wants a better life that what he thinks he is give, and two that he seeks attention. When Dill says his new father abuses him he does this to stay in Maycomb, and with the people that show him affection. Dill also makes up his multiple fathers to replace the one he lacks. Dill tells the Finch’s about his “L & N Railroad president” father in order for them to believe that he is not neglected, even though he is. (48). Dill’s partial truths are told not because he enjoys lying but rather that he just wants to be noticed and wants the affection that he is not given.

Being isolated by loved ones leaves the feeling of remorse and loneliness. This message that Harper Lee conveys in her book *To Kill A Mockingbird*, shows the struggles of feeling neglected by your parents, having to run to someone that you can feel the affection with that is normally not there, and telling lies to get attention. Why is this message so important to the story? This is because you start to learn why Dill does what he does, and how his life at home affects the Finch’s and his own feelings. When Dill was rejected by his own family he felt the urge to go where he was accepted, much like modern day when people feel alone they go to friends for help. As defined by Webster’s dictionary, acceptance is being received as suitable, is all Dill ever wanted, and that is all anyone ever wants.