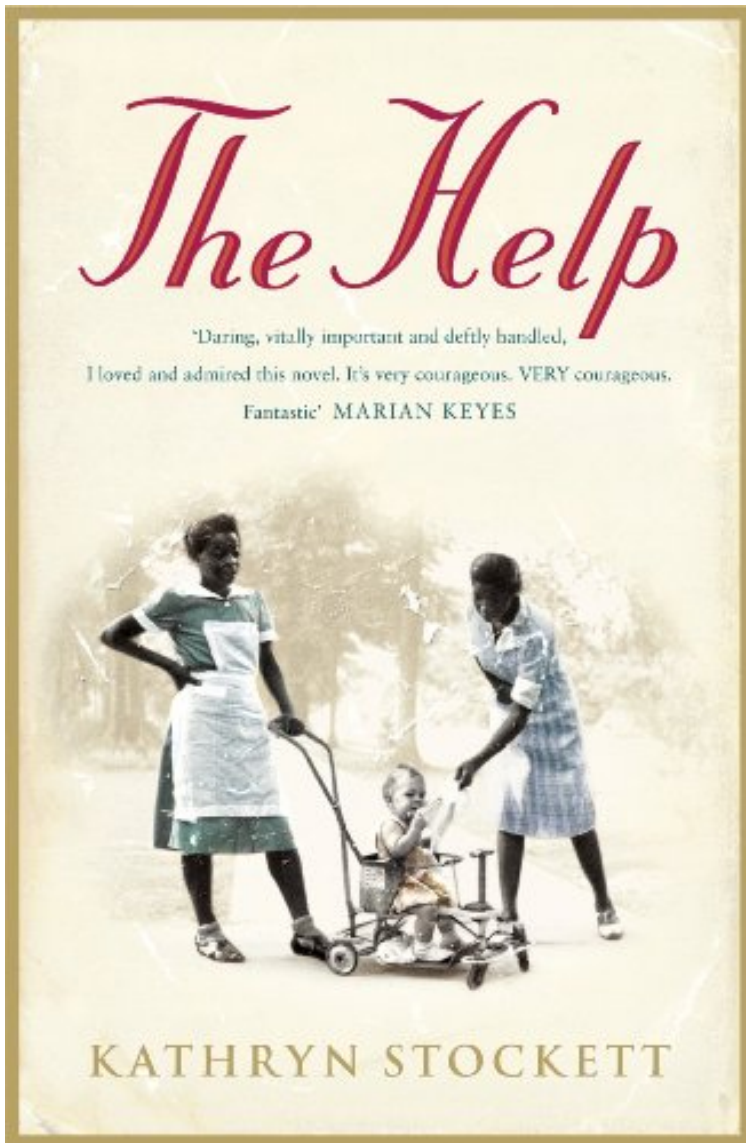


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The Help



Par Kathryn Stockett
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[Mobile pdf] The Help

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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Help is the phenomenal international bestseller (that inspired the Oscar nominated film) by Kathryn Stockett where, amidst the turbulence of the Civil Rights movement, three Mississippi women quietly start their own revolution with a book, some toilets and a chocolate pie.Enter a vanished and unjust world: Jackson, Mississippi, 1962. Where black maids raise white children, but aren't trusted not to steal the silver...There's Aibileen, raising her seventeenth white child and nursing the hurt caused by her own son's tragic death; Minny, whose cooking is nearly as sassy as her tongue; and white Miss Skeeter, home from College, who wants to know why her beloved maid has disappeared.Skeeter, Aibileen and Minny. No one would believe they'd be friends; fewer still would tolerate it. But as each woman finds the courage to

cross boundaries, they come to depend and rely upon one another. Each is in a search of a truth. And together they have an extraordinary story to tell... 'The other side of Gone with the Wind - and just as unputdownable' The Sunday Times 'A big, warm girlfriend of a book' The Times 'Harper Lee's classic novel To Kill a Mockingbird has changed lives. It's direct descendent The Help has the same potential . . . an astonishing feat of accomplishment' Daily Express

Kathryn Stockett was born and raised in Jackson, Mississippi. After graduating from the University of Alabama, she moved to New York City, where she worked in magazine publishing and marketing for nine years. She currently lives in Atlanta with her husband and daughter. The Help is her first novel.

Extrait

Two days later, I sit in my parent's kitchen, waiting for dusk to fall. I give in and light another cigarette even though last night the surgeon general came on the television set and shook his finger at everybody, trying to convince us that smoking will kill us. But Mother once told me tongue kissing would turn me blind and I'm starting to think it's all just a big plot between the surgeon general and Mother to make sure no one ever has any fun.

At eight o'clock that same night, I'm stumbling down Aibileen's street as discreetly as one can carrying a fifty-pound Corona typewriter. I knock softly, already dying for another cigarette to calm my nerves. Aibileen answers and I slip inside. She's wearing the same green dress and stiff black shoes as last time. I try to smile, like I'm confident it will work this time, despite the idea she explained over the phone. "Could we sit in the kitchen this time?" I ask. "Would you mind?" "Alright. Ain't nothing to look at, but come on back." The kitchen is about half the size of the living room and warmer. It smells like tea and lemons. The black-and-white linoleum floor has been scrubbed thin. There's just enough counter for the china tea set. I set the typewriter on a scratched red table under the window. Aibileen starts to pour the hot water into the teapot. "Oh, none for me, thanks," I say and reach in my bag. "I brought us some Co-Colas if you want one." I've tried to come up with ways to make Aibileen more comfortable. Number One: Don't make Aibileen feel like she has to serve me. "Well, ain't that nice. I usually don't take my tea till later anyway." She brings over an opener and two glasses. I drink mine straight from the bottle and seeing this, she pushes the glasses aside, does the same. I called Aibileen after Elizabeth gave me the note, and listened hopefully as Aibileen told me her idea for her to write her own words down and then show me what she's written. I tried to act excited. But I know I'll have to rewrite everything she's written, wasting even more time. I thought it might make it easier if she could see it in typeface instead of me reading it and telling her it can't work this way. We smile at each other. I take a sip of my Coke, smooth my blouse. "So," I say. Aibileen has a wire-ringed notebook in front of her. "Want me to just go head and read?" "Sure," I say. We both take deep breaths and she begins reading in a slow, steady voice. "My first white baby to ever look after was named Alton Carrington Speers. It was 1924 and I'd just turned fifteen years old. Alton was a long, skinny baby with hair fine as silk on a corn;" I begin typing as she reads, her words rhythmic, pronounced more clearly than her usual talk. "Every window in that filthy house was painted shut on the inside, even though the house was big with a wide green lawn. I knew the air was bad, felt sick myself;" "Hang on," I say. I've typed wide green. I blow on the typing fluid, retype it. "Okay, go ahead." "When the mama died, six months later," she reads, "of the lung disease, they kept me on to raise Alton until they moved away to Memphis. I loved that baby and he loved me and that's when I knew I was good at making children feel proud of themselves;" I hadn't wanted to insult Aibileen when she told me her idea. I tried to urge her out of it, over the phone. "Writing isn't that easy. And you wouldn't have time for this anyway, Aibileen, not with a full-time job." "Can't be much different than writing my prayers every night." It was the first interesting thing she'd told me about herself since we'd started the project, so I'd grabbed the shopping pad in the pantry. "You don't say your prayers, then?" "I never told nobody that before. Not even Minny. Find I can get my point across a lot better writing em down." "So this is what you do on the weekends?" I asked. "In your spare time?" I liked the idea of capturing her life outside of work, when she wasn't under the eye of Elizabeth Leefolt. "Oh no, I write a hour, sometimes two ever day. Lot a ailing, sick peoples in this town." I was impressed. That was more than I wrote on some days. I told her we'd try it just to get the project going again. Aibileen takes a breath, a swallow of Coke, and reads on. She backtracks to her first job at thirteen, cleaning the Francis the First silver service at the governor's mansion. She reads how on her first morning, she made a mistake on the chart where you filled in the number of pieces so they'd know you hadn't stolen anything. "I come home that morning, after I been fired, and stood outside my house with my new work shoes on. The shoes my mama paid a month's worth a light bill for. I guess that's when I understood what shame was and the color of it too. Shame ain't black, like dirt, like I always thought it was. Shame be the color of a new white uniform your mother ironed all night to pay for, white without a smudge or a speck a work-dirt on it." Aibileen looks up to see what I think. I stop typing. I'd expected the

stories to be sweet, glossy. I realize I might be getting more than I'd bargained for. She reads on." ;so I go on and get the chiffarobe straightened out and before I know it, that little white boy done cut his fingers clean off in that window fan I asked her to take out ten times. I never seen that much red come out a person and I grab the boy, I grab them four fingers. Tote him to the colored hospital cause I didn't know where the white one was. But when I got there, a colored man stop me and say, "Is this boy white?" The typewriter keys are clacking like hail on a roof. Aibileen is reading faster and I am ignoring my mistakes, stopping her only to put in another page. Every eight seconds, I fling the carriage aside. "And I says Yessuh, and he say, Is them his white fingers? And I say, Yessuh, and he say, Well you better tell them he your high yellow cause that colored doctor won't operate on a white boy in a Negro hospital. And then a white policeman grab me and he say, Now you look a here" She stops. Looks up. The clacking ceases. "What? The policeman said look a here what?" "Well, that's all I put down. Had to catch the bus for work this morning." I hit the return and the typewriter dings. Aibileen and I look each other straight in the eye. I think this might actually work. Chapter 12

Every other night for the next two weeks, I tell Mother I'm off to feed the hungry at the Canton Presbyterian Church, where we, fortunately, know not a soul. Of course she'd rather I go down to the First Presbyterian, but Mother's not one to argue with Christian works and she nods approvingly, tells me on the side to make sure I wash my hands thoroughly with soap afterward. Hour after hour, in Aibileen's kitchen, she reads her writing and I type, the details thickening, the babies' faces sliding into focus. At first, I'm disappointed that Aibileen is doing most of the writing, with me just editing. But if Missus Stein likes it, I'll be writing the other maids' stories and that will be more than enough work. If she likes it; I find myself saying this over and over in my head, hoping it might make it so. Aibileen's writing is clear, honest. I tell her so. "Well, look who I been writing to." She chuckles. "Can't lie to God." Before I was born, she actually picked cotton for a week at Longleaf, my own family's farm. Once she lapses into talking about Constantine without my even asking. "Law, that Constantine could sing. Like a pure bred angel standing in the front of the church. Give everybody chills, listening to that silky voice of hers and when she wouldn't sing no more after she had to give her baby to" She stops. Looks at me. She says, "Anyway." I tell myself not to press her. I wish I could hear everything she knows about Constantine, but I'll wait until we've finished her interviews. I don't want to put anything between us now. "Any word from Minny yet?" I ask. "If Missus Stein likes it," I say, practically chanting the familiar words, "I just want to have the next interview set up and ready." Aibileen shakes her head. "I asked Minny three times and she still say she ain't gone do it. I spec it's time I believed her." I try not to show my worry. "Maybe you could ask some others? See if they're interested?" I am positive that Aibileen would have better luck convincing someone than I would. Aibileen nods. "I got some more I can ask. But how long you think it's gone take for this lady to tell you if she like it?" I shrug. "I don't know. If we mail it next week, maybe we'll hear from her by mid-February. But I can't say for sure." Aibileen presses her lips together, looks down at her pages. I see something that I haven't noticed before. Anticipation, a glint of excitement. I've been so wrapped up in my own self, it hasn't occurred to me that Aibileen might be as thrilled as I am that an editor in New York is going to read her story. I smile and take a deep breath, my hope growing stronger. On our fifth session, Aibileen reads to me about the day Treelore died. She reads about how his broken body was thrown on the back of a pickup by the white foreman. "And then they dropped him off at the colored hospital. That's what the nurse told me, who was standing outside. They rolled him off the truck bed and the white men drove away." Aibileen doesn't cry, just lets a parcel of time pass while I stare at the typewriter, she at the worn black tiles. On the sixth session, Aibileen says, "I went to work for Miss Leefolt in 1960. When Mae Mobley two weeks old," and I feel I've passed through a leaden gate of confidence. She describes the building of the garage bathroom, admits she is glad it is there now. It's easier than listening to Hilly complain about sharing a toilet with the maid. She tells me that I once commented that colored people attend too much church. That stuck with her. I cringe, wondering what else I've said, never suspecting the help was listening or cared. One night she says, "I was thinking;" But then she stops. I look up from the typewriter, wait. It took Aibileen vomiting on herself for me to learn to let her take her time. "I's thinking I ought to do some reading. Might help me with my own writing." "Go down to the State Street Library. They have a whole room full of Southern writers. Faulkner, Eudora Welty" Aibileen gives me a dry cough. "You know colored folks ain't allowed in that library." "Is it there a second, feeling stupid." "I can't believe I forgot that." "The colored library must be pretty bad. There was a sit-in at the white library a few years ago and it made the papers. When the colored crowd showed up for the sit-in trial, the police department simply stepped back and turned the German shepherds loose. I look at Aibileen and am reminded, once again, the risk she's taking talking to me. "I'll be glad to pick the books up for you," I say. Aibileen

hurries to the bedroom and comes back with a list. "I better mark the ones I want first. I been on the waiting list for *To Kill a Mockingbird* at the Carver Library near about three months now. Less see;" I watch as she puts checkmarks next to the books: *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. Du Bois, poems by Emily Dickinson (any), *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. "I read some of that back in school, but I didn't get to finish." She keeps marking, stopping to think which one she wants next. "You want a book by; Sigmund Freud?" "Oh, people crazy." She nods. "I love reading about how the head work. You ever dream you fall in a lake? He say you dreaming about your own self being born. Miss Frances, who I work for in 1957, she had all them books." "On her twelfth title, I have to know. "Aibileen, how long have you been wanting to ask me this? If I'd check these books out for you?" "A while." She shrugs. "I guess I's afraid to mention it." "Did you think I'd say no?" "These is white rules. I don't know which ones you following and which ones you ain't." We look at each other a second. "I'm tired of the rules," I say. Aibileen chuckles and looks out the window. I realize how thin this revelation must sound to her.

Revue de presse
The other side of *Gone with the Wind* - and just as unputdownable (*Sunday Times*)
A big, warm girlfriend of a book (*The Times*)
Harper Lee's classic novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* has changed lives. Its direct descendent *The Help* has the same potential...an astonishing feat of accomplishment (*Daily Express*)
Outstanding, immensely funny, very compelling, brilliant (*Daily Telegraph*)
Daring, vitally important and very courageous, I loved and admired *The Help*. Fantastic (*Marian Keyes*)
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