



# In Search of Mockingbird

*Loretta Ellsworth*

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**In Search of Mockingbird** Loretta Ellsworth  
**A runaway seeks Harper Lee for answers**

Sometimes the things that need to be discovered aren't so easily found at home. Erin is certain that this is true in her case. A book is all that connects Erin to her mother, who died when she was a baby. But how much can Erin really learn about her mother from a tattered copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*? On the eve of her sixteenth birthday, Erin decides it's finally time to find out. And so begins her bus journey from Minnesota to Alabama in search of Harper Lee, the reclusive author of *Mockingbird*.

In a novel full of quirky characters, strange coincidences, and on-the-road adventures, Loretta Ellsworth deftly traces a unique voyage of self-discovery.

## In Search of Mockingbird Details

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# **From Reader Review In Search of Mockingbird for online ebook**

## **Becky White says**

I loved this book. I'm not sure if it's the best contribution to children's literature this year, but I loved it. Of course, I love To Kill a Mockingbird much more -- and I enjoyed reading a book about somebody who loves that book as much as I do.

I was impressed with the character development -- and I do mean character -- there were lots of characters in this little novel, and Erin develops her own character or value system as the story goes on.

My criticism is that Erin seemed a bit immature for 16 to me, and yet she had the guts to get on a bus and travel to Monroeville, Alabama, to meet Harper Lee. But maybe the circumstances of her dad's impending marriage and his gift to Erin of her Mom's diary (she passed away shortly after Erin's birth) made her act a bit out of character.

So, this one is all about character. Everybody's.

In addition to Erin's family (Dad, 2 brothers, Susan the future step mom), you meet Sedushia, a stripper with an adult son (Boomer) she hasn't seen in a long time; Epp, an overweight young man who is designing a computer game and traveling the country; and Billy, a young man bound for military service.

SPOILER: Erin also meets Harper Lee in a restaurant, although she doesn't know it at the time. Dad comes to Monroeville to find her--takes her home by car and she is able to ask questions about her mom the whole way. Closes with Erin going to college counselor's office and serving Good Friday dinner at her church to help her dad -- and she will be one of Susan's junior bridesmaids. As Harper Lee once wrote, "As one holds down a cork to the bottom of a stream, so may love be imprisoned by oneself." Erin feels as though she's been uncorked.

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## **Hui Lin says**

I think this is a really good book. Because it talks about something that I had never read in any books. In this book, the protagonist is Erin. Her mother died when she was very young. And now the only things that she knows about her mother was from the book To Kill A Mockingbird with the notes her mother took in it. On her 16th birthday, her father gave her her mother's diary. And after that she decide to seek for the author of her mother's favorite book, Harper Lee. And in her jourey, she learns new things and meet new people. I enjoyed reading this book because of all the surprises it has during Erin 's journey. What I learned from this book was that people need to explore in order to learn more. If you stay in one place forever, you would never learn new things that you can't learn from school and meet more people.

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## **Alissa says**

Erin's mother died when she was a baby, and Erin is deeply curious about the woman she knows so little about--especially since speaking of her mother seems to be taboo among her father and brothers. The only

clues Erin has about who her mother was is a battered copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, which she has re-read so many times she can recite whole passages by heart.

Then the night before Erin's 16th birthday, her father gives her the journal her mother kept when she was 16. Through reading it, Erin learns that her mother (also an aspiring writer) wrote to Harper Lee, author of *Mockingbird*.

Thus, Erin is convinced this elusive author possesses the piece she needs to discover who her mother was-- and she runs away to embark on a cross-country trip to try and meet the author for herself and ask the all important question.

During her long journey, Erin meets and befriends several colorful characters, including an aging exotic dancer whose only wish is to get back in touch with the son she abandoned so many years ago, and a rejection-phobic man with a talent for developing computer games.

A very simple concept, but very well-written. Character development was fantastic. One of those rare books where, when you've turned the last page, you hate for them to be over. I'm so glad I picked this one up!

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### **Kim says**

The reason I picked this up is because I attended a young author's workshop last week with my daughter and the author was one of the presenters at one of the classes we attended. Also, I always enjoyed *To Kill a Mockingbird* and my grandfather knows Harper Lee, so I was curious. I DO think I enjoyed this book a bit more because I had met the author and talked to her about it, but I did really enjoy the book. It is definitely more fun to read if you are familiar with TKaM, but I believe she gives you enough info to understand the story without that background. I would recommend this book for older teenagers because of the story content (clean, but older), but it is a very fast and easy read (180 small pages). There is lots of text meant to inspire aspiring writers and give them writing advice which I enjoyed rather than finding trite. It's a fun read from a Twin Cities author.

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### **Sally says**

On Erin's 16th birthday she begins a pilgrimage to Harper Lee's home in Monroeville, Alabama. Her mother passed away when she was a baby and she only knows her from the notes made in the book *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Erin knows that TKAM is her mother's favorite book as it is hers, and she wants to see Harper Lee to find answers to questions about life. Her 30+ hours on the bus awaken her spirit and teach her about people and life through the interesting passengers she meets. I thoroughly enjoyed it!

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### **Scott says**

It's a nice book. I'm really annoyed by books that rely so heavily on great works of fiction. It seems like they are just using it for a crutch. Or to show off that the author likes literature and so their book must be literature. Really it is kind of a throw away book. We've heard this message before. None of the characters are that new or entertaining or interesting. That said, the writing is solid and the story moves along briskly to

an altogether "nice" ending. Nothing groundbreaking, but not everything has to be the freshest book in the world. I just wish it was fresher than this.

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### **Joy says**

After learning her of her father's plans to remarry, sixteen-year old Erin runs away from home and seeks out Harper Lee, the author of her late mother's favorite book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. So far, unimpressive. First, the book won't make sense to anyone who hasn't read *Mockingbird*. Second, Erin seems much more like a twelve-year old than a sixteen-year old. Third (and related to the second), I can't see anyone but the very youngest teens finding this other than twee. That said, it might work for those fresh out of the tween set who want to feel older than they are. ETA: Okay, not finishing this; it's officially not worth my time.

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### **Megan says**

I just read this for the book club at my middle school. The author is from Lakeville, a neighboring suburb, and is coming to our book club meeting at the end of the month. This was a quick read about a girl searching for clues about her deceased mother in the pages of an old copy of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She hops a bus and tries to find Harper Lee, hoping she'll learn about her mother and herself before her dad remarries.

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### **Sylvia says**

Buku ini ditulis oleh penulisnya karena terinspirasi oleh TKAM nya Harper Lee. Sama seperti saya yang baca ini juga karena terinspirasi oleh TKAM. Dan kebetulan juga baru kelar baca TKAM, jadi yah rasanya pas aja kalo disambung dengan buku ini.

Buku ini bercerita tentang kehidupan seorang remaja berusia 16 tahun, bernama Erin. Dia hidup dengan ayah dan kedua kakak laki-lakinya. Ditinggal ibunya sejak bayi (sementara ayahnya enggan bercerita tentang ibunya sama sekali) membuat Erin ingin sekali mengenal sang ibu. Satu-satunya peninggalan ibunya yang dia punya adalah sebuah copy buku *To Kill A Mockingbird* karya Harper Lee. Buku itu menjadi temannya, dan sudah berkali-kali tamat dibacanya, terutama note disekitar halaman buku yg dibuat ibunya (Hmm.. saya aja perlu waktu sebulan untuk ngelarin buku itu).

Malam sebelum ulang tahunnya yang ke 16, ayahnya memberikan diary ibunya yg ditulis sang ibu ketika usia 16 tahun. Di dalam diary tersebut ibunya menuliskan bahwa ia mengirimkan surat ke Miss Harper Lee (sumpe, baru tau kalo Harper Lee itu ternyata wanita).

Mengikuti kata hati, Erin menguras tabungannya dan naik bis menuju Monroeville, Alabama, dengan tujuan ingin bertemu dengan Harper Lee, pengarang favorit alm. Ibunya. Resmilah Erin, di hari ulang tahunnya, kabur dari rumah.

Bukunya lumayan, banyak mengacu pada karakter Scout yang sering memberi inspirasi pada Erin dalam bertindak tanduk. Untunglah saya sudah membaca buku TKAM, kalo belum mungkin akan sedikit sulit memahami buku ini.

Satu percakapan yang berkesan buat saya adalah ketika Erin bertemu dengan seorang wanita diatas bis dan wanita itu berkata bahwa dia senang bisa bertemu dengan seorang penulis yang sangat termotivasi hingga dia rela pergi ke Alabama. Tapi Erin bilang, *"I'm not really a writer. I like to write but I haven't been published"*. Wanita itu berkata, *"Don't sell yourself short. Do you think Harper Lee was a writer before she published To Kill a Mockingbird?"*

Hmm.. bener juga ya. Jadi termotivasi deh.

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### **Kimberly says**

Fun, easy read. Probably a 3.75 but I rounded it up to a 4. Loved that it talked about Perryville, Cape Girardeau, Sikeston, and my home town of Jackson, Missouri. Ironically we were driving down I-55 towards those towns as we got to that part in the book. Books on tape are such a great thing when you are one cross country drives. I also like that it took "To Kill a Mockingbird" and found life lessons from it to draw inspirations from.

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### **Audrey Dewey says**

Such an easy and quick read!!! I wish this book didn't end on a cliffhanger

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### **Cathi says**

On the eve of her 16th birthday Erin's father announces that he is getting married. Her two brothers are happy for him but she just can't accept it. Her mother died a week after she was born, she never had bond with her, didn't know much about her. All she has is a weathered copy of To Kill A Mockingbird that she found in the attic a few years ago, her mothers favorite book. Why is it so hard for her to accept this news. That night her father gives her a gift, her mothers diary from when she was 16. When Erin reads the first pages of the diary she discovers that her mother also wanted to be a writer and wrote a letter to Harper Lee after reading TKAM. She decides to run off to Monroeville, Alabama in search of Harper Lee, love for this book and writing stories are the only things she shares with her mother. She buys a one way bus ticket to Monroeville and meets some kooky strangers along the way..

This was a quick read (listen). An ok story. Not enough content or character description.

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### **Kerri says**

Very sweet book about a girl turning 16 and missing her mother that she never knew. You don't have to read To Kill a Mockingbird to understand this book. The girl just wants to be accepted by her father and brothers, but they just don't "get" her. Girls will like this book, but it is definitely NOT a boy book.

**Summary:** It's 1966 in St. Paul, MN, and Erin is about to turn 16 when her father announces that he's marrying his girlfriend. Her brothers are thrilled, but what the teen really wants is for her dad to talk about her mother, who died when she was a baby, and whose dog-eared copy of To Kill a Mockingbird has

inspired the girl to become a writer. When her dad surprises her with her mother's diary, Erin learns that she, too, had wanted to be a writer. Angry that her father kept the diary from her until now and feeling out of place in her evolving family, she makes the sudden decision to take a one-way bus trip to Monroeville, AL, to talk to Harper Lee.

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### **Judine says**

Ellsworth, like Harper Lee, tells her first-person story very effectively. Erin is an engaging character and narrator, and I like that she realized she didn't need to meet Harper Lee in order for her journey to be complete. Her obsession with *Mockingbird* is totally understandable, given her parallels with Scout (Erin's mother died when she was a few weeks old), and her mother's love of the book. I appreciate some of Ellsworth's more subtle touches, like Erin's kitten being named Miss Maudie. However, even setting the novel in 1986 doesn't make some of the things Erin does (traveling alone from Minnesota to Alabama on a Greyhound in the middle of the night - you can take it from there) any less dangerous. While the people who help Erin all turn out to be OK, I feel like the book should carry a "do not attempt this at home" disclaimer.

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### **Shannon says**

Oh Jesus Christ. Within the first ten pages when she said something like "One notebook isn't enough to hold all my feelings" I knew this book was going to suck. And it did. The plot is about this like, 16 year old little emo fucker who is obsessed with *To Kill A Mockingbird*, and her mom's dead, and she's reading her mom's journal and she decides to run away and try to visit Harper Lee b/c she thinks that going to fix all her emo little problems (I don't like my step mom and NO ONE UNDERSTANDS ME!!). Seriously, her level of whine makes Holden Caulfield look like a prince. The writing is very contrived, the author (who is also clearly unreasonably obsessed with *To Kill a Mockingbird* and in a note at the end of the book calls it "perfection") does not understand the concept at ALL of "showing not telling". Also.. most of this book takes place on a Greyhound bus where she bonds with friendly strangers ie EVERYONE. Seriously, everyone is like "OH YOU GO GIRL!" and encouraging her even though she's loathable and I'm pretty sure a certain population of people on Greyhound's are just angry child molesters and it seems very unlikely that she didn't run into ONE person who was; pretty much everyone she encountered was unreasonably nice and helpful, going way out of their way to accompany her annoying-ass all over the freakin' country on her little emo-tour.

What I'm trying to say is: this wasn't very good.

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