

## **Twelve Angry Men by Sherman L. Sergel, adapted from the television movie by Reginald Rose**

### **Synopsis:**

The drama depicts a jury forced to consider a homicide trial. At the beginning, they have a nearly unanimous decision of guilty, with a single dissenter of not-guilty, who throughout the play sows a seed of reasonable doubt. The story begins after closing arguments have been presented in the homicide case, as the judge is giving his instructions to the jury. As in most American criminal cases, the twelve men must unanimously decide on a verdict of "guilty" or "not guilty". (In the justice systems of nearly all American states, failure to reach a unanimous verdict, a so-called "hung jury", results in a mistrial.) The case at hand pertains to whether a young man murdered his own father. The jury is further instructed that a guilty verdict will be accompanied by a mandatory death sentence. These twelve then move to the jury room, where they begin to become acquainted with the personalities of their peers. Throughout their deliberation, not a single juror calls another by his name because the names are unknown to the jurors. Several of the jurors have different reasons for discriminating against the defendant: his race, his background, and the troubled relationship between one juror and his own son.

### **Characters:**

**FOREMAN:** He is a small, petty man who is impressed with the authority he has and handles himself quite formally. He is not overly bright, but dogged.

**JUROR NO. TWO:** He is a meek, hesitant man who finds it difficult to maintain any opinions of his own. He is easily swayed and usually adopts the opinion of the last person to whom he has spoken.

**JUROR NO. THREE:** He is a very strong, very forceful, extremely opinionated man within whom can be detected a streak of sadism. Also, he is a humorless man who is intolerant of opinions other than his own, and accustomed to forcing his wishes and views upon others.

**JUROR NO. FOUR:** He seems to be a man of wealth and position, and a practiced speaker who presents himself well at all times. He seems to feel a little bit above the rest of the jurors. His only concern is with the facts in this case and he is appalled with the behavior of the others.

**JUROR NO. FIVE:** He is a naive, very frightened young man who takes his obligations in this case very seriously but who finds it difficult to speak up when his elders have the floor.

**JUROR NO. SIX:** He is an honest but dull-witted man who comes upon his decisions slowly and carefully. He is a man who finds it difficult to create positive opinions, but who must listen to and digest and accept those opinions offered by others which appeal to him most.

**JUROR NO. SEVEN:** He is a loud, flashy, glad-handed salesman type who has more important things to do than to sit on a jury. He is quick to show temper and equally quick to form opinions on things about which he knows nothing. He is a bully, and, of course, a coward.

**JUROR NO. EIGHT:** He is a quiet, thoughtful, gentle man, a man who sees all sides of every question and constantly seeks the truth. He is a man of strength tempered with compassion. Above all, he is a man who wants justice to be done and will fight to see that it is.

**JUROR NO. NINE:** He is a mild, gentle old man, long since defeated by life, and now merely waiting to die. He recognizes himself for what he is and mourns the days when it would have been possible to be courageous without shielding himself behind his many years.

**JUROR NO. TEN:** He is an angry, bitter man – a man who antagonizes almost at sight. He is also a bigot who places no values on any human life save his own. Here is a man who has been nowhere and is going nowhere and knows it deep within him.

**JUROR NO. ELEVEN:** He is a refugee from Europe. He speaks with an accent and is ashamed, humble, almost subservient to the people around him. He will honestly seek justice because he has suffered through so much injustice.

**JUROR NO. TWELVE:** He is a slick, bright advertising man who thinks of human beings in terms of percentages, graphs and polls, and has no real understanding of people. He is a superficial snob but trying to be a good fellow.

**GUARD:** This is a bit part. He can be any age and wears a uniform.