

## The beginning of the KKK – Southern vision

abridged from *Gone with the Wind*, Margaret Mitchell- 1936

*After the war, the hero Scarlett lives in Atlanta where she runs a mill. Her husband is Frank Kennedy, Ashley and Melanie are her friends and India is Ashley's sister whom she hates.*

### DOCUMENT A:

A negro who had boasted of rape had actually been arrested, but before he could be brought to trial the jail had been raided by the Ku Klux Klan and he had been quietly hanged. The Klan had acted to save the as yet unnamed victim from having to testify in open court. Rather than have her appear and advertise her shame, her father and brother would have shot her, so lynching the negro seemed a sensible solution to the townspeople, in fact, the only decent solution possible. But the military authorities were in a fury. They saw no reason why the girl should mind testifying publicly.

The soldiers made arrests right and left, swearing to wipe out the Klan if they had to put every white man in Atlanta in jail. The negroes, frightened and sullen, muttered of retaliatory house burnings. The air was thick with rumors of wholesale hangings by the Yankees should the guilty parties be found and of a concerted uprising against the whites by the negroes. The people of the town stayed at home behind locked doors and shuttered windows, the men fearing to go to their businesses and leave their women and children unprotected.

### DOCUMENT B:

“Scarlett, perhaps we should have told you but — but — you had been through so much this afternoon that we — that Frank didn’t think — and you were always so outspoken against the Klan —”

“The Klan —”

At first, Scarlett spoke the word as if she had never heard it before and had no comprehension of its meaning and then:

“The Klan!” she almost screamed it. “Ashley isn’t in the Klan! Frank can’t be! Oh, he promised me!”

“Of course, Mr. Kennedy is in the Klan and Ashley, too, and all the men we know,” cried India. “They are men, aren’t they? And white men and Southerners. You should have been proud of him instead of making him sneak out as though it were something shameful and —”

“You all have known all along and I didn’t —”

“We were afraid it would upset you,” said Melanie sorrowfully.

“Then that’s where they go when they’re supposed to be at the political meetings? Oh, he promised me! Now, the Yankees will come and take my mills and the store and put him in jail — oh, what did Rhett Butler mean?”

India’s eyes met Melanie’s in wild fear. Scarlett rose, flinging her sewing down.

“If you don’t tell me, I’m going downtown and find out. I’ll ask everybody I see until I find —”

“Set,” said Archie, fixing her with his eye. “I’ll tell you. Because you went gallivantin’ this afternoon and got yoreself into trouble through yore own fault, Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Kennedy and the other men are out tonight to kill that thar nigger and that thar white man, if they can catch them. It’s all yore fault and thar’s blood on yore hands.”

Anger wiped out the fear from Melanie’s face as she saw comprehension come slowly across Scarlett’s face and then horror follow swiftly. She rose and put her hand on Scarlett’s shoulder.

“Another such word and you go out of this house, Archie,” she said sternly. “It’s not her fault. She only did — did what she felt she had to do. And our men did what they felt they had to do. People must do what they must do. We don’t all think alike or act alike and it’s wrong to — to judge others by ourselves. How can you and India say such cruel things when her husband as well as mine may be — may be —”