

Calpurnia

To Kill A Mockingbird

Mother figure

- ✦ Helps Atticus to raise Jem and Scout
- ✦ Scout says she has been with the family 'as long as I could remember'
- ✦ Is totally trusted by Atticus



Presented in a negative light by the young Scout's narration

- ✦ Scout resents Calpurnia's strictness
- ✦ 'Our battles were epic and one-sided. Calpurnia always won, mainly because Atticus always took her side'.
- ✦ Scout calls her a 'tyrannical presence'

Much more than a servant

- ✦ Teaches Scout valuable moral lessons
- ✦ When Scout is rude to Walter Cunningham, Calpurnia is very angry, reminding Scout that he is her 'company' and that she must treat him with sensitivity and politeness

Loves her charges

- ✦ Scout thinks Calpurnia kisses her because she is sorry for being strict and that she has 'seen the error of her fractious ways' but of course she is just showing real affection for the little girl



- ✦ Calpurina misses Scout when she goes to school
- ✦ Like Atticus, Calpurnia allows Scout to express her individuality
- ✦ Does not stop her playing with boys or wearing dungarees instead of pretty dresses

Has her own life outside the Finch household

- ✦ When she takes Scout and Jem to the First Purchase church, they see for the first time that she is leading a double life
- ✦ She speaks in what Scout calls 'nigger-talk' to the other black people
- ✦ Explains to Scout that it doesn't do to show off all you know because it just upsets people

Relationship with Scout improves as Scout matures

- As Scout grows older, and as she learns more about Calpurnia's life outside the Finch household, she becomes more and more curious about her
- Calpurnia is honest and open with Scout and answers all her questions
- There is a trusting and loving relationship as the book progresses
- Scout is horrified when Aunt Alexandra suggests sending her away
- Scout finally appreciates Calpurnia's goodness and kindness

Food for thought...

- Why do you think it is that Calpurnia has to lead a double life and pretend to be someone other than she is at times, while Atticus can always be the same person?