

***Inherit the Wind* Character List**

(in order of appearance)

Melinda

A "healthy pig-tailed girl of twelve." She is teased by Howard, who tells her she and her family were all worms or blobs of jelly once. She and her mother sell lemonade as the town prepares for Brady's arrival. She mistakes Drummond, upon his entrance in the play at the end of the first scene, for the devil. After watching the trial, she isn't sure who won.

Howard

A thirteen-year-old boy. At the start of the play, he digs for worms to go fishing and teases Melinda by repeating what he learned from Cates about evolution that we were all worms once. He is a witness for the prosecution, testifying that Cates taught evolution to his class. When Drummond questions him, he says he hasn't been hurt by what Cates taught and that he hasn't made up his mind about evolution, leading Drummond to talk about the holiness of human thought. At the end of the trial, he tells Melinda he doesn't know who won but knows it's over.

Rachel Brown

Twenty-two-years old, Rachel is a second-grade teacher at Hillsboro Consolidated School. She loves Bert Cates and risks the wrath of her parent, Reverend Brown, by visiting him at the jail and bringing him clothes for the trial. At first, she urges Bert to confess that he has broken the law and seek forgiveness. Brady calls her to testify against Cates and tries to twist her words to make Cates appear blasphemous. Rachel's belief that Bert is a good person and her desires to be a good person in the eyes of her townspeople clash, and while she is on the witness stand, her emotions render her speechless. Ultimately, Rachel realizes that ideas, like children, have to be born. She overcomes her fear of thinking and reads *The Origin of Species*. When Cates is released after the trial, she tells him she has decided to leave her father. She and Cates leave together on the train to start a new life.

Meeker

The bailiff at the jail below the courthouse. He is a common, friendly man, entering with tousled hair and shaving cream on his face in the first scene. He is sympathetic to Cates, and reminisces about past prisoners. He allows Rachel to visit Cates and have privacy during their visit in the courtroom. He announces the convening and recessing of court. Meeker takes charge during chaotic situations in the courthouse, and often helps people understand the truth.

Bertram Cates

Bert Cates, age twenty-four, is a "quiet, shy, well-mannered" young man. Cates is in jail at the beginning of the play, arrested and about to go on trial for teaching evolution to his seventh-graders. Despite Rachel's urgings to him to confess, Cates knows he did not do wrong. Unlike most of Hillsboro, he does not see things in black-and-white but understands that the world is complex. His intellectual musings, including the questions about the world he has whispered to Rachel, are turned against him by Brady who sees blasphemy in his questions and observations. Cates is the center of a trial which labels him the destroyer of faith. He is terrified as the jurors return, fearful he will be imprisoned for years. His victory, in a town that no longer wants him, is only a partial victory, but he is proud when Drummond tells him that he has made the way easier for the next man. He is full of admiration for Rachel when she chooses to think, and the two leave happily together when he is released on bail paid by Hornbeck's paper.

Mr. Goodfellow

The Hillsboro storekeeper. He speaks with Mrs. Krebs and Reverend Brown as he opens his store the morning of Brady's arrival, revealing their hard-line religious beliefs. He is very excited about the business the trial will bring to the town. Later, he tells Hornbeck he doesn't have any opinions because they're bad for business.

Mrs. Krebs

A humorless Hillsboro woman who believes strongly and strictly in Christianity. She is greedy, too, saying that as long as the visitors to town have money, she will board them in her house.

Rev. Brown

Rev. Brown is the parent of Rachel and the religious leader of Hillsboro. In the past, Rev. Brown preached that a young boy who died without being baptized is burning in hell. At a prayer meeting in support of the trial, Rev. calls upon the wrath of an Old Testament God upon Cates and upon anyone, including Brown's own daughter who dare support him. The relationship between Rev. Brown and Rachel is fractured due the court case, and eventually Rachel has to choose to turn away from her family.

Corkin

A workman who helps raise the banner reading "Read Your Bible!" in preparation for Brady's arrival. Rev. Brown criticizes him for not putting it up earlier and demands it be up when Brady arrives, to show him what the community is like. Corkin is excited about the picnic lunch.

Bollinger

A band member who rushes onto the scene in the town square, announcing that the station master says that Brady's train is on its way. He has a cornet to play in honor of Brady's arrival.

Platt

One of the Hillsboro townspeople, "colorful small town citizens." He is very excited about Brady's arrival, "the biggest day for this town since [they] put up Coxey's army."

Mr. Bannister

Another Hillsboro townspeople. He wants to know where all the reporters and other trial spectators will sleep. As a prospective juror, he testifies that he has never read the Bible or

Darwin, because he can't read. Because of that, Drummond accepts him and he becomes a juror.

Mrs. Loomis

Yet another townspeople. She is Melinda's mother, and the two set up a lemonade stand in the square before Brady's arrival.

Hot Dog Man

A hot dog vendor at the square before Brady's arrival. His hawking cries intermingle with those of Elijah selling Bibles. Faced with the choice between a hot dog and Bible, Hornbeck chooses to feed his stomach rather than his soul.

Mrs. McClain

Another townspeople, Mrs. McClain sells frond fans in the square before Brady's arrival.

Mrs. Blair

Howard's mother, she is in search of her son in the town square, unable to control him because he feels like he's at a county fair. She blows the pitch pipe, leading the townspeople in singing "Give Me That Old-Time Religion" as Brady's train arrives.

Elijah

A holy man from the hills. He is "bearded, wild-haired, dressed in a tattered burlap smock," barefoot, and selling Bibles. He is ignorant and humorless. When Hornbeck says he has read his stuff, referring to the Biblical prophet Elijah, this Elijah simply says he doesn't read. He carries a sign that says "Where will you spend eternity?"

E.K. Hornbeck

A reporter from the Baltimore Herald. Her city origins are reflected in her clothes and attitude, especially when she enters during the preparations for Brady's arrival. The Herald has sent her to report on the trial and Drummond to defend Cates. Hornbeck is very critical of the town, mocking their ignorance, making jokes about the organ grinder's monkey as father of us all. She clearly sides with Drummond in the case and is essentially committed to the truth more than anything else. The character represents the power of the press to deliver truth and hold other parties accountable.

Hurdy Gurdy Man/Woman

An organ grinder whose monkey spurs Hornbeck to ask the animal if it is testifying for the defense or prosecution in this evolution trial. The monkey takes a penny from Melinda, revealing the townspeople, who have all been preparing to make money by selling food and renting rooms, to be its true descendants.

Timmy

A boy who rushes onto the scene to announce that he has seen smoke and Brady's train is coming down the track. The townspeople rush off, singing religious songs, to greet it.

Mayor (may be female)

The mayor first appears in the play when he or she greets Brady at the train depot, awkward in Brady's presence, speaking a speech of welcome. He or she confers the rank of Honorary Colonel in the state militia on Brady. A pragmatic person, in the final scene, who tells the judge about a wire from the statehouse. The trial has garnered so much publicity that the state doesn't want to upset voters with a harsh verdict near election time. Thus, the mayor's political concerns affect the end result of the case.

Matthew Harrison Brady

A three-time Presidential candidate and famous politician worshipped by the people of Hillsboro. Brady basks in the cheers and admiration of the people. "A benign giant of a man," he is always in the spotlight, speaking in the loud voice of a great orator. Brady strongly believes he is defending the faith of the world and is zealous in his efforts to do what he believes is right whether that means stopping Rev. Brown from condemning his own daughter or prosecuting Cates to the full extent of the law. He has the full support of the town behind him until Drummond puts him on the witness stand and reveals his excessive pride and illogical beliefs. Brady is so proud he reveals that he believes himself to be, in effect, a prophet of God, who hears God's will and enforces it in the world. Brady, whose ambitions to be a great man were never fully recognized because of his three failures to be elected president, can not stand the humiliation.

Mrs. Brady

A "pretty, fashionably dressed" Second Lady. She is content to support her husband and always be in his shadow. She mothers her husband, making sure he is well fed, clothed, comfortable. When Brady breaks down, humiliated on the witness stand, she is revealed to be strong, rocking and comforting the once great man. She might be the true source of his strength. His implosion after the trial shocks her so much she screams. We last see her when she goes off, as Brady is brought to the doctor's, where he will die.

Tom Davenport (may be female)

Hillsboro's prosecutor. "A crisp, business-like young man," he is impressed that he will, alongside Brady, be facing Drummond in court. He is a smart, ambitious attorney but rather conventional in his approaches not the great orator that Brady is nor the swift legal mind that Drummond is. Unlike Brady, who sees the trial as a war for faith, he is more concerned with enforcing the letter of the law. In the courtroom, he is for the most part overshadowed by Brady. Though he objects to the unorthodox move of putting Brady on the witness stand for the defense, his objections cannot keep Brady's excessive pride and Drummond's questions from destroying the prosecution's case.

Henry Drummond

A famous lawyer, known for his skilled legal defenses, Drummond is hired by the Baltimore Herald to defend Cates. Rev. Brown describes him as a godless man, for his defenses of the guilty, in which he twists the blame onto society and its perceptions. Drummond and Brady were once friends and maintain respect for each other, but each see the other as in the wrong on this case. Drummond believes Brady has moved away from him simply by standing still, by not progressing with the world. Drummond's strongest showing in the courtroom stems from desperation, when the court disallows any testimony on evolution and calls Brady as an expert on the Bible. Drummond's belief in the sanctity of ideas and freedom of thought, as well as his knowledge of Brady's weaknesses, allows him to successfully defend Cates' for speaking his thoughts allowed. In the end, he reveals that he believes in God, as Hornbeck calls him, and respects for Brady's convictions and ideals.

Judge (may be female)

A strong figure "has a nervous habit of flashing a smile after every ruling." The judge clearly leans toward the prosecution, even announcing Rev. Brown's prayer meeting in the court. He adheres very closely to the beliefs of the town and letter of the law, not even allowing expert testimony about evolution. He is closed-minded and will not see Drummond's point of view, the need to explore whether or not the law under which Cates was charged is right or wrong. Ultimately, he is pragmatic and when the mayor tells him about the wire from the statehouse warning about the effect of the verdict on upcoming elections, he sentences Cates only to a minor fine.

Dunlap

A farmer and cabinetmaker who is a prospective juror. The prosecution accepts him because of his exclamation that he believes in the Word of God and in Matthew Harrison Brady. Drummond tries to reject him as a juror without asking any questions and finally, after Brady objects to this, asks Drummond if he's hot before dismissing him.

Sillers (may be female)

Another prospective juror, Sillers works at a feed store and considers himself as religious as the next man, which leads Brady to accept him as a juror. When Drummond elicits the information that Sillers leaves the religious and "next life" to his wife and takes care "this life" himself. Only then does Brady object, worrying that the juror doesn't conform to the "laws and patterns of society."

Reuter's Man (may be female)

A reporter from London who asks Brady about his personal opinion of Drummond during an impromptu press conference, leading Brady to say he would fight against his own brother if he challenged the faith of millions.

Harry Y. Esterbrook (may be female)

The radio man who makes the first big broadcast of a public event from the courthouse when the verdict comes in. He has a direct line to WGN in Chicago and represents a venue that

will keep towns like Hillsboro from imposing their closed-minded beliefs on people, with the whole world listening. He attempts to get Brady's speech recorded but the older man's oratory is not right for the radio. Esterbrook announces a music program and leaves with his equipment in the middle of Brady's speech, precipitating his final collapse.