

ANIME REVIEW

91 DAYS

Revenge is a dish best served cold

EESAA KAZI

If you loved *The Goodfellas*, *Public Enemies*, *Peaky Blinders* and the *The Godfather* trilogy, you will not be disappointed by this brilliant and sophisticated piece of artwork. Studio Shuka is responsible for *91 Days*, a show that proves to be immensely successful in keeping its viewers in a perpetual state of suspense. Unlike most anime, it does not adapt from a manga. So, it may not have an entrenched fanbase but on the bright side, there won't be any pointless debates on whether the manga or the anime adaptation was better.

The anime follows the story of a young boy named Angelo Lagusa who is on a quest for revenge. The storyline is set during the Prohibition Era, where the police force is regarded as a useless bunch and crime is considered to be the norm. In a town pertinently named Lawless, three mafia families reside at the top of the food chain: the Orcos, the Galassias and the Vanettis. Thanks to the constant clashing between these gangs, the streets are a battlefield filled with meticulous backstabbing, questionable alliances and.

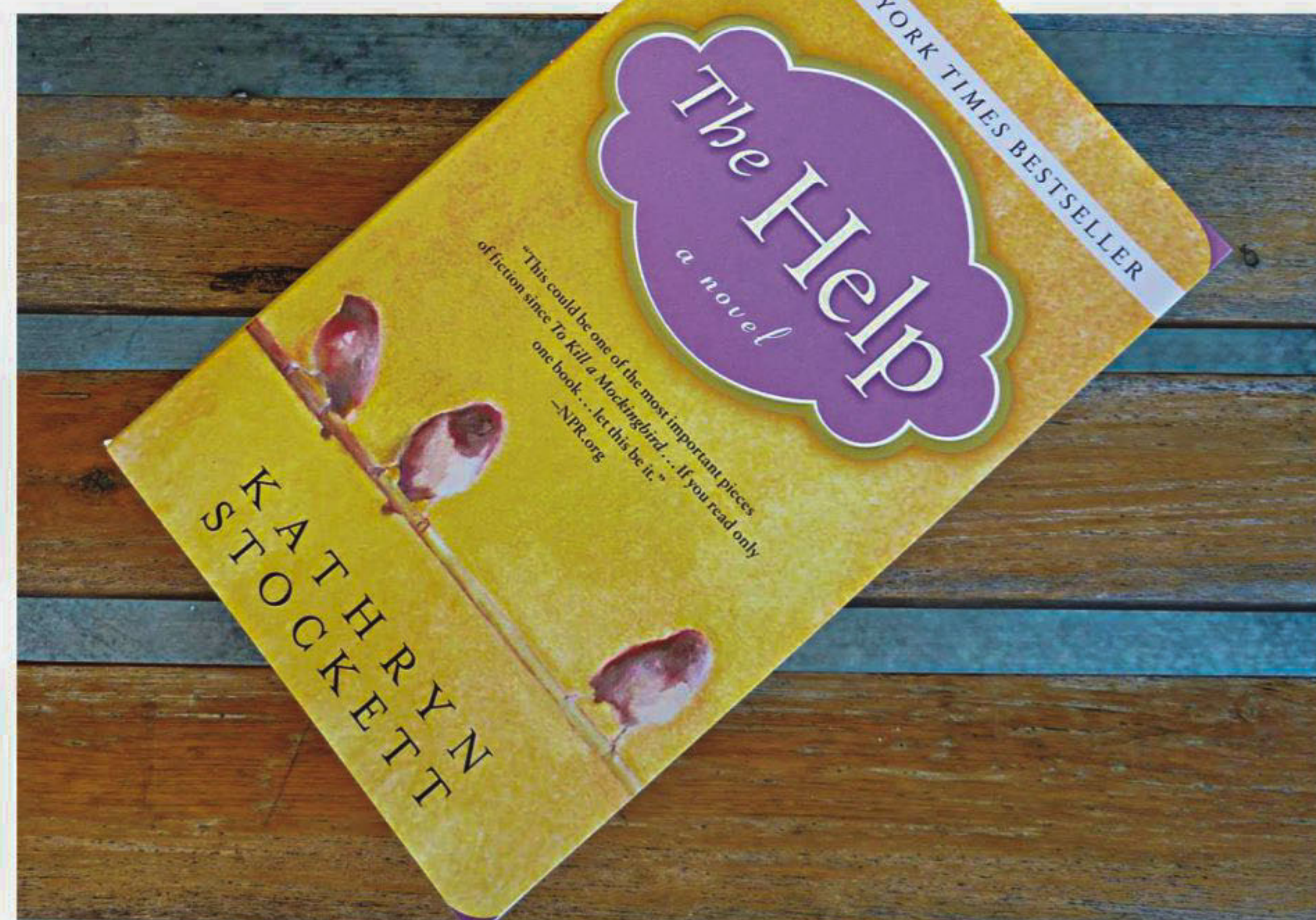
The story starts with Angelo and his brother Luce waiting for their father's arrival. It's a sweet, wholesome moment as their father embraces his two precious boys. Then, all of a sudden, the soothing ambience is broken by the unexpected visit of three large figures in trench coats. Angelo hides in his closet and stares in horror as bullets pierce through his family members, and they drop dead on the floor completely soaked in blood. This is

it. The event which will haunt our main character forever. The event which will lead him to take a path of bloodshed and betrayals.

After seven years, Angelo (now under the alias of Avilio Bruno) resurfaces and enters Lawless, having received a note from an apparent friend of his father with the names of the people who killed his family on that night. Thus, Angelo joins the Vanettis as a subordinate, befriends the Don's son Nero and secretly plots his revenge on destroying this crime syndicate from the inside. Throughout the story, the dynamics between Nero and Angelo are beautifully portrayed as they encounter the Orcos, Galassias and other salient yet shady characters like Fango and Corteo.

I'll admit, I initially didn't like *91 Days* as I thought it was going to be filled with action scenes alone. After only three episodes, the sheer amount of twists and turns made this one of my favourite shows. This anime constantly kept me on the edge, as there was no way to be certain on who's going to die and who will live, only the falsehood of plot armor that is overruled the moment two opposing party's path crosses.

It's gripping narrative and amazing storyline will make you want to keep watching it until the end. All of the OSTs and the opening are very nostalgic and heart-touching, which reflects the amount of guilt and sadness in the head of our main character. The only downside is the animation style, which isn't exactly top-notch, but if you are invested enough in the story, it won't be a problem at all.



BOOK REVIEW

A BOOK THAT MAKES YOU SAY "LAW, HAVE MERCY"

TAHSIN ABEDI

Set in Jackson, Mississippi in the early 1960s, *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett talks about racial segregation at its worst. The book is narrated by three very different women; Aibileen, a black maid who is raising her 'seventeenth white child', Minny, another black maid unable to keep a job due to her loud mouth and hot head, and Miss Skeeter, a white woman who wants to be a writer. She, like most white children, has been brought up by black maids, and embarks on a perilous journey, fuelled by her search to find out why her much-loved maid, Constantine, has disappeared.

As far as the title goes, the help are the women of the black community who raise the children of white families. While their own children are raised by someone else, the help spend their time feeding, cleaning and playing with the white children, only to watch them grow up to be as discriminating as their parents.

Aibileen is one of the sweetest characters in the book. Although she is still mourning the recent death of her son, her affection for Mae Mobley is unwavering and she dedicates most of her time to increase Mae's confidence and raise her like the past seventeen white children she has worked for.

Miss Skeeter plays the female protagonist who, after studying literature and journalism in college, wants to be a writer. When given the chance of having her work published, she has the idea of writing a book about the dreadful life that the help lead. Including Aibileen and Minny, thirteen maids reveal the cruel and unbelievable experiences they have faced whilst working for the people who discriminate against them. These voices had

never been heard before in print. In 1962, during the hazardous time of several assassinations, this was not only a major risk, since if any of the white ladies found out their help had been exposing them they would have fired them on the spot, but also illegal in Mississippi, since it violates the infamous Jim Crow segregation laws.

Stockett, being a Southern-born white woman herself, succeeds in being able to cross racial, social and chronological barriers by portraying the characters seamlessly, especially mastering the dialect of the black maids with dialogues such as "Law have mercy" and "I'm on do it". One of the characters that she captures, Miss Hilly, who is one of the white bosses, campaigns to have extra toilets for the help because they carry many diseases. Although not as severe, I could relate this to most Bangladeshi households, which have a servants' toilet that the guests or the home-owners don't use.

I commend Stockett's courage in writing about such a sensitive topic. She encourages female writers to type their minds even in times that forces otherwise, through her image of Skeeter and has portrayed the help as superheroes with white maids' uniforms instead of capes. We're reminded that small acts of defiance and courage have their own way of working change.

Kathryn Stockett manages to merge fact and fiction perfectly, exploring a myriad of emotions ranging from sadness to happiness - sometimes all in the same paragraph! Stockett has not only written an unforgettable story, it is also an informative masterpiece. If you're looking for a good novel set in an important historical era, I definitely recommend *The Help* to you.