

APPENDIX I

BIOGRAPHY OF AUTHOR

Kathryn Stockett was born in 1969 in Jackson, Mississippi, America United States. She is an American writer and an editor. Stockett earned her Bachelor's degree in English Literature and creative writing from the University of Alabama, then she headed to New York city with plans to work in publishing.

She have spent nine years there, working both in magazine publishing and in marketing, before moving to Atlanta, Georgia, where she lives with her husband and daughter. Since she is moving back to the South, Stockett has been focusing on writing for herself, having shifted her attention to fiction. She have launched her debut novel, *The Help*, was published by Amy Einhorn Books in 2009, and proved to be the one of the hit books of the summer season.

After five years of hardwork on her personal writing project, Stockett finally had *The Help* published in 2009. It was a rough time for Stockett to find a willing literary agent to represent her work. After she got many rejection from 60 literary agents consecutively, eventually agent Susan Ramer took upon the task. The novel became a milestone in Stockett's writing career earning a terrific praise for writing on a unique subject matter. The inspiration for the novel is Stockett's own childhood. Stockett never knew her book would get massive reads and much less become a best seller and motion picture.

Stockett started writing *The Help* on the day after 9/11 when there were no telephone or mail connections to her family. Stockett got homesick and started the book on the main character named Aibileen, based upon a childhood nanny. From there, the book took off with the next character named Minny, Stockett created Minny because it reminded her of her friend named Octavia, and it just built. When Stockett was a child, her parents had a maid named Demetrie who was an African American. She took care of Stockett day and night but sadly she died when Stockett was only 16 years old. As Stockett grew older, she reflected on her relationship with Demetrie. Although they were very close, she realized that she had always seen Demetrie in her plain maid outfit and never wore her regular clothes. This observation inspired Stockett to write about Demetrie, which resulted in the novel *The Help*. She was growing up her parents never told her much about Demetrie or cared for her, so she wrote the novel which has brought back her positive memories. This novel was a reflection of her own life. Her

geographical birthplace and knowledge of the South and its historical events of slavery and racism have helped her to write the novel.

Early on in the writing process, Stockett choose to frame her narrative from the point of view of a black maid. It seemed logical, and she had no qualms about her choice because at the time she did not believe anyone else to read the story. Only when she reached the stage of getting friends to look at her work did she start to get nervous about how she portrayed the characters and whether their voices rang true.

Stockett's advice to those seeking a career in writing is, "To Read. Read a lot". Some of her favorite reads include: *Seabiscuit*, *The Paris Wife*, and *Unbroken*. Because of her love to read, her English Teacher in high school seen a connection and mentioned the career to her. After some thought, Stockett decided writing was her occupation.

APPENDIX II

SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL, *THE HELP*

The Help is set in Jackson, Mississippi and begins in August 1962. The novel features three main characters, named Aibileen, Minny, and Skeeter. A-53-year-old Aibileen Clark, is a black woman who works for a white family, the Leefolts. Mae Mobley Leefolt is two years old, and Aibileen considers the girl her "special baby". Mae Mobley is physically abused and neglected by her mother, Elizabeth. Throughout the novel Aibileen does all she can to boost Mae Mobley's self-esteem and tries to teach her about civil rights and racial equality. Aibileen's own son, Treelore, dies senselessly in a workplace accident, some months before Aibileen began working for the Leefolts.

Aibileen observes the bridge game being played today at the Leefolts. In attendance are Hilly Holbrook and Eugenia "Skeeter" Phelan, Elizabeth Leefolt's best friends, who are all in their early twenties, like Elizabeth. Hilly tells Skeeter she's working to have a law passed that would make it mandatory for white families to build outside bathrooms for their black employees. Skeeter suggests Hilly should have a bathroom outside, and thus begins a slow boiling feud between the two women. After the bridge game, Skeeter apologizes to Aibileen about the bathroom talk and asks her that does she ever wish to change things.

On the bus home, Aibileen warns her best friend, 36-year-old Minny Jackson, who takes care of Hilly's mother (Miss Walter or Miss Walters, depending on whether Aibileen or Minny is talking) that Hilly is calling Minny a thief. Miss Walter is going to a nursing home, and Minny's been trying to find a new job. Now she knows why no one has hired her. She tells Aibileen she did something terrible to Hilly, something involving a pie, but she won't say what. Several days later, Minny finds work at the home of Johnny and Celia Rae Foote. Johnny is Hilly's ex, and Celia Rae, a Marilyn Monroe look-alike, is from deep in the country. She is shunned by the high-society ladies throughout the novel. Celia makes Minny promise to keep herself a secret from her husband Johnny, causing Minny much stress.

After the bridge game at the Leefolts', Skeeter goes home to Longleaf, her family's cotton plantation. We learn that during Skeeter's senior year at college, Constantine, her family's maid and Skeeter's best friend and confidante for some twenty years, mysteriously disappeared. Nobody will tell Skeeter why, though.

We find out Skeeter is in contact with an editor at a publishing house in New York, Elaine Stein. Miss Stein encourages Skeeter to get any job she can find at a newspaper and then use her free time trying to find something controversial to write about.

Skeeter scores a job at the *Jackson Journal* writing the Miss Myrna column, a column about housework and relationships, two things she knows nothing about. With Elizabeth's reluctant permission, Skeeter starts meeting with Aibileen to get answers to the questions readers send in. Skeeter learns that Aibileen's son Treelore was writing a book about his experiences in Mississippi at the time of his death. This inspires Skeeter to try to convince the local maids to be interviewed for a book that will show their points of view.

Hilly sets Skeeter up on a blind date with Stuart Whitworth, a Senator's son. Stuart gets drunk and insults Skeeter. She never wants to see him again. In December, Minny is discovered by Johnny Foote, her employer's husband. She's terrified of what he'll do to her, a strange black woman in his bedroom. But her fears are in vain – Johnny realized his wife Celia had help as soon as the cooking improved. He's glad Minny is here. Johnny asks Minny to pretend that he doesn't know about her, though.

Aibileen, an avid writer, agrees to work with Skeeter on the book about the lives of the maids of Jackson, and they begin spending their evenings together. Eventually, Minny also agrees to work with them. Aibileen tries to get other maids involved, but they are all too frightened. Skeeter steals a pamphlet from the library that lists Jim Crow laws. Three months after their failed first date, Skeeter and Stuart go out again and even share a passionate kiss. Stuart becomes a regular part of Skeeter's life, though he doesn't know about her secret writing project.

In May of 1963, Celia has a miscarriage and reveals that it's her fourth. She's afraid that if she can't have babies, Johnny won't want her anymore. When Minny tries to convince her that Johnny loves her, Celia realizes that Minny and Johnny have met. She begs Minny to pretend to Johnny that Celia doesn't know Johnny knows about Minny. In July, Hilly's maid, Yule May, steals one of her rings, which happens to be valueless and which Hilly hates.

Yule has twin sons and is short the \$75 she needs to send both boys, instead of just one, to college. When Hilly refused to loan her the money, Yule stole the ring. Hilly finds out and uses her influence to have Yule fined \$500 and sentenced to four years in the state penitentiary. Anger at Hilly over her treatment of Yule May, plus a little persuasion from Minny, convinces eleven more maids to tell their stories for Skeeter's book.

Skeeter and her family have dinner at Stuart's parents' home. At dinner, the topic keeps coming around to Stuart's ex, Patricia Van Devender, who cheated on Stuart with a white civil rights activist. At the end of the evening, Stuart breaks up with Skeeter. Hilly steals the list of Jim Crow laws out of Skeeter's bag and says she won't give them back until Skeeter, editor of the Junior League newspaper, prints a notice about Hilly's bathroom project in the newsletter.

Explains about outdoor bathrooms for black employees in white households which Skeeter does print the notice. She also, accidentally-on-purpose, prints a notice telling people to drop off their old toilets on Hilly's lawn. Meanwhile, she hires some kids to deliver dozens of toilets to Hilly's place. Needless to say, Hilly is furious when she finds out. Skeeter is subsequently ostracized by the women who used to be her friends. Aibileen, Minny, and the other maids are afraid Hilly will find out that they are writing their stories and hurt them.

At the Jackson Junior League Annual Ball and Benefit, Celia Foote gets very drunk and tries to get Hilly to accept her into the high-society ladies' circle. She ends up tearing Hilly's dress and vomiting on the floor – not good progress there. In the days that follow, Celia is depressed and is on the verge of leaving Johnny because she thinks she isn't good enough for him. Minny convinces her to stay.

During her last days of caring for Hilly's mother, Miss Walter, Minny baked a chocolate pie laced with her own poo, and that Hilly ate two slices of the pie. This is why Hilly is trying so hard to ruin Minny around town. Minny convinces Skeeter and Aibileen that their best protection against Hilly, if their book comes out, is to include the pie story in Minny's section. Even if Hilly recognizes the town as Jackson, she won't tell because it would mean admitting to eating poo.

In December, Skeeter learns that Constantine, the maid who disappeared mysteriously from Skeeter's life, is dead. After Constantine's daughter, Lulabelle, and Skeeter's mother, Charlotte, got into a confrontation, Constantine was fired. She moved to Chicago with Lulabelle and died three months later. Skeeter gets part of the story from Aibileen and part from her mother. Also in December, Skeeter and Stuart get back together.

At the end of December, Skeeter mails the book manuscript, which contains the maid's stories and is called *Help*, to Elaine Stein in New York City. In January, Stuart proposes to Skeeter. She says yes, but when she tells him about *Help* he takes back his proposal. Also in January, Skeeter, Aibileen, Minny, and the other maids learn that *Help* is going to be published. They wait with bated

breath. Skeeter's book is set in the fictional town of Niceville and published anonymously.

When the book comes out, it becomes a national bestseller and soon, the white American women of Jackson begin recognizing themselves in the book's characters. Hilly is set on vengeance due the details of the book. Hilly immediately suspects the book is set in Jackson and begins campaigning against the maids who she suspects are involved. But when she gets to the last chapter, Minny's chapter, and reads the pie story, she does an abrupt turnaround and tells everybody she can that the book is not about Jackson. Still, Hilly confronts Skeeter about her involvement in the book and vows revenge on Aibileen and Minny. Hilly, who leads the Junior League and bosses around the other white women in the town, reveals to Stuart, Skeeter's boyfriend, that she found a copy of the Jim Crow laws in Skeeter's purse, which further ostracizes Skeeter from their community.

Skeeter is offered a job in New York City and Minny and Aibileen convince her she must take it. Before she goes, Skeeter arranges for Aibileen to take Skeeter's old job writing the Miss Myra column. Meanwhile, Celia finally tells Johnny about the miscarriages and about Minny. Johnny and Celia tell Minny she has a job with them for life. However, Hilly arranges for Minny's abusive husband, Leroy, to be fired and to be told that it's Minny's fault. Leroy then tries to kill Minny. She takes their five children, leaving Leroy and moving out of town, but still not far from her job with Celia.

Hilly still isn't satisfied, though, and proves to Elizabeth that Aibileen is the author of a chapter of *Help*. Hilly tries to frame Aibileen for stealing silver, but Elizabeth doesn't go along with her plan. She does fire Aibileen, though. After a tearful good-bye to Mae Mobley, Aibileen discovers she's about to start a new life, one in which she plans to spend writing about her life and the people she knows.