

# Inherit the Wind: SparkNotes Literature Guide Series

Inherit the Wind is a 1955 play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee. The play is based on the real-life Scopes Trial of 1925, in which a Tennessee high school teacher named John Scopes was charged with violating a state law that prohibited the teaching of evolution in public schools.

Inherit the Wind dramatizes the Scopes Trial and explores the broader issues of freedom of speech, religion, and science. The play has been praised for its powerful storytelling, its insightful characters, and its timeless themes.

## Background

The Scopes Trial was a major event in American history. It was the first time that the issue of evolution had been brought before a court of law. The trial was also a major media event, and it attracted national attention.



## Inherit the Wind (SparkNotes Literature Guide)

(SparkNotes Literature Guide Series) by Aleera Anaya Ceres

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 197 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 64 pages



The trial was ultimately decided in favor of the state of Tennessee. However, the Scopes Trial helped to raise awareness of the issue of evolution, and it played a major role in the eventual acceptance of evolution by the American public.

## Characters

Inherit the Wind features a cast of memorable characters. The main characters are:

- **Henry Drummond:** a famous defense attorney who defends Scopes in the trial. Drummond is a brilliant orator and a passionate advocate for freedom of speech.
- **Matthew Harrison Brady:** the prosecutor in the trial. Brady is a devout Christian who believes that the teaching of evolution is a violation of God's law.
- **John Scopes:** the young high school teacher who is charged with violating the state law that prohibits the teaching of evolution. Scopes is a kind and gentle man who is simply trying to do his job.
- **Bert Cates:** a young reporter who covers the trial for a local newspaper. Cates is initially skeptical of Scopes and Drummond, but he eventually comes to admire their courage and determination.

## Plot Summary

Inherit the Wind follows the events of the Scopes Trial. The play begins with the arrival of Henry Drummond in Hillsboro, Tennessee. Drummond

has been hired to defend Scopes, and he quickly begins to prepare for the trial.

The trial itself is a dramatic affair. Drummond and Brady engage in a heated debate over the issue of evolution. Drummond argues that evolution is a scientific fact, while Brady argues that it is a violation of God's law.

The trial ends with a guilty verdict for Scopes. However, the trial has a profound impact on the American public. It helps to raise awareness of the issue of evolution, and it plays a major role in the eventual acceptance of evolution by the American public.

## Themes

Inherit the Wind explores a number of important themes, including:

- **Freedom of speech:** The play argues that freedom of speech is essential for a free and democratic society. Drummond's defense of Scopes is based on the belief that everyone has the right to express their own opinions, even if those opinions are unpopular.
- **Religion:** The play also explores the role of religion in society. Brady's prosecution of Scopes is based on his belief that the teaching of evolution is a violation of God's law. The play suggests that religion can be a force for good, but it can also be used to justify intolerance and persecution.
- **Science:** The play also examines the role of science in society. Drummond argues that science is a powerful tool that can be used to understand the world around us. The play suggests that science should be based on evidence, not on dogma.

## Critical Reception

Inherit the Wind has been praised by critics for its powerful storytelling, its insightful characters, and its timeless themes. The play has been adapted into a number of films and television productions, and it continues to be performed around the world.

## Study Questions

1. What are the main arguments for and against the teaching of evolution?
2. How does the play explore the role of religion in society?
3. What does the play say about the importance of freedom of speech?
4. How does the play use the Scopes Trial to explore the broader issues of science, religion, and freedom of speech?
5. What are the strengths and weaknesses of Inherit the Wind as a play?

Inherit the Wind is a powerful and thought-provoking play that explores the important issues of freedom of speech, religion, and science. The play is a valuable resource for students of history, literature, and law. It is also a must-read for anyone who is interested in the Scopes Trial or the broader issues of science and religion.



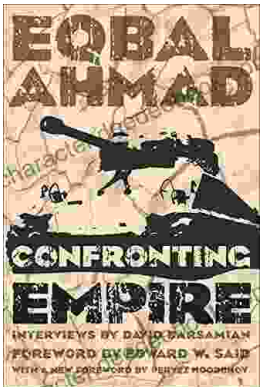
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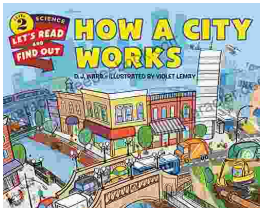
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