

An advertisement for GradeSaver. On the left is a white silhouette of a building with a dome. On the right is a photograph of a smiling graduate in a black cap and gown, holding a rolled-up diploma in his right hand and raising his left hand in celebration. The background is a dark blue silhouette of a grassy hill. The text 'GradeSaver' is written in a blue serif font with a red 'A', and the website 'www.gradesaver.com' is below it. At the bottom of the blue area, the text 'You have goals...We have help.' is written in white. A large, faint blue letter 'A' is visible in the background of the blue area.

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**ClassicNote on To Kill a Mockingbird**

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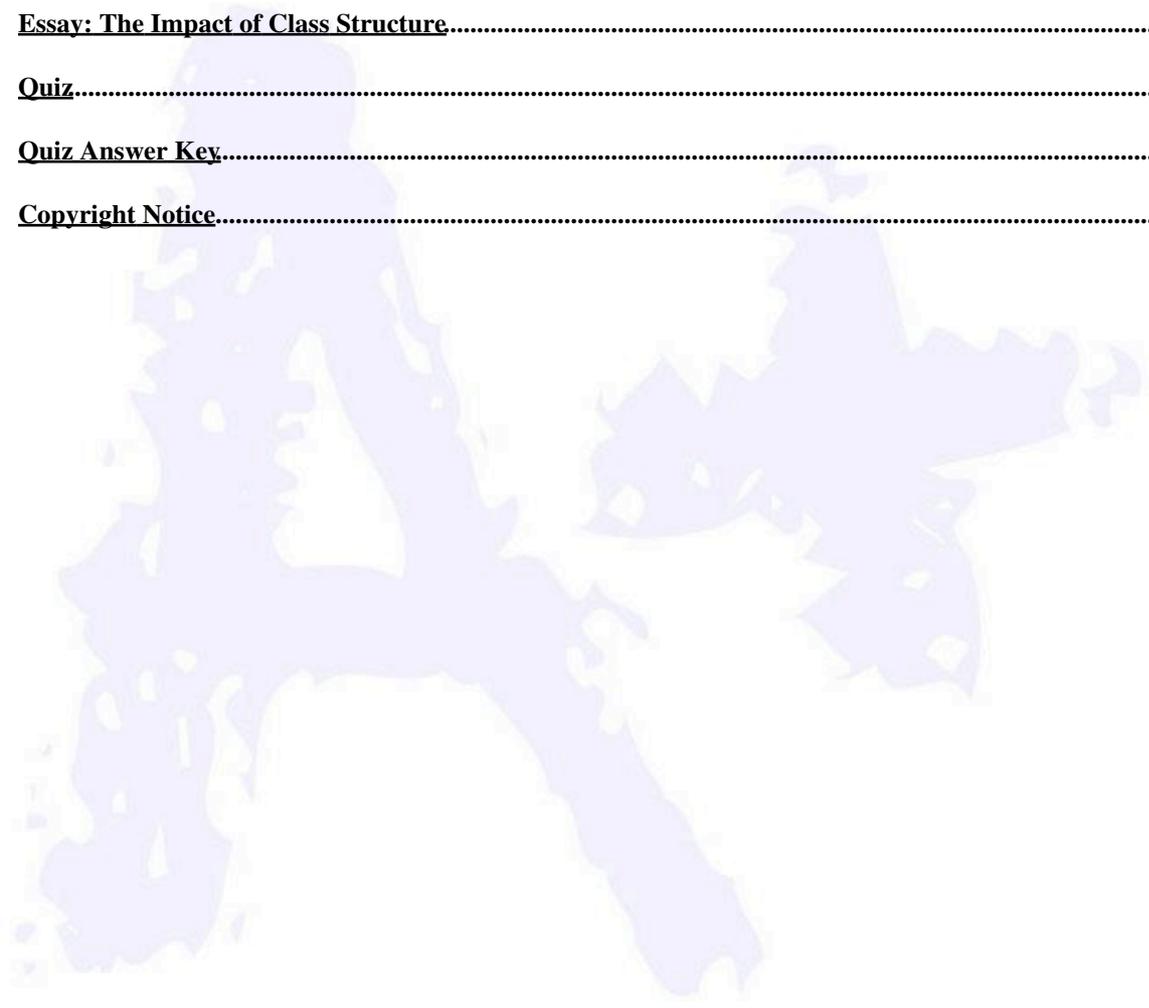
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## Biography of Lee, Harper (1926-)

Nelle Harper Lee was born on April 28, 1926, to Amasa Coleman Lee and Frances Cunningham Finch Lee. Harper Lee grew up in the small southwestern Alabama town of Monroeville. Her father, a former newspaper editor and proprietor, was a lawyer who also served on the state legislature (1926-38). As a child, Lee was a tomboy and a precocious reader, and she enjoyed the friendship of her schoolmate and neighbor, the young Truman Capote, who provided the basis of the character of Dill in her novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Lee was only five years old in when, in April 1931 in the small Alabama town of Scottsboro, the first trials began with regard to the purported rapes of two white women by nine young black men. The defendants, who were nearly lynched before being brought to court, were not provided with the services of a lawyer until the first day of trial. Despite medical testimony that the women had not been raped, the all-white jury found the men guilty of the crime and sentenced all but the youngest, a twelve-year-old boy, to death. Six years of subsequent trials saw most of these convictions repealed and all but one of the men freed or paroled. The Scottsboro case left a deep impression on the young Lee, who would use it later as the rough basis for the events in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Lee studied first at Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama (1944-45), and then pursued a law degree at the University of Alabama (1945-49), spending one year abroad at Oxford University, England. She worked as a reservation clerk for Eastern Airlines in New York City until the late 1950s, when she resolved to devote herself to writing. Lee lived a frugal lifestyle, traveling between her cold-water-only apartment in New York to her family home in Alabama to care for her ailing father. In addition, she worked in Holcombe, Kansas, as a research assistant for Truman Capote's novel *In Cold Blood* in 1959. Ever since the first days of their childhood friendship, Capote and Lee remained close friends.

Lee published her first and only novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, in 1960 after a two-year period of revising and rewriting under the guidance of her editor, Tay Hohoff, of the J. B. Lippincott Company. *To Kill a Mockingbird* won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize despite mixed critical reviews. The novel was highly popular, selling more than fifteen million copies. Though in composing the novel she delved into her own experiences as a child in Monroeville, Lee intended that the book impart the sense of any small town in the Deep South, as well as the universal characteristics of human beings. The book was made into a successful movie in 1962, starring Gregory Peck as Atticus.

President Johnson named Lee to the National Council of Arts in June 1966, and since then she has received numerous honorary doctorates. She continues to live in New York and Monroeville but prefers a relatively private existence, granting few interviews and giving few speeches. She has published only a few short essays since her debut: "Love--In Other Words" in *Vogue*, 1961; "Christmas to Me" in *McCall's*, 1961; and "When Children Discover America" in *McCall's*, 1965.

## About To Kill a Mockingbird

Harper Lee wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* during a very tense time racially in her home state of Alabama. The South was still segregated, forcing blacks to use separate facilities apart from those used by whites, in almost every aspect of society. The Civil Rights Movement began to pick up steam when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955. Following her bold defiance, Martin Luther King, Jr., became the leader of the movement, and the issue began to gain serious national attention. Clearly, a prime subject of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, namely the injustice of racism and inequality in the American South, was highly relevant at the time of its publication.

Interestingly, Harper Lee decided to set the novel in the Depression era of the 1930s. The main character, Scout, is based on Lee's own childhood, and Dill is most likely based on her childhood friend and neighbor, Truman Capote. By placing her novel in the 1930s, Lee provided her readers with a historical background for current events of the time, and in doing so she exposed the deeply rooted history of the civil rights struggle in the South.

In addition to a biting analysis of race relations, *To Kill A Mockingbird* is also a story about Scout's maturation. Coming-of-age stories are also known as members of the genre *Bildungsroman*, which tends to depict main characters who take large steps in personal growth due to life lessons or specific trauma. In Lee's novel, Scout Finch works to come to terms with the facts of her society, including social inequality, racial inequality, and the expectation that she act as a "proper Southern lady." Scout is a tomboy who resents efforts to alter her behavior in order to make her more socially accepted. In the 1930s, gender inequality also reigned, and women were not given equal rights. Women in the South were expected to be delicate and dainty, concepts that Scout abhors; and women were not allowed to serve on juries in Maycomb, according to the novel. Scout loves adventure and can punch as well as any boy in her class. She finds it hard to fit into the mold of a Southern lady. Miss Maudie is a strong role model for her in that Miss Maudie also defies some of their society's expectations and maintains her individuality as a Southern woman. But Scout eventually succumbs--in her own way--to social pressure.

The novel's characters are forced to examine the world (or at least the town) in which they live. Through observing their society and interacting with people such as Tom Robinson and Boo Radley, they come to understand more about true bravery, cowardice, and humanity.

## **Character List**

### **Scout (Jean Louise Finch)**

The narrator and main character who begins her story at almost six years old. A rebellious tomboy, Scout has a fierce disposition toward any who challenge her, but at heart she believes in the goodness of people. Scout reacts to the terrible events of the book without losing hope in humanity.

### **Jem (Jeremy Finch)**

Scout's older brother, who is nearly ten at the beginning of the story. Jem is quieter and more reserved than his sister, and has very high standards and expectations for people. When these expectations are not met, Jem has a difficult time resolving his feelings.

### **Dill (Charles Baker Harris)**

A friend of the Finch children, who is a little older than Scout, quite short for his age, has an active imagination, and exhibits a strong sense of adventure. He initiates the first expeditions toward the Radley house, and is Scout's best friend. His family life is less than ideal, and he tends to resort to escapism when confronted with difficult situations. Dill spends summers with his aunt, who lives next door to the Finch family.

### **Atticus Finch**

The father of Scout and Jem, Atticus is a lawyer and an extremely morally upright man who strives to deal with everyone fairly. Atticus is sometimes overly optimistic, but his unshakable hope in mankind and self-created role as the town 'do-gooder' sustain him. Atticus' wife died when Scout was very small, and he has raised his children only with the assistance of Calpurnia, his black housekeeper and cook.

### **Boo Radley**

A recluse who never emerges from his house. As a young boy, he was in trouble with the police, and his strictly religious and reclusive parents have kept him indoors ever since. A prisoner in his home, he stabbed his father with scissors once, and no one has seen him since. The town has developed a myth that he is an insane monster who wanders around at night peering into people's windows. Throughout the book, he lives with his brother, who is highly controlling.

## **Tom Robinson**

A black man who stands falsely accused of raping Mayella Ewell. Atticus agrees to take his case, even though he knows it is probably hopeless, if only to show the white community its own moral degeneracy.

## **Calpurnia**

A black woman who works as the Finch family's cook and housekeeper. She is one of the many motherly figures in Scout's life and one of the few who can negotiate between the very separate black and white worlds of Maycomb.

## **Aunt Alexandra**

Atticus's sister, who has very strict, traditional ideas of how society works and the role a Southern woman should play. She earnestly tries to pass along this information to Scout, who is not particularly interested. Alexandra is concerned with raising Atticus's children "properly," and thus appears during the summer of Tom's trial to stay with them.

## **Maudie Atkinson**

A kind, cheerful, and witty neighbor and trusted friend of Scout's, who also upholds a strong moral code and helps the children gain perspective on the events surrounding the trial. She also loves gardening.

## **Bob Ewell**

An evil, ignorant man who belongs to the lowest substratum of Maycomb society. He lives with his nine motherless children in a shack near the town dump. Evidence from the trial suggests that he caught his daughter kissing Tom, proceeded to beat her, and then encouraged her to claim Tom raped her. He drinks heavily and spends his relief checks on whiskey rather than food for his family. Bob holds a strong grudge against Atticus and attacks his children at the end of the novel.

## **Mayella Ewell**

The oldest of the many Ewell children, at age nineteen. She lives a miserable and lonely existence, despised by whites and prohibited from befriending blacks. However, she breaks a social taboo by trying to seduce Tom, then reacts with cowardice by accusing him of rape and perjuring against him in court.

## **Heck Tate**

Maycomb County's trusty sheriff, who is ultimately an honest and upstanding man.

## **Reverend Sykes**

The reverend for the all-black congregation, First Purchase African M.E. church, which Scout and Jem visit one day with Calpurnia.

## **Judge Taylor**

The judge for Tom's trial. Taylor is a good, sensible man with a sense of humor, who manages a strict courtroom.

## **Mr. Gilmer**

Lawyer for the Ewell family in Tom Robinson's case.

## **Mrs. Dubose**

A mean, sick, very old woman who lives near the Finch family. Jem unknowingly assists her with her heroic attempt to conquer her morphine addiction, a fight that wins her Atticus's highest praises.

## **Walter Cunningham**

A poor farmer who is among the "Sarum bunch," a crowd which assembles near the town jail the night before Tom's trial in order to start a lynching. He is deeply moved by Scout's friendly words when she tries to diffuse the situation, and as a result leads the rest of the men in going home. Ever after, he respects the Finch family greatly.

## **Walter Cunningham (Jr.)**

Son of the other Walter, who attends first grade with Scout.

## **Adolphus Raymond**

A white man who chose to marry a black woman and have "mixed" children. He pretends to be a drunk so that the townspeople will have a way to more comfortably explain his behavior and life choices.

## **Helen Robinson**

Wife of Tom.

## **Uncle Jack**

Atticus's brother, a doctor Jem and Scout are very fond of.

## **Francis**

One of Aunt Alexandra's grandchildren, who spends Christmas with the Finch family and annoys Scout by being both boring and cruel.

## Major Themes

### Good and Evil

*To Kill a Mockingbird* is an exploration of human morality, and presents a constant conversation regarding the inherent goodness or evilness of people. Atticus, father of Scout and Jem, also plays the role of teacher, for his children and his town. Atticus believes that people usually contain aspects of both good and evil, but that good will usually prevail. Atticus teaches this to his children, but also to the town, as he works to defend Tom Robinson, an innocent black man accused of raping a white woman. In the racist town of Maycomb in the heart of America's South during the Depression era, this is a Herculean task. Despite the challenge of overcoming the town's deeply ingrained racism and forcing people to change their social perspectives, Atticus struggles on, because he believes that one day, goodness will prevail over the evils of racism and racial equality will exist.

Throughout the book, Scout and Jem make the classic transition from innocence to maturity. Jem leads this change, as he is older than Scout, but both children experience it. At the beginning of the novel, they approach life innocently believing in the goodness of all people, thinking everyone understands and adheres to the same values they and their father do. During Tom Robinson's trial, the children are sorely disappointed when the jury, made up of their fellow townspeople, convicts the obviously innocent Tom Robinson simply because he is a black man and his accuser is white. The realization that there is true evil within their society shakes Jem to the core. He held a strong belief in the goodness of all people, but after the trial must reevaluate his understanding of human nature. The challenge of this struggle causes him great emotional pain as he tries to come to terms with disappointing realities of inequality, racism, and general unfairness. Scout also struggles to understand these things, but even following the trial is able to maintain her belief in the goodness of human nature. At the end of the novel, both children are faced with true evil, as Bob Ewell tries to kill them. True goodness, embodied in Boo Radley, saves them. In this final conflict between these opposing forces, goodness prevails.

### Education

Shortly after the novel begins, Scout starts her first year at school. The educational system in Maycomb leaves much to be desired. Scout is ahead of her classmates because Atticus has taught her to read and write, and Calpurnia has even taught her script. However, once her teacher discovers this, she punishes Scout and tells her not to learn anything else at home, because her father does not know how to teach her properly. This is the first clear conflict between institutionalized education and education in the home.

Atticus clearly takes great pride in instilling a powerful sense of morality in his children. He truthfully answers whatever questions they ask, and encourages their inquisitive minds by treating them as adults and encouraging them to grow intellectually and morally as much as possible. On the other hand, Scout's teacher has a very specific understanding of what children should learn when, even if this schedule requires holding a child back.

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For example, when she asks Scout to write during class and Scout writes in script, she chides her and tells her that she should not be doing that for many years, because it isn't taught in school until much later. Scout feels frustrated that her teacher does not understand her and only wants to hold her back.

Scout comes to Atticus with concerns about her education and he helps her understand that she must get an education, even though she might find the process frustrating, and that he will continue to read with her and teach her at home. Clearly, Atticus understands the faults of the educational system, but also knows it is necessary for his children to pass through this system to be a part of society. However, his teaching at home, both morally and otherwise, is far more valuable to his children than anything they learn in the classroom. Scout notices this most obviously when learning about the Holocaust. Her teacher explains that such oppression of one group of people could never happen in the United States and Scout is astonished. She heard Miss Gates outside the court house during Tom Robinson's trial saying that, referring to black people, she thought it was, "time somebody taught them a lesson, they thought they was getting' way above themselves, an' the next thing they think they can do is marry us." Scout sees Miss Gates's statement about blacks in clear conflict with her statement about the equality in America.

Scout receives the majority of her education in the home, and doesn't believe school will do much for her. At the end of the novel, she notes that she has learned probably all there is to learn, except maybe algebra. Clearly, Scout understands that life experiences are the true teachers, and that Atticus has taught her more than school ever will. Clearly, Lee is expressing a lack of belief in the institutionalized educational system, and in fact suggests it might do more harm than good. Perhaps a more valuable education can be found in the home.

## **Social Inequality**

Along with struggling with concepts of good and evil, Scout and Jem spend a great deal of time trying to understand what defines and creates social strata. Scout tends to believe that "folks are just folks", while Jem is convinced that social standing is related to how long people's relatives and ancestors have been able to write.

Scout elucidates the town's social strata quite clearly on her first day at school when Walter Cunningham does not have lunch or lunch money. Her classmates ask her to explain to the teacher why Walter won't take a loaned quarter to buy lunch, and she lectures the teacher on the Cunningham's financial situation and how they trade goods for services. Scout and the other children have a very clear understanding of the social inequalities in their town, but see these inequalities as natural and permanent. The Finch family falls rather high up in the social hierarchy, while the Ewell family falls at the bottom. However, this hierarchy only includes white people. Maycomb's black population fall beneath all white families in Maycomb, including the Ewells, whom Atticus labels as "trash".

Scout understands this social structure, but doesn't understand why it is so. She believes that everyone should be treated the same, no matter what family they are from. For instance, when she wants to spend more time with Walter Cunningham, Aunt Alexandra objects saying no Finch girl should ever consort with a Cunningham.

Scout is frustrated by this, as she wants to be able to choose her own friends based on her definition of what makes a good person: morality.

## The Mockingbird

When Scout and Jem receive airguns for Christmas, Atticus tells them that although he would prefer that they practice their shooting with tin cans, if they must shoot at living things, they must never shoot at mockingbirds. Atticus explains that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird. Clearly, this is the title scene, but the theme continues throughout the book. Miss Maudie explains why Atticus is correct - mockingbirds never do anyone any harm, and are not pests in any way. All they do is sing beautifully and live peacefully. Therefore, it is a sin to kill them. The mockingbird comes to represent true goodness and purity. Tom Robinson is one example of a human "mockingbird". He stands accused of raping and beating Mayella Ewell, but is innocent of the charges. The town commits the ultimate sin by finding him guilty and sentencing him to death. In effect, they have killed a mockingbird. Boo Radley is another example of a human "mockingbird". He has spent his entire life as a prisoner of his own home because his father was overzealous in punishing him for a childhood mistake. Boo Radley observes the world around him, causing no harm to anyone, and then saves Jem and Scout's lives when Bob Ewell attacks. The sheriff determines that Ewell's death will be ruled an accident to avoid forcing Boo to go to trial, even though Boo killed him to protect the children. Atticus agrees, and wants to make sure Scout understands why this little white lie must be told. She replies saying of course she understands, putting Boo on trial and in the public sphere would be like killing a mockingbird. The mockingbird represents true goodness and innocence that should always be protected.

## Perspective

Throughout the novel, Atticus urges his children to try to step into other people's shoes to understand how they see the world. Whenever Scout doesn't understand Jem, Atticus encourages her to try to understand how he might be feeling. Usually, Scout finds this advice helpful, and her attempts to gain insight into other people's perspectives on life and the world broaden her moral education and social understanding.

When Mrs. Dubose, the mean old woman who lives down the street from the Finch family yells insults at Jem and Scout on her way to town, Jem reacts by returning and cutting up all the flowers in her front yard. His punishment is to read to Mrs. Dubose for a specified time period every day. He complains to Atticus that she is an awful woman, but Atticus tells Jem and Scout to try to understand Mrs. Dubose's point of view. She is an old woman, very set in her ways, and she is entirely alone in the world. Jem and Scout agree to visit her. After Mrs. Dubose dies, Atticus reveals that by reading to her each day, the children were helping her break her morphine addiction. Atticus explains that Mrs. Dubose was fighting to regain sobriety, even as she stood on the brink of death. Because of this, to Atticus, she is the bravest person he has ever known. He explains this to the children to try to make them understand the terrible pain she was experiencing, and how their presence helped her through the process. Although she might have said some horrible things, Atticus encourages the children to try

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to see the world from her perspective and to understand how brave and strong she was.

At the end of the book, Scout escorts Boo Radley back to his home. After Boo closes the door, she turns around and surveys the neighborhood from his perspective. She imagines how he has witnessed all the happenings of the recent years, including her and Jem running by the house on their way to and from school, her childhood Boo Radley games, Miss Maudie's fire, the incident of the rabid dog, and finally, Bob Ewell's attack. As she steps into Boo's shoes, Scout gains a new respect for his life, and understands that his experience is just as valid as hers. With this understanding, she is humbled.

## Racism

Obviously, racism is a major theme of the novel. During the Depression era, blacks were still highly subjugated members of society. Blacks were not permitted to commingle with whites in public settings, as exemplified in the courthouse physical separation of races and in the clearly distinct black and white areas of town. Moreover, things like intermarriage were almost unheard of, and sorely looked down upon.

Throughout the novel, Scout explores the differences between black people and white people. She and Jem attend church with Calpurnia and Scout truly enjoys the experience. Afterwards, she asks Calpurnia if she might be able to visit her house sometime because she has never seen it. Calpurnia agrees, but the visit is never made, largely because Aunt Alexandra puts a stop to it. Jem, Scout and Dill also sit with the black citizens of the town in the balcony of the court house to observe the trial. In addition, Scout and Dill have a lengthy conversation with Mr. Raymond, a white man who married a black woman and has mixed children. Mr. Raymond reveals that he pretends to be an alcoholic by carrying around a paper bag with a bottle of Coca-Cola inside in order to let the town excuse his choice to marry a black woman.

Tom Robinson is convicted purely because he is a black man and his accuser is white. The evidence is so powerfully in his favor, that race is clearly the single defining factor in the jury's decision. Atticus fights against racism, and a few other townspeople are on his side, including Miss Maudie and Judge Taylor. Jem and Scout also believe in racial inequality, but are obviously in the minority. When Atticus wins the trial, he tries to make his children understand that although he lost, he did help move along the cause of ending racism as evidenced by the jury's lengthy deliberation period. Usually, such a trial would be decided immediately.

## Bravery

Bravery takes many forms in *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Atticus is brave to defend a black man in the face of criticism and threats of violence. He also is brave in the face of danger, both when he kills the rabid dog with a single shot and when facing the mob of men outside the jailhouse. Atticus urges Scout to be brave and prevent herself from fighting those who criticize her or her family. To Atticus, withholding violence is one of the highest forms of bravery. The children believe themselves to be brave when approaching the Radley house early

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in the book, but learn later on that this was false bravery, and in fact, silly. Atticus holds up Mrs. Dubose as the ultimate definition of bravery, as she finds against her morphine addiction in order to be free from it before she dies, even when she knows she will die in the process. Atticus, who also fights against a power greater than himself, tells his children they should have great respect for Mrs. Dubose. Finally, Bob Ewell represents the greatest cowardice, as he both lies in the courtroom to protect himself and resorts to attacking children in the darkness in order to make himself feel more of a man.

## The Law

Atticus is a lawyer, and the book is centered around his representation of Tom Robinson. Although Atticus loses the trial, he believes strongly that despite social inequalities, all men are equal in the courtroom. He includes this information in his closing statements to the jury, and during his later discussions with Jem and Scout regarding jury selection and the trial process, makes this statement again. Atticus believes that progress towards racial equality can and will be made in the courtroom.

In addition, although he believes powerfully in upholding the law, Atticus understands that it must be bent in certain situations. For example, Bob Ewell is permitted to hunt even in the off season because the town authorities know that if he is prevented from hunting, his children might starve. In addition, at the end of the novel, the law would require Boo Radley to be placed on trial to determine whether he killed Bob Ewell is self defense or not. However, Atticus understands, as does Heck Tate and Scout, that Boo should not be forced to experience powerful public attention or criticism. Therefore, it is necessary to bend the law in this case to protect Boo.

## Glossary of Terms

### **akimbo**

body position -- hands on hips, elbows bent outward

### **apoplectic**

on the verge of having a stroke

### **arbor**

an outdoor area shaded by trees

### **asafoetida**

strong smelling substance made from parsley that is often used in folk medicine

### **bantam cock**

a small aggressive rooster

### **bridgework**

sections of replacement teeth (not full dentures) than can be easily inserted and removed

### **calomel**

a laxative often used to rid a person of intestinal worms

### **catawba worms**

caterpillars; highly prized as fishbait in the American South

**changelings**

a child secretly put in the place of another

**chiffarobe**

a large cabinet with drawers and a place for hanging clothes

**collards**

cabbage with very coarse, thick leaves

**cootie**

slang term for a head louse

**dog-trot hall**

a covered passageway between two parts of a building

**eddy**

a whirlpool or current of water that moves against the current

**edification**

instruction or education

**entailment**

legal issue regarding inheritance

**fey**

strange or eccentric

**Franklin stove**

a cast iron heating stove invented by Benjamin Franklin

**guile**

craftiness and cunning

**habiliments**

clothing

**haint**

ghost or spook

**hock**

the joint of a pig's leg

**hookah**

a tobacco pipe of Eastern origin that draws smoke through a bowl of water

**hookworm**

a parasite that enters the body through the feet and settles in the small intestine

**Jew's Harp**

small musical instrument played by plucking a piece of metal while holding the instrument to one's mouth.

**kudzu**

a large leafed quick-growing vine of the South

**largo**

a musical term meaning "a very slow tempo"

**manacles**

handcuffs

**mimosa**

a tree or shrub, often specifically a silk tree

**morphodite (hermaphrodite)**

Scout hears Miss Maudie call her and Jem's snowman a "morphodite". Miss Maudie most likely said "hermaphrodite", which is an animal or plant with both male and female reproductive organs.

**myopic**

near-sighted

**nome**

"no ma'am"

**obstreperous**

noisy and unruly

**palliate**

to lessen pain

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**plaited**

braided

**Providence**

the care of God

**ringworm**

a contagious skin disease caused by fungus

**roly-poly**

a small bug that can turn itself into a ball. Also known as a pillbug

**rotogravure print**

a kind of photograph

**ruttin'**

slang for having sexual intercourse

**scrip stamps**

paper money of small denominations issued by government agencies for temporary emergency use; particularly common during the Great Depression

**scuppernogs**

sweet grapes grown in the American South

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## **shinny**

slang term for whiskey

## **smockin'**

decorative stitching that gathers fabric

## **switches**

small thin twigs or branches

## **tollable**

Mayella's pronunciation of "tolerable"

## **trousseau**

the new clothes a woman brings to her marriage

## **voile**

a thin, cotton like fabric

## **widow's walk**

a platform with a rail around it built on the roof of a house, named for women who would stand on it and wait in vain for their husbands' ships to return to port

## Short Summary

To Kill a Mockingbird takes place in Alabama during the Depression, and is narrated by the main character, a little girl named Jean Louise "Scout" Finch. Her father, Atticus Finch, is a lawyer with high moral standards. Scout, her brother Jem, and their friend Dill are intrigued by the local rumors about a man named Boo Radley, who lives in their neighborhood but never leaves his house. Legend has it that he once stabbed his father in the leg with a pair of scissors, and he is made out to be a kind of monster. Dill is from Mississippi but spends his summer in Maycomb at a house near the Finch's.

The children are curious to know more about Boo, and during one summer create a mini-drama they enact daily, which tells the events of his life as they know them. Slowly, the children begin moving closer to the Radley house, which is said to be haunted. They try leaving notes for Boo on his windowsill with a fishing pole, but are caught by Atticus, who firmly reprimands them for making fun of a sad man's life. Next, the children try sneaking over to the house at night and looking through its windows. Boo's brother, Nathan Radley, who lives in the house, thinks he hears a prowler and firing his gun. The children run away, but Jem loses his pants in a fence. When he returns in the middle of the night to get them back, they have been neatly folded and the tear from the fence roughly sewn up.

Other mysterious things happen to the Finch children. A certain tree near the Radley house has a hole in which little presents are often left for them, such as pennies, chewing gum, and soap carved figures of a little boy and girl who bear a striking resemblance to Scout and Jem. The children don't know where these gifts are coming from, and when they go to leave a note for the mystery giver, they find that Boo's brother has plugged up the hole with cement. The next winter brings unexpected cold and snow, and Miss Maudie's house catches on fire. While Jem and Scout, shivering, watch the blaze from near the Radley house, someone puts a blanket around Scout without her realizing it. Not until she returns home and Atticus asks her where the blanket came from does she realize that Boo Radley must have put it around her while she was entranced by watching Miss Maudie, her favorite neighbor, and her burning house.

Atticus decides to take on a case involving a black man named Tom Robinson who has been accused of raping a very poor white girl named Mayella Ewell, a member of the notorious Ewell family, who belong to the layer of Maycomb society that people refer to as "trash." The Finch family faces harsh criticism in the heavily racist Maycomb because of Atticus's decision to defend Tom. But, Atticus insists on going through with the case because his conscience could not let him do otherwise. He knows Tom is innocent, and also that he has almost no chance at being acquitted, because the white jury will never believe a black man over a white woman. Despite this, Atticus wants to reveal the truth to his fellow townspeople, expose their bigotry, and encourage them to imagine the possibility of racial equality.

Because Atticus is defending a black man, Scout and Jem find themselves whispered at and taunted, and have trouble keeping their tempers. At a family Christmas gathering, Scout beats up her cloying relative Francis

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when he accuses Atticus of ruining the family name by being a "nigger-lover". Jem cuts off the tops of an old neighbor's flower bushes after she derides Atticus, and as punishment, has to read out loud to her every day. Jem does not realize until after she dies that he is helping her break her morphine addiction. When revealing this to Jem and Scout, Atticus holds this old woman up as an example of true courage: the will to keep fighting even when you know you can't win.

The time for the trial draws closer, and Atticus's sister Alexandra comes to stay with the family. She is proper and old-fashioned and wants to shape Scout into the model of the Southern feminine ideal, much to Scout's resentment. Dill runs away from his home, where his mother and new father don't seem interested in him, and stays in Maycomb for the summer of Tom's trial. The night before the trial, Tom is moved into the county jail, and Atticus, fearing a possible lynching, stands guard outside the jail door all night. Jem is concerned about him, and the three children sneak into town to find him. A group of men arrive ready to cause some violence to Tom, and threaten Atticus in the process. At first Jem, Scout and Dill stand aside, but when she senses true danger, Scout runs out and begins to speak to one of the men, the father of one of her classmates in school. Her innocence brings the crowd out of their mob mentality, and they leave.

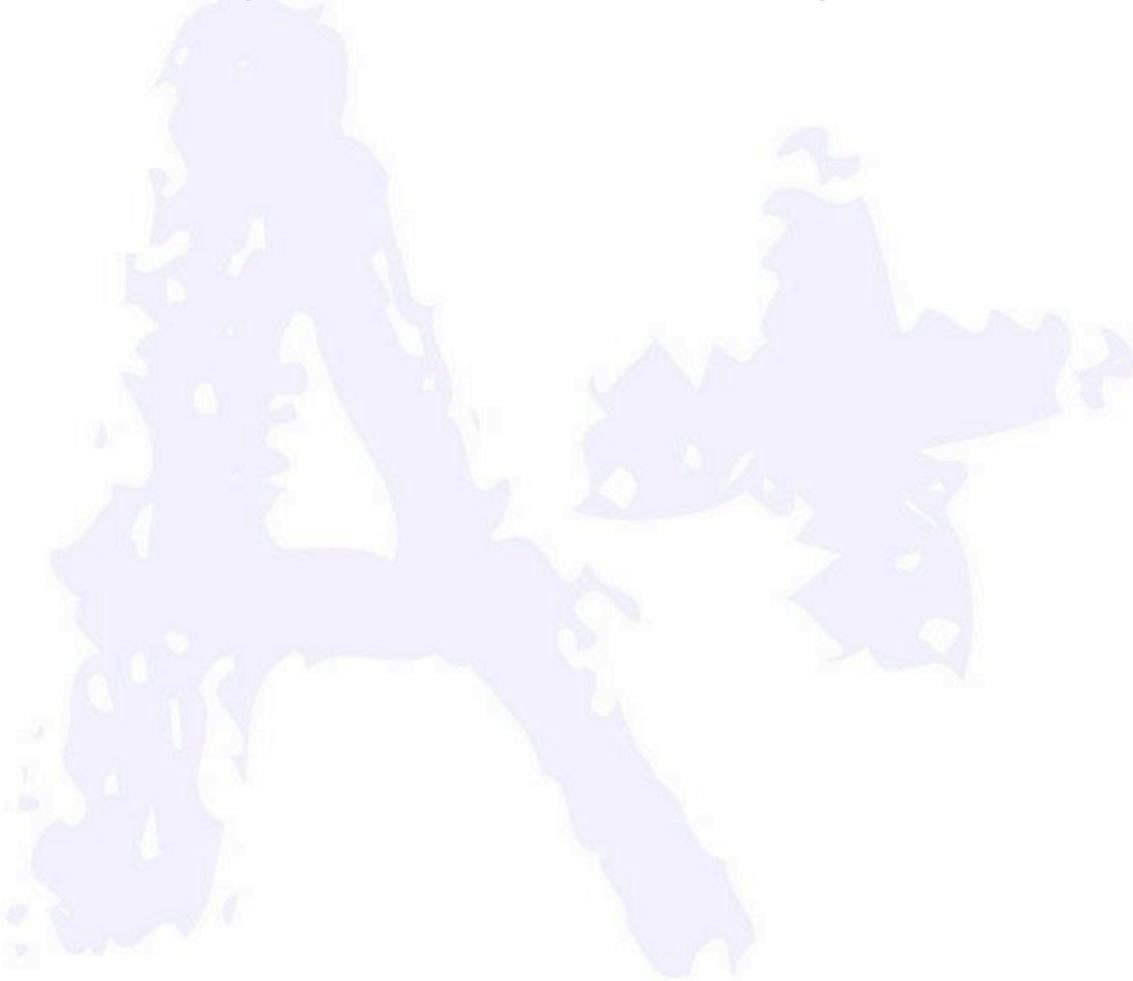
The trial pits the evidence of the white Ewell family against the black Tom's evidence. According to the Ewells, Mayella asked Tom to do some work for her while her father was out, and Tom came into their house and forcibly beat and raped Mayella until her father appeared and scared him away. Tom's version is that Mayella invited him inside, then threw her arms around him and began to kiss him. Tom tried to push her away. When Bob Ewell arrived, he flew into a rage and beat her, while Tom ran away in fright. According to the sheriff's testimony, Mayella's bruises were on the right side of her face, which means she was most likely punched with a left hand. Tom Robinson's left arm is useless due to an old accident, whereas Mr. Ewell leads with his left. Given the evidence of reasonable doubt, Tom should go free, but after hours of deliberation, the jury pronounces him guilty. Scout, Jem and Dill sneak into the courthouse to see the trial and sit in the balcony with Maycomb's black population. They are stunned at the verdict because to them, the evidence was so clearly in Tom's favor.

Though the verdict is unfortunate, Atticus feels some satisfaction that the jury took so long deciding. Usually, the decision would be made in minutes, because a black man's word would not be trusted. Atticus is hoping for an appeal, but unfortunately Tom tries to escape from his prison and is shot to death in the process. Jem has trouble handling the results of the trial, feeling that his trust in the goodness and rationality of humanity has been betrayed.

Meanwhile, Mr. Ewell threatens Atticus and other people connected with the trial because he feels he was humiliated. He gets his revenge one night while Jem and Scout are walking home from Halloween play at their school. He follows them home in the dark, then runs at them and attempts to kill them with a large kitchen knife. Jem breaks his arm, and Scout, who is wearing a confining ham shaped wire costume and cannot see what is going on, is helpless throughout the attack. The elusive Boo Radley stabs Mr. Ewell and saves the children. Finally, Scout has a chance to meet the shy and nervous Boo. At the end of this fateful night, the sheriff declares

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that Mr. Ewell fell on his own knife so Boo, the hero of the situation, won't have to be tried for murder. Scout walks Boo home and imagines how he has viewed the town and observed her, Jem and Dill over the years from inside his home. Boo goes inside, closes the door, and she never sees him again.



## Summary and Analysis of Chapters 1-6

(Part One)

### Chapter 1

The chapter opens with the introduction of the narrator, Scout (Jean Louise) Finch, her older brother Jem (Jeremy), and their friend and neighbor, Dill (Charles Baker Harris). Next, Lee provides an overview of Finch family history. Their ancestor, a Methodist named Simon Finch, fled British persecution and eventually settled in Alabama, where he trapped animals for fur and practiced medicine. Having bought several slaves, he established a largely self-sufficient homestead and farm, Finch's Landing, near Saint Stephens. The family lost its wealth in the Civil War.

Scout's father, Atticus Finch, studied law in Montgomery while supporting his brother, John "Jack" Hale Finch, who was in medical school in Boston. Their sister Alexandra remained at Finch's Landing. Atticus began his law practice in Maycomb, the county seat of Maycomb County, where his "office in the courthouse contained little more than a hat rack, a spittoon, a checkerboard, and an unsullied Code of Alabama." His first case entailed defending two men who refused to plead guilty for second-degree murder. They instead pled not guilty for first-degree murder, and were hanged, marking "probably the beginning of my father's profound distaste for criminal law."

Scout then describes Depression-era Maycomb, "an old tired town when I first knew it", summer heat and slow pace of life. She notes, "There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go, nothing to buy and no money to buy it with, nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County". Scout describes as her father as entirely "satisfactory," and her family's black cook, Calpurnia, as strict and "tyrannical." Scout and Jem's mother died of a heart attack when Scout was two and she has no memories of her. However, Jem can remember his mother and Scout notices that he is occasionally nostalgic about her. The novel takes begins during the summer. Scout is almost six, and Jem is almost ten.

Once this background picture is complete, the real narrative begins with the first meeting of Scout, Jem, and "Dill", a feisty, imaginative boy who is nearly seven but very small for his age Dill defends his height saying, "I'm little but I'm old". From Meridian, Mississippi, Dill will be spending the summer at the nearby house of Miss Rachel Haverford, his aunt. He impresses the Finch children with his dramatic recounting of the movie *Dracula*, which wins him their respect and friendship. The three engage in summertime play activities of improving the Finch tree and acting out the plots of several of their favorite books. Scout notes that Dill proves to be, "a pocket Merlin, whose head teemed with eccentric plans, strange longings, and quaint fancies."

By late summer, having exhausted these pursuits, the children turn their thoughts to the mysterious Radley place, down the block from the Finch house. The Radley house is said to contain a "malevolent phantom" by the

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name of Boo Radley. Though the children have never seen him, rumors abound that he is over six feet tall, has rotten yellow teeth, popping eyes and a drool, and eats raw animals. Whenever strange things happen in the neighborhood, Boo is often blamed. Boo's story is an extension of the strange Radley family, who have always disregarded local custom by "keeping to themselves." Prior to his death, Mr. Radley, Boo's father, had only been seen on his daily trip to collect groceries from 11:30am-12pm, and the family worshipped together in their own home on Sundays. Their youngest son, Arthur, who the children call Boo, apparently mixed with "the wrong crowd," a gang of boys who were finally arrested and brought to court after driving an old car through the town square and locking Maycomb's beadle in an outhouse. Though the other boys were sent to industrial school for punishment, and ironically received excellent educations, Arthur Radley's family preferred to keep him hidden inside the home. After fifteen years living at home, the thirty-three-year-old Boo is rumored to have stabbed his father in the leg with a pair of scissors and then quietly continued about his business of cutting out newspaper articles. Refusing to permit his son to be deemed insane or charged with criminal behavior, Mr. Radley allowed Boo to be locked up in the courthouse basement: "the sheriff hadn't the heart to put him in jail alongside Negroes". Boo was eventually brought back to the Radley home. After Mr. Radley's death, his older brother Nathan arrived to continue to watch over Boo and keep him inside and out of sight.

Dill develops an insatiable curiosity about Boo, and wants to lay eyes on this strange "phantom," who is said to walk about at night looking in windows. Dill dares Jem to go inside the boundary of the Radleys' front gate. After three days of hedging, Jem's fear of Boo succumbs to his sense of honor when Dill revises his terms, daring Jem to only touch the house. Jem finally agrees to do this. He runs, touches the house, and the three scramble back to the Finches' porch, where looking down the street to the Radley house "we thought we saw an inside of a shutter move. Flick - and the house was still."

## Chapter 2

The summer is over, and September has arrived. Dill has returned to his family in Meridian, and Scout eagerly awaits her first day of school. She is excited about the prospect of finally starting school, but her first day of first grade leaves her extremely disappointed. Her teacher, Miss Caroline Fisher, is 21 years old and new to the Maycomb County schools. Miss Caroline is from the richer and more cultured North Alabama, and does not understand the country ways of Maycomb.

To begin the day, Miss Caroline reads a saccharine children's story about cats, which leaves the children feeling restless. Scout explains, "Miss Caroline seemed unaware that the ragged, denim-shirted and flour-sack-skirted first graders were immune to imaginative literature." Half of these children had failed first grade the year before. Therefore, when Miss Caroline writes the alphabet on the board and Scout reads it through easily, then reads from her reader and from the local paper, Miss Caroline forbids Scout to let Atticus teach her to read anymore. Rather than congratulating Scout on her knowledge, Miss Caroline believes Scout is being taught incorrectly and tells her not to read at home anymore. Scout explains she doesn't remember learning how to read, but it seems she always knew how. When Miss Caroline forbids her to continue reading, she realizes how important it is to her: "Until I feared I would lose it, I never loved to read. One does not love breathing."

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At recess, Jem listens to Scout's complaints and tries to reassure her, explaining that Miss Caroline is introducing a new teaching technique which he calls the Dewey Decimal System. Back in class, Scout gets bored and starts writing a letter to Dill, but is criticized again by her teacher for knowing how to write in script when she's only supposed to print in first grade. Scout blames Calpurnia for teaching her how to write in script on rainy days.

At lunchtime, Miss Caroline asks everyone who isn't going home for lunch to show her their lunch pails. One boy, Walter Cunningham, has no pail and refuses to accept Miss Caroline's loan of a quarter to buy something with. Miss Caroline doesn't understand his refusal, and a classmate asks Scout to help explain. Scout tells Miss Caroline that Walter is a Cunningham, and thinks that explanation should be enough. After realizing Miss Caroline doesn't know what that means, Scout explains that the Cunninghams don't accept other people's help, and just try to get by with what little they have. Scout mentally recollects how Mr. Cunningham, when entailed, repaid Atticus for his legal services by giving the Finch family hickory nuts, stove wood, and other farm produce. The Cunninghams are farmers who don't have actual money now that the Depression is on. Many professionals in the town charge their country clients in farm produce rather than monetary currency. When Scout explains that Walter can't pay back the lunch money Miss Caroline offered, the teacher taps Scout's hand with a ruler and makes her stand in the corner of the room. Scout and the children are puzzled by this very unthreatening form of "whipping," and the entire class laughs until a locally-born sixth grade teacher arrives and announces that she'll "burn up everybody" in the room if they aren't quiet.

The first half of the day ends, and on her way out of the classroom, Scout sees Miss Caroline bury her head in her arms as the children leave the room. However, Scout doesn't feel sorry for her considering her unfriendly treatment that morning.

### Chapter 3

Jem invites Walter Cunningham over for lunch when he finds out that the boy doesn't have any food. Walter hesitates but then takes Jem up on the friendly offer. At the Finch house, Atticus and Walter discuss farming, and Scout is overwhelmed by their adult speech. Walter asks for some molasses and proceeds to pour it all over his meat and vegetables. Scout rudely asks him what he's doing and Calpurnia gives her a lecture in the kitchen about how to treat guests - even if they're from a family like the Cunninghams.

Back at school, there's a big scene when Miss Caroline screams upon seeing a louse ("cootie") crawl off of the head of one of the boys in the class. This boy, Burris Ewell, comes from a family so poor that Atticus says they "live like animals." Their children come to school on the first day of the year and then are never seen again. The children inform their teacher of this, explaining that "He's one of the Ewells." Miss Caroline wants Burris to go home and take a bath, but before he leaves the room for the rest of the year, he yells crude insults at her and makes her cry. The children comfort her and she reads them a story.

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Scout feels discouraged returning home from school. After dinner she tells Atticus she doesn't want to go back. Atticus asks her to understand the situation from Miss Caroline's point of view - Miss Caroline can't be expected to know what to do with her students when she doesn't know anything about them yet. Scout wants to be like Burris Ewell and not have to go to school at all. As Atticus explains, the town authorities bend the law for the Ewells because they'll never change their ways - for instance, Mr. Ewell can hunt out of season because everyone knows he spends his relief checks on whiskey and his children won't eat if he doesn't hunt. Atticus teaches Scout about compromise: if she goes to school, Atticus will let her keep reading with him at home. Scout agrees and Atticus reads to her and Jem from the papers.

## Chapter 4

School continues; the year goes by. Scout doubts that the new educational system is really doing her any good - she finds school boring and wishes the teacher would allow her to read and write, rather than ask the children to do silly activities geared toward "Group Dynamics" and "Good Citizenship." One afternoon, as she runs past the Radley house, she notices something in the knot-hole of one of the oak trees in the front yard. She investigates further and finds two pieces of chewing gum. Scout is careful, but eventually decides to chew them. Upon learning she is chewing found gum, Jem makes her spit it out. Later, toward the end of the school year, Jem and Scout find two polished Indian-head pennies, good luck tokens, inside the same knothole. The children don't know if the knothole is someone's hiding place or if the pennies are a gift, but decide to take them and keep them safely at the bottom of Jem's trunk.

Dill comes to Maycomb for the summer again, full of stories about train rides and his father, whom he claims to have finally seen. The three try to start a few games, but quickly get bored. Jem rolls Scout inside an old tire, but he pushes so hard that it ends up in the Radley's yard. Terrified, Scout runs back home, but leaves the tire behind. Jem has to run into the yard and retrieve the tire. Dill thinks Boo Radley died and Jem says they stuffed his body up the chimney. Scout thinks maybe he's still alive. They invent a new game about Boo Radley. Jem plays Boo, Dill plays Mr. Radley, and Scout plays Mrs. Radley. They polish it up over the summer into a little dramatic reenactment of all the gossip they've heard about Boo and his family, including a scene using Calpurnia's scissors as a prop. One day Atticus catches them playing the game and asks them if it has anything to do with the Radley family. They deny it, and Atticus replies, "I hope it doesn't." Atticus's sternness forces them to stop playing, and Scout is relieved because she's worried for another reason: she thought she heard the sound of someone laughing inside the Radley house when her tire rolled into their yard.

## Chapter 5

Jem and Dill have become closer friends, and Scout, being a girl, finds herself often excluded from their play. Dill, in childish fashion, has decided to get engaged to Scout, but now he and Jem play together often and Scout finds herself unwelcome. Instead of playing with the boys, Scout often sits with their neighbor, the avid gardener Miss Maudie Atkinson, watches the sun set on her front steps, or partakes of Miss Maudie's fine homemade cake. Miss Maudie is honest in her speech and her ways, with a witty tongue, and Scout considers

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her a trusted friend. Scout asks her one day about Boo Radley, and Miss Maudie says that he's still alive, he just doesn't like to come outside. She also says that most of the rumors about him aren't true. Miss Maudie explains that the Radleys are foot-washing Baptists - they believe all pleasure is a sin against God, and stay inside most of the time reading the Bible. She says that Arthur was a nice boy when she used to know him.

The next day, Jem and Dill hatch a plan to leave a note for Boo in the Radley's window, using a fishing line. The note will ask him to come out sometimes and tell them what he's doing inside, and that they won't hurt him and will buy him ice cream. Dill says he wants Boo to come out and sit with them for a while, as it might make the man feel better. Dill and Scout keep watch in case anyone comes along, and Jem tries to deliver the note with the fishing pole, but finds that it's harder to maneuver than he expected. As he struggles, Atticus arrives and catches them all. He tells them to stop tormenting Boo, and lectures them about how Boo has a right to his privacy, and that they shouldn't go near the house unless they're invited. He accuses them of putting Boo's life history on display for the edification of the neighborhood. Jem says that he didn't say they were doing that, and thus inadvertently admits that they were doing just that. Atticus caught him with "the oldest lawyer's trick on record."

## Chapter 6

It is Dill's last summer night in Maycomb. Jem and Scout get permission to go sit with him that evening. Dill wants to go for "a walk," but it turns into something more: Jem and Dill want to sneak over to the Radley place and peek into one of their windows. Scout doesn't want them to do it, but Jem accuses her of being girlish, an insult she can't bear, and she goes along with it. They sneak under a wire fence and go through a gate. At the window, Scout and Jem hoist Dill up to peek in the window. Dill sees nothing, only curtains and a small faraway light. The boys want to try a back window instead, despite Scout's pleas to leave. As Jem is raising his head to look in, the shadow of a man appears and crosses over him. As soon as it's gone, the three children run as fast as they can back home, but Jem loses his pants in the gate. As they run, they hear a shotgun sound somewhere behind them.

When they return, Mr. Radley is standing inside his gate, and Atticus is there with various neighbors. They hear that Mr. Radley was shooting at a "white Negro" in his backyard, and has another barrel waiting if he returns. Dill makes up a story about playing strip poker to explain Jem's missing pants, and Jem says they were playing with matches rather than cards, which would be considered unforgivable. Dill says goodbye to them, and Jem and Scout go to bed. Jem decides to go back and get his pants late that night. Scout tries to persuade him that it would be better to get whipped by Atticus than to be shot and killed by Mr. Radley, but Jem insists on going. Jem explains that he's never been whipped by Atticus and doesn't want to be. Jem is gone for a little while, but returns with the pants, trembling.

Analysis

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The first chapter's emphasis on family history and stories within stories describes the rigid social ties that hold society together in the little town of Maycomb, Alabama, and the inescapable links that tie an individual to his or her family or clan. The book opens by mentioning how at age twelve, Jem broke his arm. The narrator notes that the remainder of the book will explain how this injury occurred, and the novel concludes with this event. From the outset, through historical analysis, the novel tries to conclude how "this particular situation" arose. The children's attempt to trace the main incident in the novel (Jem's broken arm) back to its roots, leads them to wonder whether it all began when Dill first arrived in Maycomb and became their friend, or whether the real origins lie deeper in their ancestral history and the chance events that brought the Finch family to Maycomb. Their debate speaks to deeper fundamental issues on the nature of human good and evil, and the old "nature vs. nurture" debate. Dill, the new kid in town, represents an outside influence upon the children that affects them deeply, whereas the family history Scout recounts is a more inexorable pattern which existed long before the children were born. Atticus tells Jem and Scout that patterns of history, family, identity, and temperament, both new and old, help make an individual.

Scout narrates the book in the first person, but in the past tense. Her voice and viewpoint offer a glimpse of local events and personalities through the lens of childhood, which may not always grasp the entire story. She often looks up to Atticus, who always displays an upright, solidly moral response for his reactions to events. However, Scout's voice often assumes a mature tone when she writes from a more distant time, speaking of the town and its people in the far-off past tense and offering explanations for outdated terms ("Mr. Radley 'bought cotton,' a polite term for doing nothing"). This narrative device allows the reader to understand more about some of the events that Scout recounts than the young narrator is completely aware of.

The Radley house is old, dark, closed-off, and uncivilized in contrast to the rest of the neighborhood: once white, it is now a slate-gray color, with rotten shingles, little sunlight, overgrown yards, and a closed door on Sundays. The Radleys are also differentiated from the community by their willful isolation from the usual patterns of social interaction, which causes the town to ostracize them and unreasonably turn the mysterious Boo into a scapegoat for any odd and unfortunate circumstances that occur. For instance, when various domesticated animals are mutilated and killed, townspeople still suspect Boo even after Crazy Addie is found guilty of this violence. This foreshadows the town's treatment of Tom Robinson later in the book - they will find him guilty despite rational evidence to the contrary.

Scout describes the Radleys' tendency to "keep to themselves" a "predilection unforgivable in Maycomb. They did not go to church, Maycomb's principle recreation, but worshipped at home." Her choice of the word "recreation" to describe church worship hints toward the townspeople's ethical hypocrisy, especially in its close conjunction with the idea of forgiveness, a major Christian virtue. Going to church may not guarantee that people will uphold the virtues of Christianity when worship is reduced to a social event and the laws of society have more bearing upon what is "forgivable" than the laws of the church. This idea is fleshed out in more detail in Chapter 24, in which women from Maycomb's Missionary Society display equal doses of religious "morality" and outright racist bigotry.

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To the children, Boo is only what they have heard from popular legend, and interpreted in their own imaginations. Scout's retelling of Jem's description of Boo shows how her young mind could not yet distinguish between fact and fiction. Jem explains that Boo, "dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were blood-stained - if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off." The children's acceptance of such superstitions as the permanence of raw animal blood shows that they are equally susceptible to accepting the local gossip about the mysterious Boo, as evidenced by Scout's evaluation of Jem's description as "reasonable."

The childish perspective, however easily misled, is also shown in this chapter to probe closer toward truth than the adults are capable of. Dill's comment, "I'm little but I'm old," explains why his height seems disproportionate to his maturity, but also symbolically suggests that "little" people may have a wiser grasp on events than their elders. The physical representation of this facet of childhood is represented in Jem's daring rush into the Radleys' yard, in which he enters a space that has been fundamentally condemned by the entire town. The journey of this one individual against the mores of the entire group, though performed here in fear and on a dare, symbolically speaks toward events that will follow when Atticus defends Tom Robinson in court and Scout breaks up the threatening mob of townspeople. Dill tries to persuade the other two to "make him [Boo] come out" because "I'd like to see what he looks like." His desire for this "seeing" has symbolic relevance to the idea that children, who are as yet still somewhat innocent and uninfluenced by their society, have a desire to see things more truly than adults, and can be capable of understanding the fallacies of adult biases, prejudices, and false accusations.

In **Chapter 2**, the description of Scout's first day allows Lee to provide a context for the events to follow by introducing some of the people and families of Maycomb County. By introducing Miss Caroline, who is like a foreigner in the school, Lee also reveals Maycomb culture to the reader. Maycomb county children are portrayed as a mainly poor, uneducated, rough, rural group ("most of them had chopped cotton and fed hogs from the time they were able to walk"), in contrast to Miss Caroline, who wears makeup and "looked and smelled like a peppermint drop." The chapter helps show that a certain amount of ignorance prevails in Maycomb County. The school system, as represented by Miss Caroline, is well-intentioned, but also somewhat powerless to make a dent in patterns of behavior which are deeply ingrained in the town's social fabric.

As seen in the first chapter, where a person's identity is greatly influenced by their family and its history, this chapter again shows that in Maycomb, a child's behavior can be explained simply by his family's last name, as when Scout explains to her teacher "he's a Cunningham." Atticus says that Mr. Cunningham "came from a set breed of men," which suggests that the entire Cunningham line shares the same values. In this case, they have pride: they do not like to take money they can't pay back, and they continue to live off the land in poverty rather than work for the government (in the WPA, FDR's Work Projects Administration). Thus, in Maycomb County, people belong to familial "breeds," which can determine a member's disposition or temperament. All the other children in the class understand this: growing up in this setting teaches children that people can behave a certain way simply because of the family or group that they come from.

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The chapter also establishes that Scout is a very intelligent and precocious child who learned how to read through her natural instinct, sitting on Atticus's lap and following along in his book. She doesn't understand that she loves to read until her teacher tells her she can't read anymore: this shows that reading was a pleasure and a freedom she had taken for granted all her life until it is denied to her. The value of some freedoms can't be fully understood until a person is forced to part from them. Similarly, Scout and Jem will learn the full importance of justice later in the book through the trial of Tom Robinson, where justice is withheld and denied to a black man. The implication is that young people intrinsically expect certain human freedoms and have a natural sense for freedom and justice, which they only become aware of when the adults in society begin trying to take such freedoms away. Though Scout is young and impressionable, she becomes a spokesperson for her entire class, interacting with the adult teacher comfortably; this shows that though a child, she is more grown-up than some of her peers.

In this chapter, Lee also reveals how Scout looks to Jem for support and wisdom. Jem is sometimes wrong in his advice: he thinks that entailment is "having your tail in a crack" when it actually has to do with the way property is inherited, and he calls the new reading technique the "Dewey Decimal System" because he is confusing the library catalogue with the new educational theories of John Dewey. However, he gives his little sister support when she needs it even though he warns her not to tag along with him and his fifth-grade friends at school.

In **Chapter 3**, Atticus's patient teaching gives Scout a lesson that he says will help her "get along better with all kinds of folk": she has to remember to judge people on their intentions rather than their actions, and put herself into the other person's shoes in order to understand them best. The chapter establishes that Atticus can relate to all kinds of people, including poor farm children. The last sentence of the chapter, "Atticus was right," applies not only to his prediction that Jem will come down from his tree house if left alone, but also to most issues of character judgment. Atticus's opinions can usually be trusted, and he is convinced of the importance of dealing fairly and reasonably with all people, no matter what the circumstances.

The chapter introduces the Ewell family, who will figure heavily into the latter part of the book. Burris Ewell and his family manage to live outside the local and national laws because they are so poor and ignorant, belonging to the lowest circle of white Maycomb society. The Ewell children only need to come to school for the first day, and then the town will overlook the fact that they are absent, even though schooling is mandatory for all children. Likewise, Mr. Ewell is allowed to hunt out of season because he is known to be an alcoholic who spends his relief money on whiskey - if he can't hunt, his children may not eat. Here we see how the law, which is meant to protect people, can sometimes be harmful if followed too absolutely. Sometimes, it is in everyone's best interests to bend the law in special cases. The town's opinion is that no law will ever force the Ewells to change, because they are set in their "ways". Rather, the law must change to accommodate them and protect the children, who should not have to suffer needlessly.

Scout also learns that the reason Walter Cunningham doesn't pass first grade is because he has to leave school in the spring to help around the farm. The Cunninghams are not all necessarily illiterate and ignorant because of a lack of intelligence, but because they are subject to a system which subverts their chances of receiving a good

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education. The Cunninghams must keep the farm running in order to survive, and because the school system does not make any accommodations for farm children, there is a self-perpetuating societal cycle for farm families to remain uneducated and ignorant.

In **Chapter 4**, we see that the schools have attempted to teach children how to behave in groups and how to be upstanding citizens, but Scout notes that her father and Jem learned these traits without the kind of schooling she is getting. The school may be attempting to turn the children into moral beings, but Scout's moral education occurs almost exclusively in her home or in the presence of Maycomb adults and friends. This suggests that schools can only provide limited change in children's moral sensibility, or no change at all - families and communities are the true sculptors of children's sense of what is right and good, and what is not.

Accepting gifts in the Radley tree knothole and rolling accidentally into the Radley yard are some of the first signs that the children are slowly coming closer to making contact with Boo. They're still terrified, however, by the mystery of Boo. Their curiosity and the drama game they create shows how desperately they wanted to find answers to their questions about Boo in the absence of any real information or knowledge. Likewise, the townspeople have a tendency to react unfavorably to things that are "different" until they have reasons to understand the difference. In addition, the children are gradually humanizing Boo - he was referred to in the opening chapter as a "malevolent phantom," but by now, he is a real man whose antisocial behavior marks him as unusual and therefore suspicious or dangerous.

In **Chapter 5**, though Atticus tries to encourage the children to leave Boo alone, their senses of sympathy have been summoned by thinking about Boo's solitude and his strict upbringing. Though still frightened of him, they wish to befriend him and help him now. Miss Maudie's description of Boo helps the children understand him as a victim of his upbringing.

Miss Maudie is one of the only women whom Scout respects and is friendly with. Calpurnia and Miss Maudie are the main motherly influences in her life. Later on, while Aunt Alexandra imposes herself as a maternal substitute, trying to turn Scout into a "lady" against her will. Miss Maudie is the most unbiased and supportive of these three women, though Calpurnia becomes much more sympathetic as time goes by. Miss Maudie is obsessed with her flowerbeds, and goes about tending them despite disapproval of the "foot-washing Baptists," who occasionally accuse her of spending too much time in such vain earthly pursuits. Miss Maudie is opposed to these staunch, strict ideas but is also religious, showing that perhaps she finds a relationship between maintaining beautiful things in the world and connecting with God. Just as in the case of the Ewells hunting out of season, some things are more important than following the letter of the law exactly. The very religious Radley family stays indoors all day and rarely participates in community affairs, except during emergencies. However, Miss Maudie seems to think that serving living things - whether human or floral - is an important part of serving God. There is no one clear way to worship God, but the chapter suggests that reading the Bible inside all day may be an application of God's law which, like the hunting law when applied to the Ewells, becomes self-defeating if applied too severely. In both cases, the maintaining of life (Mr. Ewell's children or Miss Maudie's flowers) is more important than observing the strictest codes. Miss Maudie also believes in the

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importance of pleasure and the enjoyment of life.

In **Chapter 6**, the children come even closer to bridging the distance between themselves and Boo. Scout is reluctant to participate in these games, but can't stand to be left out, especially on charges of being too "girlish." Later on, Scout learns why Boo likes his privacy and understands why it's important to leave him alone, but for now, she is suspicious of him.

The children's attempts to connect with Boo evoke, again, the sense that children will be able to see Boo with more decency and sincerity than the rest of the populace. Their search through the darkness, the many gates, the vegetables in the yard, and then Dill's glance through the dark window with curtains through which there is one small light are somewhat symbolic of the children's search through layers of ignorance and rumor to find the truth underneath it all. By searching for the man who has been made into a monster by society, they bring back his basic common humanity and unite him with everyone else in spite of his unusual personality. Likewise, Atticus wants to make it possible for black people to exist on the same plane as whites, no longer subjected to an inhuman subjugation. Color is not insignificant here: Boo Radley is described as very, very white at the end of the book, and Tom is described as being extremely "velvety" dark - they are at opposite ends of the flesh color spectrum but both of these main "mockingbird figures" share the common dilemma of being markedly different from the flesh color considered the norm in Maycomb.

## Summary and Analysis of Chapters 7-12

### Chapter 7

Jem is "moody and silent" after the pants incident. The new school year starts, and Scout finds second grade just as boring as first. One day, she and Jem are walking home together when Jem reveals that when he found his pants that night, they were all folded up, and the tears had been crudely sewn up, as if someone knew that he would be coming back for them. He finds this highly eerie. Then, they find a ball of twine in the Radley oak tree knothole. Again, they aren't sure if it is a gift for them or not, so they leave it for a few days. When it remains in the hole for a few days, they take it, and decide that anything left there is okay to take.

Jem is excited about sixth grade, because he is going to learn about ancient Egypt. Jem tells Scout that school will get better for her. One day in October they find two little figures in their secret knothole, a boy and a girl, carved artfully out of soap. Upon closer examination, they realize that the figures are images of themselves. They wonder who could have done it - maybe Mr. Avery, a neighbor who whittles wood. In a couple of weeks, they find a package of chewing gum, an old spelling bee medal, a broken pocket watch on a chain, and an aluminum knife. Jem can't get the watch to work, but he and Scout decide to write a letter thanking the mystery person who is leaving them these gifts. They write a note of thanks and leave it in the oak tree. The next day, they are horrified to discover that someone has filled their hole up with cement. They ask Mr. Radley about it, and he claims the tree is dying and filling the knothole with cement will keep it alive. Jem is suspicious, and when he asks Atticus about it, Atticus says the tree looks very healthy, but that Mr. Radley must have a good reason for plugging up the hole. Jem thinks on Atticus's statement and about who might be leaving the gifts. He stands out on the porch by himself for a long time. When he comes inside, Scout thinks it looks like he has been crying.

### Chapter 8

Winter arrives in Maycomb and it is unexpectedly harsh. Mr. Avery blames the children for causing the bad weather, saying that disobedient children make the seasons change. Mrs. Radley dies, and Atticus goes to the Radley house to pay his respects. Upon Scout's questioning, he sternly states that he did not see Boo there.

A snowstorm arrives, and it is the first snow Scout and Jem have ever seen. School is canceled and Jem and Scout decide to make a snowman. However, there is only a little snow, and Jem and Scout aren't even sure how a snowman is made. Determined, they decide to make a snowman using soil and snow collected from their yard and from Miss Maudie's. The snowman looks quite like Mr. Avery. Atticus admires their work, but suggests they disguise the identity of their creation to avoid offending their neighbor. Jem gives the snowman Miss Maudie's hat and pruning shears, and Miss Maudie laughs at the impersonation.

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The night following the snowfall is bitterly cold. Scout wakes up in the middle of the night with Atticus over her telling her she must get up and go outside. Miss Maudie's house is on fire. Three fire trucks are trying to put out the flames, but they are hampered by the cold, and one of the hoses bursts. Atticus makes the two children wait by the Radley house so they are well out of the way. In front of the Radley yard, they shiver and hope that the flames won't come too near their own house. Miss Maudie's house collapses and her tin roof helps put out the flames. Scout understands that Miss Maudie will have to live at Miss Stephanie's house for a while.

Back at home, Atticus notices that Scout has a blanket wrapped around her shoulders and scolds her for straying from the one spot he told her to stay in. Scout explains that neither she nor Jem left the Radley yard and that they don't know where the blanket came from. They realize that Boo Radley must have slipped the blanket over Scout while she and Jem were engrossed by the fire. Mr. Radley, his brother, had been busy helping everyone else at Miss Maudie's house, so Boo is the only person that could have given Scout the blanket. Scout is amazed that she was so close to Boo and didn't even know it.

Miss Maudie is unexpectedly cheery about her house being burnt down and says she wanted a smaller house anyway, because she always wanted a bigger garden. She also notes that the fire probably started because she kept a fire going that night to keep her potted plants warm.

## Chapter 9

A boy at school, Cecil Jacobs, teases Scout, saying that her father "defends niggers". Scout will not accept insults about her father and fights Cecil. Later, she asks Atticus what the phrase means, and he explains that he has decided to defend a black man named Tom Robinson, who lives in a settlement behind the town dump. Atticus says many of the town people think he ought not defend Tom because he is black. Scout asks why he's still doing it if people don't want him to, and Atticus responds that if he didn't take the case, he wouldn't be able to "hold up my head in town," represent his county in the legislature, or even tell his children what to do. Atticus explains that every lawyer gets at least one case in a lifetime that affects them personally, and that this one is his. He tells Scout to keep her cool no matter what anyone says, and fight with her head, not her hands. Scout asks if he's going to win the case and Atticus says no, but "simply because we were licked a hundred years before we started is no reason for us not to try to win." He tells her that no matter what happens, the people of Maycomb are still their friends, and this is still their town.

Back at school, Scout works hard not to fight. Uncle Jack comes to stay with them in Maycomb for a week, which Scout enjoys, because he has a good sense of humor, even though he's a doctor. Scout has been trying out swear words on the theory that Atticus won't make her go to school if he finds out she learned them there, but after dinner Uncle Jack tells her not to use them in his presence unless she's in an extremely provoking situation. For Christmas, Jem and Scout both get air rifles and are extremely pleased.

Atticus and the children go Finch's Landing, a large house with a special staircase leading to the rooms of Simon Finch's four daughters that once allowed Finch to keep track of their comings and goings. Scout hates

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going here, because her Aunt Alexandra always tells her that she should be more ladylike - she should wear dresses and not pants, and that she should play with girls' toys like tea sets and jewelry. Aunt Alexandra hurts Scout's feeling and makes her sit at the little table in the dining room at dinner instead of the grown-up table, where Jem and Francis are sitting. Francis is Aunt Alexandra's grandson, and Scout calls him "the most boring child I ever met." Talking to Francis gives Scout the feeling of, "settling slowly to the bottom of the ocean." The only good thing about being at the Landing is Aunt Alexandra's excellent cooking.

After dinner, Francis and Scout are outside in the backyard. Francis says that Atticus is a "nigger-lover," and that now Atticus will be the ruination of the family, who won't even be able to walk the streets of Maycomb. Scout patiently awaits her chance, and then punches him squarely in the mouth. Francis screams and everyone comes outside. Francis says Scout called him a "whore-lady" and jumped on him, which Scout does not deny. Uncle Jack tells her not to use that language and pins her when she tries to run away. Scout says that she hates him. Atticus says it's high time they went home.

Back at home, Scout runs to her room to be alone. Uncle Jack comes upstairs to have a talk with her about her language. Scout points out that he doesn't understand children very well, since he never heard her side of the story. Uncle Jack asks her for her side and Scout tells him what Francis said about Atticus. Uncle Jack is very concerned and wants to go talk with Alexandra right away, but Scout pleads with him not to tell Atticus, since she doesn't want him to know that she broke her agreement not to fight anyone over the issue of Tom Robinson's case.

Scout overhears Uncle Jack and Atticus talking. Uncle Jack explains that he doesn't want to have children because he doesn't understand them well enough. Atticus muses that Scout needs to learn to keep her temper under control because in the next few months, there is going to be a lot in store for the family. Jack asks how bad it will be, and Atticus says that it couldn't be worse - the case comes down to a black man's word against the word of the white Ewell family, and the jury couldn't possibly take Tom's word over the word of white people. Atticus just hopes that he can get his children through the ordeal without having them catch "Maycomb's usual disease," when "people go stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up." Atticus hopes that Jem and Scout will look to him for their answers rather than to the townspeople. Then he calls out Scout's name and tells her to go to bed. She runs back to her room. Years later, the narrator, an aged Scout, explains she eventually came to understand that Atticus wanted her to hear everything he said.

## Chapter 10

Scout doesn't think her father can "do" anything besides be a lawyer - he doesn't do hands-on physical work and he doesn't play football. He's much older than the parents of her peers, which makes it difficult for him to take part in such activities. In addition, Atticus wears glasses because he's nearly blind in one eye. Instead of hunting, he sits and reads inside. Scout is slightly ashamed of her father, because it seems like he can't do anything noteworthy. Atticus tells Scout and Jem they can shoot their air guns at tins cans and bluebirds, but that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird. Miss Maudie affirms this, saying to Scout, "Your father's right. Mockingbirds don't do

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one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird."

One day a dog named Tim Johnson appears in the neighborhood, down the street from the Finch house. He looks strange appearance and walks slowly, with a twitch. The children tell Calpurnia, who takes one look at the dog and immediately calls Atticus to tell him that there's a rabid dog in the neighborhood. Next Calpurnia gets the town operator to call everyone in the neighborhood to warn them. She even runs over to the Radley house and yells a warning to them. Atticus and the sheriff, Heck Tate, drive up, and the sheriff gives Atticus the gun. The dog is so close to the Radley house that a stray bullet might go into the building. Atticus reluctantly takes aim and shoots the dog. The dog crumples into a heap. Jem is dumbstruck with the accuracy of his father's shot. Miss Maudie tells the children that their father used to be known as "One-Shot Finch," the best dead-shot in the county. She says he doesn't shoot unless he has to, because he feels that when he holds a gun, God has given him an unfair advantage over living beings. Scout wants to tell everyone in school about the incident, but Jem tells her not to. Jem explains that he wouldn't care if Atticus "couldn't do a blessed thing," because Atticus is a gentleman.

## Chapter 11

On their way to meet Atticus after work, Scout and Jem have to pass by Mrs. Dubose's house. Mrs. Dubose is a very mean, sick old lady who sits on her front porch and yells insults at Jem and Scout as they pass by. The day after Jem's twelfth birthday, he and Scout go to town to spend some of his birthday money. On the way, Mrs. Dubose yells to Jem that he broke Miss Maudie's grape arbor that morning, which is untrue, and yells at Scout for wearing overalls. Then she starts yelling at them about how Atticus is defending "niggers," and says that Atticus is no better than "the trash he works for." Jem tries to follow Atticus's advice regarding Mrs. Dubose: just hold your head high and be a gentleman. In town, Jem buys himself a model steam engine and buys Scout a sparkly twirling baton she has had her eye on for some time.

On the way home, in a sudden fit of anger, Jem suddenly grabs Scout's baton, cuts off all the tops of Mrs. Dubose's camellia bushes, and then snaps her baton in half. Scout watches, amazed, and begins to scream. They return home and gloomily await Atticus's return, knowing that they will be in trouble. Atticus comes home carrying green camellia buds and Scout's broken baton. He makes Jem go to Mrs. Dubose's house and apologize to her in person. Scout and Atticus discuss the necessity of keeping one's head even when times get hard. Atticus explains that he has to follow his conscience, no matter what anyone else in the town says. Jem returns from Mrs. Dubose's house. Atticus tells him one can't hold a sick old lady responsible for what she says. Jem explains that Mrs. Dubose wants him to read out loud to her every afternoon for a full month.

Scout and Jem go to Mrs. Dubose's house, which is dark, frightening, and full of medical equipment. Mrs. Dubose is lying in bed, and she looks friendly but her face is old and hideous. Jem begins to read *Ivanhoe* and Mrs. Dubose snaps at him when he pronounces any word incorrectly. As time passes, the old woman stops speaking and her mouth opens and closes while her head sways from side to side. Jem asks her if she is all right,

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but she doesn't reply. In a few minutes, an alarm clock sounds, and Mrs. Dubose's assistant shoos them out of the room and tells them to go home because it is time for Mrs. Dubose's medicine. This same sequence of events happens every time Scout and Jem go to Mrs. Dubose's house.

Scout asks Atticus what a nigger-lover is, and he says that it's just a meaningless term that "ignorant, trashy people use when they think somebody's favoring Negroes above themselves." He tells her that these words hurt the people who say them more than they hurt him.

The end of the month arrives and Mrs. Dubose asks Scout and Jem to read to her for one more week. Each day, it seems that they stay there a little longer before the alarm sounds. When Mrs. Dubose makes remarks about Atticus's case, Jem responds with detachment and keeps his anger hidden. Weeks after the last day of reading, Atticus receives a phone call and goes to Mrs. Dubose's house for a long time. He comes back to announce that she is dead, and tells the children that she was a morphine addict. Jem and Scout's visits helped break her from her morphine addiction, which the doctors had prescribed for her as a painkiller for her illness. Atticus explained to his children that Mrs. Dubose is an example of true courage. Even though she knew she was going to die, Mrs. Dubose wanted to be free of her addiction. Atticus tells Jem that courage is about more than men with guns. Instead, it is about knowing you're going to lose but sticking to your views and fighting anyway. Mrs. Dubose won, because she died beholden to nothing. Atticus calls her "the bravest woman I ever knew."

(Part Two)

## **Chapter 12**

Jem is growing up and becoming moody and temperamental. Scout tries to give him his space, and looks forward to Dill coming in the summer. Unfortunately Dill doesn't arrive that summer - he writes to explain that he has a new father and has to stay in Meridian. To make matters worse, Atticus has to leave for two weeks for an emergency session with the state legislature. Instead of letting the children go to church unattended that Sunday, Calpurnia takes them to the First Purchase African M.E. church, an all-black congregation. Calpurnia takes special pains to make sure they are cleanly-scrubbed and as perfectly dressed as possible on Sunday.

At the church, a black woman named Lula tries to tell Calpurnia that white children don't belong at the church. However, Calpurnia points out that it's the same God, and the rest of the congregation welcomes the newcomers. Scout is surprised to hear Calpurnia speak in the same black dialect as the others, because at home, Calpurnia always speaks proper English. Inside the church, everything is much simpler than in the church she is used to, and there are no hymnbooks. Reverend Sykes announces that the collection taken up today will go to Helen, the wife of Tom Robinson. Calpurnia's son Zeebo, the town's trash collector, leads the congregation in hymns, singing each line and having the group repeat it back to him. Reverend Sykes gives a sermon, which seems similar to the sermons Scout is used to, except that he makes examples of particular people in the congregation to illustrate his points. After collection time, the Reverend counts the money collected and announces that they must raise ten dollars to give to Helen Robinson. He orders for the doors to be closed until

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everyone gives more.

After the service, Scout asks Reverend Sykes why Helen needs the collection money when she can still go to work and take her children with her. Reverend Sykes explains that she may have trouble getting any work in the fields now. Scout asks Calpurnia about this, and Calpurnia explains that it's because Tom has been accused of raping Bob Ewell's daughter. Mr. Ewell had Tom arrested and put in jail. Scout remembers that the Ewells are the ones who only come to school once a year, and are what Atticus calls "absolute trash." Calpurnia won't tell her what rape is. Scout then asks her why they don't have hymnbooks at her church, and Calpurnia explains that only a few people at the church can read. Scout also learns that Calpurnia used to work at the Landing for Miss Maudie's aunt, Miss Buford, who taught her to read. Jem asks Calpurnia why she doesn't speak with proper grammar around black people, and Calpurnia explains that it would be out of place, and that she would look pretentious. The others don't want to learn to speak the "right" way, she says, so she speaks their language. Scout asks if she can come over to Calpurnia's house sometimes to see how she lives at her own home, and Calpurnia says yes. When they arrive home, they discover Aunt Alexandra sitting on their porch.

## Analysis

The oak tree with the knothole is in the Radley yard, and after Mr. Radley fills it up claiming he is trying to save the obviously healthy tree from dying, it becomes fairly clear that Boo Radley has been leaving the presents for the children. In addition, the offerings are sweet, harmless, and clearly quite thoughtful, demonstrating that despite his lack of social skills, he means well and has a generous and perceptive nature. Boo's gifts also suggest a fondness for children. Having lost much of his childhood after being kept inside his home at all times, perhaps Boo is nostalgic and lives vicariously through watching Scout and Jem play, live, and grow. Mr. Radley, who plugs up the hole, and all the other adults discourage Boo's interaction with the children, but Jem feels great sympathy for the man, reflecting the beginning of his passage from childhood to adulthood. When the conversation with Boo ends, so do childish games, and Jem must mature. Standing alone on the porch, Jem stands on a threshold between indoors and outdoors, between childish freedom and the inside civilized world of adults. In this quiet, reflective, sad moment, we don't know what Jem is thinking, but perhaps he is mourning the last days of his own childhood as much as the unfair imprisonment of his mysteriously detached new friend, Boo Radley.

**Chapter 8** is concerned mainly with the conclusion of the search for Boo Radley, with more narrative than thematic material. The narrative outlines the children's activities, including sneaking around the Radley house, finding presents left in the tree, discovering the hole has been filled with cement, and watching Miss Maudie's house burn down. While watching the fire, Boo wraps a blanket around Scout, and she doesn't even notice. Throughout these chapters, Boo is portrayed as a friend to the children and a caretaker of sorts. He looks out for them, giving them thoughtful gifts and making sure they stay warm when stuck out in the cold. Clearly, Boo watches the children, and his actions in these chapters foreshadow his daring rescue later on.

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The threat of the fire unites the community as everyone works together to try to overcome it. Even Mr. Radley, who generally does not interact with his neighbors, comes out to help fight the flames. Ironically, Miss Maudie is happy to be forced to have a smaller house because she wants a bigger garden. Miss Maudie loves to spend time outdoors. Throughout the book, the location of people and events inside or outside of houses is highly relevant. In general, those who are usually seen and described as being willfully inside the house: Mrs. Dubose and Aunt Alexandra in particular, are often more corrupted by prejudices of society. The open-minded children run outside constantly, and Dill in particular has no house of his own, making him extremely free. Miss Maudie stays outside a great deal, as does the sheriff, Heck Tate, and both prove to be on the side of all that is good. Those who are forced to stay inside are victims of society's influence, especially Boo Radley and Tom Robinson, who both live within their respective forms of jail for much of the book. Atticus is an exception: the presence of his office gives him a different kind of house to live in, one that is tied into the fabric of society and yet is also outside of it. Atticus very rarely uses his car, and his daily walks back and forth from home to his office demonstrate that he is part of the "outside" world of free thinkers.

**Chapter 9** lays some of the groundwork for the upcoming Tom Robinson trial, which will occupy the remainder of the novel. Atticus knows it will be a difficult time for the children, and though the reader doesn't know anything about the case yet, Atticus already claims that it is hopeless, because the jury simply won't believe a black man's word against a white man's, no matter what the evidence. The trial is thus about more than simply setting a man free - Atticus seems sure that he won't win, but he suggests it will cause a stir in the town that will have major repercussions. The bigotry and racism that have been endemic to Southern society for a hundred years may not be eradicated by this single case, but Atticus will fight anyway to do his small part in working towards equality and to follow his own conscience and set an example for the community. Atticus knows that if he is false in his work as a lawyer, than he cannot be true to his family or friends.

This first introduction of Aunt Alexandra presents her as a dominating and traditional presence with strong opinions about how Scout ought to behave. Her ideas of what a Southern lady should do become a constant reminder for Scout that she is always doing something "wrong." However, Scout is always comforted by knowing the accepting and open-minded Atticus doesn't mind her "too much" the way she is. Scout's behavior constantly flies in the face of traditional Southern female attributes, but the codes that her aunt tries to force on her often seem unreasonable and unjustified since they are based mainly on sheer tradition. Scout can maintain her youthful identity for now, but when Aunt Alexandra moves in with the Finch family during the trial, she will find herself more directly torn between two worlds - her childhood innocence and the ideal behavior of a Southern lady.

These parallel struggles of individual identity against communal tradition - Atticus's preservation of his own morals and Scout's preservation of her own idea of what it means to be a girl - suggest that though Atticus's fight for justice is very difficult and lonely, the process of growing up as a tomboy in the 1930s South could be equally painful and lonely at times, and certainly contributed to Scout's strong character development. Atticus clearly encouraged Scout to be her own kind of girl, both directly and through his personal approach to his own life.

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The rabid dog in **Chapter 10** is a deadly, dangerous menace to the town, and its presence affects everyone in the community, black or white, irrespective of class or personality. Thus, just like the fire, the dog creates a unifying affect over the neighborhood - no one is immune to it, and everyone must take cover together. Later in the book, Atticus uses the court of law in a similar way, making everyone equal, regardless of ethnicity or social stature. In addition, we also learn that even though Atticus does not like to shoot, he is an excellent marksman. Atticus does not brag about his strengths or talents, he simply uses them when necessary. When Atticus holds the gun, the fate of the entire community rests upon his shoulders, a role which will be discussed more in Chapter 24, where Miss Maudie points out that the town depends upon Atticus to uphold truth for them all. Atticus dislikes handling a gun because he believes it gives him an unfair advantage over all living things. However, in the name of public safety, Atticus's moral code calls for him to protect his family and neighbors and kill the dog. Again, this shows how a law, such as nature's law or even a personal law such as Atticus's avoidance of guns, must sometime be bent toward a higher aim.

Atticus is not the only important figure in the rabid dog crisis. Calpurnia is the first to recognize the serious nature of the situation, and she immediately makes the right phone calls, and runs to warn the neighbors. She protects many from danger, but receives no praise in comparison to Atticus who actually kills the dog. Though Atticus's skill with a gun is remarkable, Calpurnia's swift action and knowledge are invaluable. This is a reflection of how the black community's assistance to the white community in Maycomb is often unacknowledged.

Atticus's warning about shooting a mockingbird is the first reference to the novel's title and mockingbird theme. Atticus doesn't want his children to inflict cruelty upon the innocent mockingbirds just because they have the power to, just as he doesn't like to shoot for sport. His warning serves to emphasize the responsibilities that come with power. Those who have power must be careful not to use it cruelly against the innocent and harmless. The powerful must be careful in choosing whom they target. In the trial of the harmless Tom Robinson, the white people in the jury have power over the black man, and choose to exercise their power poorly, declaring him guilty simply because he is black. Here, Tom Robinson is in the same situation as the mockingbird. The mockingbird theme will also appear at the end of the book when Boo rescues Jem and Scout. To avoid making Boo suffer a trial, the sheriff and Atticus agree that Bob Ewell fell on his own knife.

Again, the events of **Chapter 11** help underscore the severe racial intolerance of many of the townspeople, and the extreme ostracizing the Finches undergo in the name of maintaining good conscience. Mrs. Dubose calls all black people "trash" without exception, and tests Jem's patience. Atticus wants the children to understand that courage has to do with the fight for one's personal goals, no matter what the odds are against achieving the goal. Heroism consists of the fight itself, the struggle against fate, circumstance, or any other overpowering force. Mrs. Dubose's goal is to break free from her addiction to morphine. Her struggle against the clock and mortality is easily compared to Atticus's struggle to uphold his own morals despite the hopelessness of his case and the lack of support he has in town. According to Atticus's definition, he and Mrs. Dubose are both brave, even heroic, and he wants the children to follow their example. Even though Mrs. Dubose is a mean and bigoted old woman, she does have good qualities that demand respect. Atticus wants the children to see that though many of

the townspeople are ignorant and racist, they also have personal strengths and are not fundamentally bad people.

Jem learns some lessons on how to remain impassive even when his father's judgment is questioned and criticized. Jem is usually calmer and quieter than Scout, but his outward calm often disguises as much hurt and anger as Scout feels and expresses. Because he so rarely expresses his rage in verbal or physical fights, he often ends up bottling his feelings up. When these feelings explode, as when he cuts up Mrs. Dubose's flowers, the explosion is much bigger and more destructive than anything Scout would normally do, and he finds himself extremely ashamed afterwards. Part of Scout and Jem's growing up consists of understanding how to manage their feelings of anger. Scout must learn to calm her responses, whereas Jem may need to learn to find useful ways to express his feelings rather than suppress them.

**Chapter 12** offers the one real window into the life and culture of Maycomb's black community. The scarcity of views into the "Quarters," the black residential part of town, most likely reflects accurately upon what it would be like to grow up as a white girl in the Deep South in the 1930s. Scout lives almost exclusively in a middle-class white world, and as the book tends to stay centered around her own experience, it almost never moves into other racial circles. The narrowness of her own experience, seen through the book, demonstrates the rigidity of Maycomb's segregated society.

The First Purchase church is noticeably shabbier and simpler than Scout's church, reflecting the material poverty of its congregation. However, though materially poor, the congregation displays a richness in human and spiritual dignity. Though exposed to decades of white racist hatred and discrimination, the entire congregation (except Lula) gives the Finch children a warm welcome. For the most part, the black community seems unified in a sense of solidarity that their poverty and shared hardships help to solidify. The Reverend singles out individuals in front of the group in his sermon because within a community of discriminated people, the actions of individuals have a more profound effect upon the image of the entire group. Thus, it becomes every individual's responsibility to act with the group's common goals in mind. Likewise, in making a collection for Helen Robinson, everyone in the community must sacrifice a little more than they are comfortable with in order to help out those in need. In a more affluent social group, the very wealthy can act as philanthropists, doling out large sums to support the very poor without significant sacrifice to their own large fortunes. In the black community, the needs of the poorest members are felt by everyone else in the group.

Despite the differences between the black and white congregations, Scout notes that most aspects of the service are very similar, including the nature of the sermon itself. This demonstrates that the two groups, though so socially segregated, share much in common where the issue of faith is concerned. Like the courtroom (house of the state), later in the book, the church (house of God) is a space in which all people can be treated on equal terms.

Calpurnia's ability to speak both the English of the white community and of the black community shows one aspect of her role as a mediator between the otherwise far-separated worlds of black and white. She is often called upon as a go-between between the two communities, as in the case of the death of Tom Robinson in

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chapter 24. She manages to bridge both worlds without becoming a foreigner to both, as in the case of the "mixed" children seen around the courthouse in Chapter 16. However, the discussion of English dialects also dates Lee's book considerably, as white grammar is referred to as "proper" English, whereas black grammar comes across as being a more ignorant way of speaking. More recent linguistic research has demonstrated that the dialects of African-American English follow the same logical, systematic rules as all languages and are correct and perfectly contained unto themselves. Calpurnia explains that members of the black community prefer to speak their own form of English, which shows that their dialect helps to identify them as a group, an idea which has contemporary reverberations with respect to the issue of introducing Ebonics in American public schools.

Lula's defensive attitude toward allowing the Finch children into the church demonstrates that although the black community is by and large welcoming, there are always people, black or white, who are less generous or unfair, which relates to Atticus's courtroom speech where he explains that there are honest and dishonest people everywhere, regardless of race. Creating one somewhat hostile black character in Lula, saves the black populace from becoming an unrealistic stereotype for unambiguous "good" in the book. The experience of being temporarily restricted from the space of the church also forces the Finch children to momentarily experience the same kind of racial discrimination that is a terrible daily reality for the black community. Lula's actions suggest that in retaliation against the cruelty of white domination, she wants the black community to, like whites, have their own spaces and lead mutually exclusive lives. The others, however, seem more interested in working toward a peaceful integration between blacks and whites despite historical atrocities and animosity.

## Summary and Analysis of Chapters 13-18

### Chapter 13

Aunt Alexandra has decided (and convinced Atticus) it would be best for the family if she stays with them for "a while," which worries Scout even though she knows there's nothing to be done. Aunt Alexandra establishes herself in the neighborhood and continues to pester the children about what they should and should not do. She is old-fashioned and proper, and often refers to the people of Maycomb in light of their family history. She seems to believe that behaviors and character traits are hereditary, passed on from one generation to the next - one family might have a Gambling Streak, or a Mean Streak, or a Funny Streak. She also judges families on the basis of how long they have been settled in the same place. Those who have stayed on the same land for many generations are deemed "Fine Folks," whereas Scout always thought that "Fine Folks" were those who "did the best they could with the sense they had." Scout reasons that in Aunt Alexandra's eyes, the Ewells, who are very poor, are "Fine Folks," because they have stayed on the same land by the town dump for three generations, which clearly is not the case.

Scout remembers how Maycomb was founded around an old tavern run by a man named Sinkfield. Its location was very far inland and away from the only form of transportation in that day - riverboats. Thus, the original town families tended to intermarry a great deal, until most people looked fairly similar in the town. Newcomers arrived rarely, and when a new person married a Maycomb family, the new genes were noticeable. Most old people still know each other so well that every behavior is somewhat predictable and repetitive.

Aunt Alexandra wants the children to know all about the Finch family and uphold its genteel heritage, but Atticus has not introduced them to the entirety of their family history, and instead has told them amusing stories, such as how their cousin Josh went insane at university. Aunt Alexandra tries to pressure Atticus into telling the children why they should behave and "live up to your name." Atticus makes an attempt, but when Scout begins to get upset with this strange side of her father she has never seen before, he returns to his original principles and finds himself incapable of passing on what Aunt Alexandra deems important. Scout is relieved when her father returns to the same old Atticus, and says she knew what he was trying to do, but that "it takes a woman to do that kind of work."

### Chapter 14

Scout asks her father what rape is. He tells her it is "carnal knowledge of a female by force and without consent." Later on, Aunt Alexandra finds out that Scout and Jem went to the black church with Calpurnia and tries to forbid Scout from visiting Calpurnia's home. Moreover, Aunt Alexandra tries to make Atticus fire Calpurnia, but he refuses on the grounds that she's done an excellent job of running the house and raising the children, and the children love her. Jem takes Scout aside and tries to tell her not to antagonize their aunt. He and Scout get into a fist fight, which Atticus breaks up, saying that Scout doesn't have to obey Jem unless he can

make her do so.

That night Scout feels something under her bed and thinks a snake is hiding there. She gets Jem to investigate, and they discover Dill hiding under Scout's bed. Dill tells a long story about being locked and chained in a basement and escaping with a traveling animal show. Then, he tells the real story of how he stole money from his mother's purse, and walked and hitched his way from the train station to the Finch house. Dill is very hungry and Scout gets him some cold cornbread to eat while mentally noting that Dill is now "home." Jem says that Dill should let his mother know where he is and goes to report the situation to Atticus. Scout remarks that by taking this action, Jem "broke the remaining code of our childhood". However, Atticus is lenient, and calls Miss Rachel to inform her of the situation and ask if Dill can stay the night. Miss Rachel appears on the scene and reprimands Dill but allows him to stay. Dill and Jem sleep in Jem's room, which adjoins Scout's room.

Late at night, Dill wakes Scout up and asks if he can sleep with her. He explains that his new father and mother don't seem interested in him, and that is why he left. They were kind to him, but did not seem to need him around. To Dill, it seemed they would rather spend time alone together than with him. Scout realizes how lucky she is to have a family that needs her. Then Dill suggests that they have a baby together, and even though he knows how babies are made, he makes up a long dreamy story about a magic island where babies are collected like flowers. Scout wonders why Boo Radley doesn't run away, and Dill replies saying maybe Boo doesn't have anywhere to run to.

### Chapter 15

Dill is allowed to stay for the summer. Just a week later, events surrounding the trial begin to come to a head. First, a group of men pay a call to Atticus at his home. Jem and Scout watch from inside. The men make allusions to Tom being moved to the Maycomb jail the next day (Sunday), because the trial will occur on Monday. They are concerned that the "Saram bunch" will cause some trouble, but Atticus thinks they won't do anything (such as a lynching) on a Sunday night. Mr. Link Deas warns Atticus that he has everything to lose from the trial, but Atticus says that he wants the truth to come out. Jem is concerned that the men outside mean Atticus harm, but Atticus assures him later that those men are his friends and are not part of a gang or the Ku Klux Klan, whom Atticus claims is gone and will never come back. Jem overhears Aunt Alexandra warning Atticus that he is bringing disgrace to the family name. Jem is still concerned for Atticus's safety.

On Sunday there are more people at church than ever in Scout's memory - even Mr. Underwood from the town newspaper is there, and he almost never attends church. Later that afternoon, Atticus leaves the house in his car, carrying an electrical extension cord with a light bulb at the end. He refuses to allow Jem and Scout to come. Around 10:00pm, Jem starts changing his clothes and tells Scout that he's going downtown. Scout insists on coming, and they pick up Dill on the way. They look for Atticus in his office, but finally spy him sitting outside the county jail, with the light bulb providing light for him to read his book. The children stay a safe distance away so Atticus won't notice them. Jem feels reassured knowing where his father is, but as they are about to head home, four old cars come into town. A shadowy group of men emerges. Atticus informs them that the

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sheriff is nearby, but they counter that they called him into the woods on false pretenses. Atticus still seems unperturbed. Suddenly Scout runs out into the circle, but is taken aback when she realizes that these men are strangers to her. Atticus orders the children to go home, but Jem refuses. One man picks up Jem by the collar, and Scout kicks the man in the groin. Jem still refuses to leave.

Scout becomes interested in the men, who smell of "whiskey and pigpen" and are dressed in heavy dark clothes despite the summer night. Looking for a friendly face in the group, she recognizes Mr. Cunningham, the father of Walter from her class at school. Trying to be cordial, she innocently begins to talk to Mr. Cunningham about how Walter is a good boy, and recounts how they invited him home for dinner one day, and asks Mr. Cunningham to say hello to his son for her. Then she tries to engage him on the topic of his entailment, which she heard her father mention once, but notices that everyone is staring at her. Mr. Cunningham bends down to Scout's height and says, "I'll tell him you say hey, little lady." The men decide to disperse, and go home in their cars. Mr. Underwood reveals himself in a nearby window with a gun, pointing out that he had them covered the whole time. The Finch family and Dill head home.

## **Chapter 16**

Scout cries that night and Jem consoles her. Atticus says that Mr. Underwood despises black people, but was still willing to defend Atticus. Aunt Alexandra urges Atticus not to speak like that in front of Calpurnia, but Atticus protests as usual, claiming fairness and honesty are important. Scout wonders out loud why Mr. Cunningham wanted to hurt Atticus when he usually is Atticus's friend. Atticus explains that some people can forget that they are human beings when they become part of a mob. Clearly moved by the situation, Atticus explains to her that it took an eight-year-old girl to bring them to their senses.

Tom Robinson's trial begins, and despite warnings from Atticus to stay at home, Scout, Jem, and Dill go to the courthouse where the locals are all out picnicking in the park. They notice Mr. Dolphus Raymond drinking liquor from a paper bag and sitting with the black people. Jem explains that he married a black woman and that he has "mixed" children. Jem says that these children are "sad" because they don't feel accepted by black people or by white people - though they can be accepted in the North. They see one of the mixed children and Scout thinks he looks black. She asks Jem how to determine whether someone is "mixed" or not and Jem says that you can't tell by looking, you have to know their history. The Finch family is all white, but Jem considers that during Biblical times, it is possible some of their ancestors came from Africa. However, Jem notes that probably doesn't count because it was so long ago. In Maycomb county, if anyone has a drop of black blood, society considers them all black.

In the packed courthouse, the children have trouble getting seats until Reverend Sykes helps them find seats upstairs in the balcony where the black people sit. Scout observes Judge Taylor, whom she considers to be a rather good, sensible judge.

## **Chapter 17**

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The trial begins with the testimony of the sheriff, Heck Tate. The prosecution's attorney, Mr. Gilmer, asks him about the events surrounding Tom Robinson and Mr. Ewell's daughter, Mayella. Mr. Tate states that on November 21, Mr. Ewell came to get him because "some nigger'd raped his girl." He says that he found Mayella on the floor, very beaten up, and that Mayella claimed Tom Robinson had taken advantage of her and beaten her. Atticus questions Tate next, asking whether anyone called a doctor. Mr. Tate says no. Atticus asks where Mayella had been beaten, and Mr. Tate says, with some hesitation, that her right eye and entire right side of her face were bruised, and she had scratches all around her neck.

Mr. Ewell is the next witness. Scout recollects mentally the way that the Ewells live, in a tiny hut made of planks and corrugated iron and flattened tin cans, surrounded by junk salvaged from the nearby dump. In the corner of the yard there are some geraniums planted in slop jars by Mayella, which appear to be the most cared for living things on the property. Scout concludes that the only thing separating Mr. Ewell from the black people around him, in terms of social standing, is that his skin is white.

Mr. Ewell is surly and crass in the witness chair, but the judge, who clearly does not respect the man, manages to keep everything orderly. Mr. Gilmer asks Mr. Ewell for his version of the events. Mr. Ewell claims that he heard Mayella screaming when he was coming in from the woods with kindling, and that he ran to the house to find Tom Robinson having sexual intercourse with her. He uses the highly offensive term "rutting," which causes an uproar in the court. After the judge calms everyone down, Mr. Ewell says that he ran to get the sheriff. He implores the judge to "clean up" the "nigger-nest" that are his neighbors, claiming that his neighborhood is getting dangerous.

Atticus questions Mr. Ewell, asking whether a doctor was called, and Mr. Ewell again says that no doctor was called, saying that he has never called a doctor in his life and never thought of doing so. Atticus asks if Mr. Ewell remembers Mayella's injuries as being the same as described by the sheriff. Mr. Ewell says that he does. Atticus asks if Mr. Ewell can write, and he says he can, so Atticus asks him to write his name on an envelope. In so doing, it is revealed that Mr. Ewell is left-handed.

## Chapter 18

It is now Mayella's turn to be a witness. She is very distraught and cries in the witness stand, saying that she is afraid of Atticus. She finally tells Mr. Gilmer that her father asked her to chop up an old chiffarobe (chest of drawers) for kindling, but she didn't feel strong enough. When Tom Robinson walked by, she asked him to do it for a nickel. She claims that she went inside for the money, and Tom followed her, pushed her to the floor, and took advantage of her while she screamed and tried to fight back. Then, her father arrived and Tom ran away. After Mr. Gilmer has allowed Mayella to tell her story, it is Atticus's turn.

Atticus questions Mayella, but first asks her some background questions to show the jury what kind of family she comes from. At first, Mayella takes exception to Atticus calling her "Miss Mayella," and the judge has to explain that Atticus is imply being polite. He treats everyone on the stand with the same respect, no matter who

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they are or where they come from. In her cross-examination, we learn Mayella is nineteen and her family receives relief checks, but there isn't enough food to go around; her father seems to be a drunkard. Mayella went to school for a few years but none of her eight siblings go, and their mother is dead. Mayella doesn't seem to have any friends. Atticus asks if Mr. Ewell is a loving father, and with hesitation, Mayella says that he is "tolerable" except when he has been drinking. However, she insists that he never lays a hand on her or beats her. Atticus asks if this was the first time Tom Robinson has been invited into her house, and she jumps a little before she says that it was the first time. He asks Mayella if she remembers being beaten in the face, and Mayella first says no, but then yes. Atticus asks her to identify the man who raped her, and Mayella points to Tom, who Atticus asks to stand. Everyone in the courtroom notices that Tom's left arm is twelve inches shorter than his right, due to an accident in his youth when the arm got stuck a cotton gin. Atticus asks for more details about the struggle, then he asks many questions which Mayella doesn't answer: Why didn't the other children hear her screaming? Where were they? Why didn't they come running? Did she start screaming when she saw her father in the window? Did she get beaten up by her father, not Tom Robinson?

Mayella just says that she was taken advantage of, and if the upper class gentlemen won't prosecute Tom, they are cowards. Atticus appears to have found his exchange with the young woman distasteful. The court rests for ten minutes, but no one leaves the courthouse

#### Analysis

Aunt Alexandra's views typify the general consensus of traditional assumptions held by the Maycomb community. She introduces the idea of "Fine Folks" to Scout, who will be forever perplexed about what criteria are used to determine whether or not a family fits this category. The rigidity of behavior patterns that Aunt Alexandra (and the rest of Maycomb) believe in demonstrate that individuals from white families also are subject to a certain amount of discrimination on the basis of their family's social stature. Individuals are not judged on their own qualities, but rather upon stereotypes forced upon their entire clan. Given the enormous amount of racism in Maycomb, it becomes incredibly unlikely that whites will treat blacks with respect. According to Aunt Alexandra's way of thinking, dishonesty and inferiority are traits somehow genetically endemic to the entire race.

Aunt Alexandra begins trying to form Scout into a proper Southern girl, and meets with much opposition. She has a strong idea of what Finch women should be like, based upon years of family tradition, and tries to impose this onto Scout. In this way, Scout is also a victim of this old-fashioned system for judging individuals, and as Aunt Alexandra tries to mold her into the image of Southern femininity, she gets a clear taste of what it is like to be held up to a stereotyped identity rather than being allowed to simply be herself.

Jem's behavior in **Chapter 14** seems to betray Dill, and demonstrates his progress into the adult sphere. In addition, he suggests that Scout be less defiant toward their aunt, putting himself onto the adult side of the argument, to Scout's annoyance. The interaction between the two suggests that children (like Scout) are more immune to the attitudes and mindsets of the society around them, but as they grow older (like Jem), they

unwittingly find themselves replicating and reinforcing society's traditional views.

Dill's story about his experiences with his parents show Scout how much she has to be grateful for. Even her aunt's constant pestering is a sign of her care for Scout, which is much better than the ambivalence that Dill experienced. Dill enjoys fantasy, as evidenced by his fanciful story about how babies are made. Even though he knows the real truth, he prefers the story he makes up. Dill's flights of fancy are an escape, like his physical escape from Meridian, into a world where he feels more at "home." When everyday life does not satisfy him, he can find solace again in his make believe world.

Scout and Dill's relationship, though close, is still childish and innocent, as shown in the end of the chapter. Their discussion about babies also suggests that Scout knows less about the facts of life than she claims in later chapters, and that it is possible that the meaning of rape is still unclear in her mind.

In **Chapter 15**, Atticus's stance at the door of the jail is symbolic of his role throughout the book. The night is dark, like the culture of bigotry and ignorance in Maycomb. Atticus's light illuminates the night, just as he strives to teach his community the truth and expose their unfairness. The light is an unusual addition to the scene: it would not occur outside the jail unless Atticus brought it there. Likewise, without people like Atticus going out of their way to help others, the darkness of prejudice could perpetuate itself indefinitely. Atticus doesn't hold a gun or any other weapon, but carries only a book. He is determined to guard the basic human rights of Tom and all others by using his knowledge and experience in law. With his high morals, Atticus will not lower himself to the violent measures used by others, even for his own self-defense.

Atticus also reveals his fatal flaw: he tends to be overly optimistic or unrealistically hopeful at times. For instance, his prediction that the Ku Klux Klan will never return is mistaken, and even though he doesn't believe anyone will cause trouble at the jail on a Sunday night, the town members prove him wrong. It is also noticeable unclear as to whether Atticus knew Mr. Underwood was looking out for him until after the mob disperses. If he did not know, then he could have put himself in considerable danger.

Scout's conversation with Mr. Cunningham emphasizes her knowledge of young Walter Cunningham and reminds Mr. Cunningham of the human bonds that connect everyone in the town. From the indistinguishable group of men, she singles him out and restores his individuality out of anonymity by addressing him by name and recalling his son and entailment. When people join together in a mob, they lose a feeling of responsibility for their actions, because they act as a group rather than as separate individuals. Scout's ability to separate Mr. Cunningham from his group is a result of the sheer innocence of her statements, which shows how inconceivable violence is to her, and forces them to reconsider their behavior. Mr. Cunningham, confronted with the shame of the group's plans and having been reminded of his own responsibility in them, decides to remove himself from the scene, and everyone else follows.

In **Chapter 16**, Scout's and Jem's discussion of "mixed" children demonstrates the irrationality of prejudice. A "mixed" child could look completely black or completely white, but would still be considered "black" either

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way. Yet, family history is also a poor determinant of race, because as Jem points out, the human race probably originated in Africa or the Middle East, and a drop of black blood makes a person "black." Therefore, neither image nor family history is infallible. Thus, discrimination is shown to be even more arbitrary and senseless.

The Finch children again find themselves welcomed and even honored among blacks when Reverend Sykes invites them to the balcony, and chairs are vacated in the front row on their behalf.

In **Chapter 17**, the Ewells belong to the bottom set of Maycomb's whites. Mr. Ewell shows himself to be arrogant and crude. Maycomb reluctantly has bent the laws for the Ewells, and Mr. Ewell's manner is of one who is beyond the law. He is described as a "bantam cock" who struts around arrogantly yet ridiculously, and he tries to invoke the good humor of the audience, whines to the judge about being asked to prove his ability to write, and offends everyone with his language, putting the court into five minutes of uproar. The chapter depicts him as brutish, insensitive, and confident of his ability to get away with his perjury.

In this chapter, Atticus demonstrates his excellent skills as a lawyer. Atticus treats both the sheriff and Ewell with respect, and carefully asks questions that poke holes in the Ewells' claims. For instance, he first determined exactly what injuries Mayella suffered, and then manipulates Ewell into revealing that he is left-handed, and that a left-handed man most likely beat Mayella, causing bruising on the right side of her face.

In **Chapter 18**, we learn that Mayella's life is one of miserable poverty and deprivation. She shows she is accustomed to being treated without respect when she thinks Atticus is deliberately mocking her by calling her "Miss." She seems hopelessly immature for nineteen years old and her whiney or tearful attitude suggests a subtle sly manipulation of her audience, as if on some level she wants to capitalize off of whatever pity she can invoke for her social state and extend it toward her fictionalized state as a supposed rape victim. She also appears quite afraid of Atticus. There is good in Mayella, her flowers are the only beautiful thing at the Ewell residence, and Scout thinks that Mayella seems to make an effort to keep herself clean, but her actions seem motivated by cowardice. She is initially reluctant to say Tom's name when asked to name her rapist, but she does surrender to fear and accuse him, thus putting her fear of public humiliation over the value of his life.

Scout and Jem listen intently to everything that is said in the courtroom. Here, Scout and Jem watch their father in action. He shows himself to be a highly respectful man, and he carefully and deliberately outlines each piece of evidence. Atticus never shows disapproval of either Mr. Ewell or Mayella, and is kind and courteous, despite insults he receives. This chapter builds the trial's suspense quite significantly, as the reader begins to understand Atticus's situation. He knows that Tom Robinson is innocent and it seems that Mr. Ewell is most likely to blame for Mayella's injuries. Clearly, more will soon be revealed.

## Summary and Analysis of Chapters 19-24

### Chapter 19

Tom Robinson is called to the witness stand. He tries to put his left hand upon the Bible, but it is a futile effort, as his left arm is entirely non-functional. The arm simply slips off the Bible again and again. Finally, the judge tells him his effort is sufficient and he can take the stand. Atticus questions Tom, first asking whether he has ever been convicted of a crime. Tom explains that he was once convicted for fighting because he could not pay the fine that would have released him. In an aside, the narrator explains that Atticus is showing how honest Tom is and that he has nothing to hide from the jury. Next, Tom gives his account of the Ewell incident.

In Tom's version, he says he passed by the Ewell house every day on his way to work at Mr. Link Deas's farm, where Tom picks cotton and does other farm work. Tom confirms that one day last spring, Mayella asked him to chop up an old chiffarobe with a hatchet, but that was long before the November day in question. After Tom performed that favor for her, Mayella often asked him to help her with odd jobs around the house as he passed by. She offered him a nickel the first time, but he refused payment, knowing that the family had no money. He said he helped her out because she didn't seem to have anyone else to help her, and that he never went onto the Ewell property without being invited. Scout thinks about how lonely Mayella is - she's so poor that white people won't befriend her, but black people will avoid her because she's white.

Atticus asks about the events on November 21 of that year. Tom says that he passed the Ewell house as usual, and everything seemed very quiet. Mayella asked him to come inside and fix a broken door, but when he got inside the house, the door didn't look broken. Then, Mayella shut the door behind him and said she had sent the children to town to get ice cream, having saved for a very long time to be able to give each child a nickel. Tom starts to leave, but she asks him to take a box down from on top of another chiffarobe. As Tom reached for the box, Mayella grabbed him around his legs. He was so startled that he overturned a chair. Next, she hugged him round the waist and kissed his cheek, and as Tom explains, said that, "she never kissed a grown man before an' she might as well kiss a nigger. She says what her pap do to her don't count." Mayella asks him to kiss her back, and Tom asks her to let him out of the house. However, her back is to the door, and he doesn't want to force her to move. He knows that as a black man, if he lays a hand on her he could later be killed. Then Mr. Ewell arrives, happens upon the scene, calls his daughter a "goddamn whore," and tells her he will kill Tom. Tom runs away in fear.

Mr. Gilmer questions Tom next, and he does so fairly aggressively, addressing him only as "boy". Mr. Gilmer tries to get at Tom's motivations for helping Mayella, insinuating that he must have had ulterior motives for helping her. Tom finally says he just tried to help because he felt sorry for her, which stirs up the audience considerably, as it is unacceptable for a black man to feel sorry for a white woman. Mr. Gilmer asks whether Tom thinks Mayella was lying about asking him to chop up the chiffarobe in November. Tom avoids a potential trap by saying he thinks Mayella must be, "mistaken in her mind" about this and everything else. Mr. Gilmer

asks why Tom ran if he had a clear conscience, and Tom said he was afraid of being tried in court, not for what he did, but for what he didn't do.

At this point, Dill starts to cry, and Scout takes him outside the courthouse. He says he can't bear to watch Mr. Gilmer behaving so disrespectfully toward Tom. Scout says that all lawyers do that and Mr. Gilmer didn't even seem to be trying as usual today. Dill points out that Atticus isn't like that. A sympathetic voice behind them agrees that it makes him sick too - they turn to see Mr. Dolphus Raymond.

## **Chapter 20**

Mr. Dolphus Raymond is known as the town drunk, because he always carries his drink in a brown paper bag, and tends to sway a bit in his walk. Mr. Raymond is also married to a black woman and has mixed children. When running from the courthouse, Dill and Scout run into Mr. Raymond and he offers Dill a sip of his drink. Scout is wary, but Mr. Raymond promises Dill it will make him feel better. Dill takes a sip and discovers Mr. Raymond is hiding a bottle of Coca-Cola in his infamous paper bag. Scout asks why he does such a thing, and Mr. Raymond explains he feels he has to give the population some reason for his odd behavior (being friendly toward black people). Mr. Raymond believes it's easier for people to handle strangeness when they have a reason to explain it. Thus, he pretends to be a drunkard. He says he thinks that children like Dill, who is so upset over the trial, haven't lost the instinct that tells them that it's wrong for white people to "give hell" to black people without consideration for their basic humanity.

Scout and Dill return to the courtroom, where Atticus is beginning his speech to the jury. Atticus explains that the case is very simple, because there is no medical evidence and very questionable testimony to prove Tom's guilt. Atticus explains that Mayella has, "broken a rigid and time-honored code of our society" by attempting to seduce a black man. He acknowledges her poverty and ignorance, but says, "I cannot pity her: she is white." He explains that Mayella followed her desires even though she was aware of the social taboos against her actions. Having broken one of society's strictest codes, she chose to, "put the evidence of her offense," namely Tom Robinson, away from her by testifying against him. Atticus accuses Mayella of trying to rid herself of the source of her own guilt.

Atticus suggests that Mr. Ewell beat his own daughter, as shown by Mayella's bruising on her right side. Mr. Ewell leads predominately with his left, while Tom can't punch with his left hand at all. Atticus points out that the case comes down to the word of a black man against the word of the white people, and that the Ewells' case depends upon the jury's assumption that "all black men lie." Uncharacteristically, Atticus loosens his tie and removes his jacket, which Scout and Jem are astounded to see, because he never walks about so casually. In his final remarks, Atticus speaks directly to the jury, earnestly reminding them that there are honest and dishonest black people just as there are honest and dishonest white people. He tells the jury that in a court of law, "all men are created equal." A court is, however, no better than the members of its jury, and he urges the jury to do their duty. As his speech comes to a close, Scout and Jem see Calpurnia moving toward the front of the court.

## Chapter 21

Calpurnia arrives with a note for Atticus from Aunt Alexandra, who is concerned that the children have been gone all day. The court witnesses this exchange, and then the children are pointed out to Atticus. He sends the children home, but allows them to return to hear the jury's verdict after they eat their dinner. The children return home, where Aunt Alexandra is saddened to hear that the three of them, particularly Scout, were at the courthouse. Everyone eats, and then walks back to court. The jury is still deliberating, but the courthouse is still packed. Usually, people leave to go eat or walk around the square, but due to the weightiness of this case, everyone has stayed inside the courthouse, eagerly awaiting the decision. Everyone is silent and still, and Scout feels the sensation of chilliness in the room. Finally, the jury returns. Scout notices that not a single member of the jury looks at Tom, and she takes this as a bad sign. Meanwhile, she and Jem can't believe that anyone could convict Tom because he is so clearly innocent. Judge Taylor polls the jury, and every man declares Tom guilty. Atticus whispers something to Tom, then exits the courtroom. All the black people in the balcony rise to their feet to honor Atticus as he passes them.

## Chapter 22

Jem is crying and angry - he thought that the case was clearly in Tom's favor. Atticus is exhausted and when Jem asks him how the jury could have done it he responds, "I don't know, but they did it. They've done it before and they did it tonight and they'll do it again and when they do it - seems like only children weep." However, the next morning, he explains that there's a good possibility for the case to be appealed in a higher court. Calpurnia reveals that the black community has left Atticus all sorts of appreciative gifts including chickens, bread and produce that have filled the house. Upon seeing this generosity, Atticus's eyes fill with tears. He says he's very grateful but tells Calpurnia that they shouldn't give him such things when times are so hard.

Dill comes by for breakfast and tells everyone that Miss Rachel thinks that, "if a man like Atticus Finch wants to butt his head against a stone wall it's his head." The children go outside and Miss Maudie saves them from Miss Stephanie's nosy gossip by inviting them over for cake. Miss Maudie says that Atticus is someone who does other people's unpleasant jobs for them. Jem is discouraged and disappointed with the people of Maycomb, who he formerly thought were "the best people in the world." He thinks that no one but Atticus worked on Tom's behalf, but Miss Maudie points out that many people helped, including Mr. Tate the sheriff, the black community, and especially Mr. Taylor the judge, who offered Atticus the case in the first place. Mr. Tate assigned Atticus to the case because he knew Atticus would truly dedicate himself to the cause. Miss Maudie says that even though she knew Atticus couldn't win, he did manage to keep the jury out in discussion for longer than anyone else could, which is an achievement in and of itself. She says, "we're making a step - it's just a baby step, but it's a step."

As they leave, Dill says he wants to be a clown when he grows up, because, "there's ain't one thing in this world I can do about folks except laugh, so I'm gonna join the circus and laugh my head off." The children see Mr. Avery, Miss Stephanie, and Miss Rachel discussing something with animation in the street. Apparently Mr.

Ewell saw Atticus by the post office, spat in his face, and told him that, "he'd get him if it took the rest of his life."

### **Chapter 23**

Atticus is unconcerned about Mr. Ewell's threat, and tells his worried children that Mr. Ewell, who has been publicly discredited by the trial, just needs to feel like he is retaliating against someone, and better it be Atticus than the Ewell children.

Tom is being held on a prison farm, and his wife and children are not permitted to visit him. Atticus thinks there's a good chance he'll be spared execution by having his sentence commuted by the governor. Atticus comments that too many people are sent to death based upon purely circumstantial evidence. Jem thinks that juries should be done away with, because they can't make reasonable decisions. Atticus responds that men don't behave rationally in some situations, and will always take a white man's word over a black man's. Atticus tells Jem that any white man who cheats a black man is trash.

Jem and Atticus talk about what keeps people off of juries. Women can't serve on juries in Alabama (which Scout takes exception to), and many people don't want to get involved in court cases because their livelihood depends in some way upon maintaining good favor with both parties involved in a case. Jem thinks that the jury decided quickly, but Atticus reminds him that it took a few hours, which is much longer than usual. Typically, a case like Tom's would be settled in a matter of minutes. Atticus sees this as a sign of the beginnings of change for the better. Also, Atticus reveals that he learned that the one jury member who kept everyone out so long was a Cunningham who defended Tom's innocence. Atticus thinks that all Cunninghams will stand solidly behind anyone who wins their respect, without fail - and the incident at the jailhouse won the Finch family great respect.

Upon learning that his father believed Tom to be innocent, Scout wants to invite Walter Cunningham over for lunch more often, but Aunt Alexandra puts her foot down, saying that the Cunninghams aren't the right sort of people for Scout to spend time with. Scout can be gracious to Walter and polite, but can't invite him over because "he is trash."

Scout is upset about this and goes to Jem to talk about it. Jem tries to cheer her up and proudly shows her the beginnings of chest hair, which Scout pretends to see and congratulates him on. Jem explains he wants to go out for football next year. Next, Jem tries to comfort Scout by explaining that Aunt Alexandra is just trying to make her into "a lady." He says that there are four different kinds of people in Maycomb county: "ordinary" people like themselves, people like the Cunninghams in the woods, people like the Ewells by the dump, and black people. Each class looks down upon and despises the class below it. The two try to resolve exactly what separates and distinguishes the categories of white people. Background doesn't seem to matter, because all the families are equally old. Jem thinks these class definitions have to do with how long the family has been literate. Scout disagrees and thinks, "there's just one kind of folks. Folks." Jem says he used to think so as well, but he

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doesn't understand why they despise one another if that's the case. Jem seems very frustrated with society, and adds that maybe Boo Radley stays inside because he wants to.

## Chapter 24

Jem and Dill have gone swimming, and wouldn't let Scout come along because they were planning to skinny dip. Aunt Alexandra has ladies over for a meeting of the Missionary Society of Maycomb, and keeps Scout in attendance in order for her to learn to be a lady. The women discuss the plight of the Mruna people, a non-Christian group in Africa who are said to live in squalor and are being converted thanks to the efforts of a missionary named J. Grimes Everett. Scout doesn't enjoy being around women but does her best to take part. The discussion moves toward the topic of Tom's wife, Helen. Apparently the black cooks and field hands in town were discontented during the week after the trial. One of the ladies comments on how much she dislikes a "sulky darky," and says that when her black female servant was slow to perform her duties following the trial, she reminded her that Jesus never complained. Another lady says that no amount of education will ever make "Christians" out of black people, and that, "there's no lady safe in her bed these nights." Miss Maudie tersely shows her differing opinion on this topic. Aunt Alexandra magically smoothes everything over. Another lady says that Northerners are hypocrites who claim to give blacks equal standing but actually don't mix socially with them, whereas in the South people are very up-front about their lack of desire to share the same lifestyle.

Scout remembers that Calpurnia told Atticus that the day Tom went to prison, he lost hope. Atticus couldn't promise Tom an acquittal so he didn't try to reassure Tom by giving him potentially false hope. Suddenly Atticus enters the house and requests Aunt Alexandra and Calpurnia's presence in the kitchen. He reveals that Tom tried to escape from prison and was shot to death by the prison guards. Apparently the guards tried to tell him to stop and fired warning shots, but Tom kept running. Atticus needs Calpurnia to go with him to Tom's wife to give her the news. The two of them go, leaving Aunt Alexandra to tell Miss Maudie in the kitchen that she's concerned about Atticus. The trial has taken a lot out of him and it seems to be unending. Miss Maudie thinks that the town has paid Atticus a high tribute by trusting him to do right and uphold justice. These people are the small handful who know that blacks should be given justice, and who have "background." The two women are quite shaken, but then join the other women effortlessly. Scout feels proud of her Aunt and of Miss Maudie, and for the first time feels inclined to be ladylike, thinking that, "if Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I."

Analysis:

Tom's crippled state is more than just a plot device. It also serves as an emblem for his disadvantage in life as a black man. His arm was injured in a cotton gin, a machine used primarily by slaves, and later, poor black workers in the cotton fields. The legacy of slavery cripples Tom in court and in his everyday life, just as his actual injury is a constant burden for him.

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Mayella's sad situation comes out more fully in Tom's testimony. Her short comment about, "what her pap do to her don't count" hints that her father probably abuses her, possibly sexually. Mayella is as lonely as the "mixed" children Jem spoke of earlier, as she belongs to neither black nor white circles.

The idea that a black person could feel sorry for a white person refutes all of Maycomb's social assumptions, making Tom's courthouse comment extremely provocative. By nature, black life is thought to be inferior to white life, making Tom's feelings towards Mayella subvert everything that the town's social fabric is based upon. As Jem explains in chapter 23, every class looks down upon the class below it - so black people, as the lowest class, should not feel pity for anyone.

Dill's feeling of illness during Mr. Gilmer's cross-examination shows his extreme sensitivity, as a young child, to the ugliness of society's prejudices and evil. Scout tries to see Mr. Gilmer's actions as part of the method of the job he is trying to do, following Atticus's advice to try to "get into a person's mind" in order to understand them better. However, it is indisputable that Mr. Gilmer does not behave as honorably as Atticus. Atticus speaks to all the witnesses with respect, while Mr. Gilmer demeans Tom in court, calling him "boy" and sneering at him. Dill's classic method of managing uncomfortable situations is to run away, and he does so here, fleeing the courtroom with Scout at his side.

In **Chapter 20**, Atticus appeals to the jury's sense of dignity, and in putting together the facts of the case, he stresses the simplicity of the evidence and shows that the facts point toward Tom's innocence. As later becomes apparent, Atticus doesn't really believe that the jury will set Tom free, even though he hopes they will, as evidenced by his final statement, under his breath, "In the name of God, believe him." All Atticus can hope for is to leave an impression upon the town by exposing the truth for all to see.

Atticus's treatment of Mayella reveals that though a victim of many cruelties, she has chosen to bring cruelty upon Tom, and must not be excused for this. As he points out, Mayella wants to protect herself by placing her guilt on Tom, knowing that her actions will bring about his death because the jury will believe her, a white woman, and not him, a black man. Thus, she manipulates the unfairness of her society toward her own ends.

Mr. Raymond, as Scout notes elsewhere, is a person of high enough social standing that he can act in very unorthodox ways and have his behavior accepted not only because, as he says, he gives the people a "reason" with which to interpret his behavior, but also through the usual expression, "it's just his way." The ability to be pardoned for certain eccentricities isn't allowed to people of all levels of society. Mr. Raymond owns a great deal of land and is a successful businessman. However, if an Ewell displayed similar behavior, he or she would not be excused so easily.

By **Chapter 21**, Jem was sure that the trial would go in Tom's favor after all the evidence was revealed. Therefore, the pronouncement of guilt comes as a complete surprise to his naïve mind, and he feels physical pain upon hearing each jury-member's "guilty". Jem is psychologically wounded by the results of the trial, feeling that his previously good opinion of the people of Maycomb (and people in general) has been seriously

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marred. Jem's trust in the rationality of the people has been beset by the knowledge that people can act in irrationally evil ways. He finds himself struggling to conceive of how otherwise good people can behave terribly throughout the remainder of the book.

Despite the unfavorable verdict, the black community pays tribute to Atticus for the respect he has shown their community and the human race. Atticus dedicated himself to the trial, which everyone knew was a lost cause. He tried as best he could to allow Tom to go free, and worked to teach the townspeople a lesson by exposing the unfairness of their collective opinions. Just as he fathers Jem and Scout in good moral virtues, he tries to teach the town a lesson and infuse them with more virtuous ideas.

In **Chapter 22**, Atticus reaches a point of frustration immediately after the trial, but his usual optimism returns the next day when he begins talking about the chance for an appeal.

Though he acknowledges that, "they'll do it again," and understands the reality that evil will always persist in some form, he seems to need to believe that there is hope for the future and the inherent goodness of mankind in order to keep himself going. Exhausted and pessimistic the night after the trial, he seems restored the next morning, as if his ability to exist and his hope are closely intertwined.

Miss Maudie makes Jem aware of an entire network of people who were quietly working in Tom's favor. Her use of the word "we" to represent them not only creates the sense that there is a cohesive group with a communal vision, but also makes the children feel like they are now included as a part of it. The trial has affected their lives in many ways, and now they are aware that they are by default going to part of the ongoing aim of taking "steps" toward fairness and equality.

Dill's comment about being a clown follows his tendency for escapism. He finds reality so difficult to manage, that he defines himself in another, separate reality where he can be safe from the trauma that Jem feels and the confusion that Scout feels as a result of being so closely intertwined with the town's events. Dill also seems to typify a certain idea of the work of the artist in his efforts to create a separate reality for himself that serves as a vantage point from which to see the events going on in the world. He perceives things well, but will not become caught up in them, and will treat everything as a performance that is ultimately meaningful only in that it is a reaction against the real.

Atticus is overly hopeful again in **Chapter 23**: his opinion of Mr. Ewell shows a lack of understanding for the ultimate possibility for evil inherent in some people.

Jem is unsure whether people can be trusted to serve on juries, based on the jury that served in Tom's case, and Atticus points out some of the factors that make juries less than ideal. Some people are not willing to do right by serving on a jury because they fear public opinion. For instance, a shop owner would not want to lose business by sitting on a jury in a dispute between two customers. Fear seems to be the main motivating factor that makes individuals shirk the task of upholding what they know to be right. Also, as Atticus points out, the state itself is

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unfair by not allowing women (or for that matter blacks) to serve on juries.

Even after all the events of the trial, Scout continues to believe that all people are the same. She believes all people are "folks," and that they are neither all good nor all bad, and sometimes they act out of weakness. She can't determine what makes her family "better" than the Cunninghams. Jem seems to still want a reason to explain why some people act the way they do; he feels that he has outgrown Scout's viewpoint and needs a new one that is calibrated to his more mature mind. His comment about Boo shows that on the whole, he is feeling mistrustful toward humanity.

Just as Chapter 12 gives insight into black society in Maycomb, **Chapter 24** gives insight into white women's society. Scout's experience with the Missionary Society women is somewhat mixed. She observes the hypocrisy with which the women try to do good for a remote culture like the Mrunas, but neglect the needs and sufferings of the black community in their own town. Particularly disconcerting is the way the women discriminate freely against the blacks, complaining about "sulky darkies" and making ridiculous insinuations that black men, spurred on by the trial, will start coming into their beds. The women's provincialism comes out when they speak of the Mruna people - it is evident that they have no understanding of how another way of worship could be just as spiritually meaningful as the religion they have always known. They also refuse to believe that the blacks of Maycomb are Christians, although as shown in Chapter 12, they are clearly worshipping the same God. Miss Maudie is the only woman who seems to show any appreciation for conscience, but when she speaks up, Aunt Alexandra is required by civil code to move the conversation pleasant again. Thus, the ladies never seem to discuss anything meaningful.

Throughout the book, women are often described in relation to sweet things: for instance in Chapter 1 they are described as, "soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum," Miss Caroline is described as looking like a peppermint drop, and the ladies gathered at the Finch household are said to smell heavenly and make many remarks about Aunt Alexandra's dainty tarts. Even Miss Maudie is best known, outside of her gardening, for her cake, and Aunt Alexandra is famous for her Christmas dinner. Women seem, in these descriptions, somewhat superficial and transient. The delicate desserts they seem to epitomize are hardly fortifying or necessary--they mainly look pretty and behave pleasantly--but lack real substance. Scout, who has a very strong sense of character, does not fit this comparison, and fights against becoming a part of this community.

When meaningful news does arrive, the women are spared from hearing it, as Atticus takes Aunt Alexandra into the kitchen. The news of Tom's attempt at escape, and his loss of hope after his sentence, occurs in the middle of the women's meeting about doing good in the world, which points to their hypocrisy and wasted "moral" zeal, and gives context to Tom's feelings of hopelessness. However, Scout does note that there is an element of challenge involved in being a lady. She understands this when watching Aunt Alexandra and Miss Maudie put themselves together after hearing the tragic news and rejoining the group. The ability to maintain an appearance of tact and civility above all other events strikes Scout as an appealing skill.

## Summary and Analysis of Chapters 25-31

### Chapter 25

It is now September, and Jem and Scout are about to go to sleep on their cots on the back porch. Scout sees a roly-poly bug and goes to kill it. Jem stops her, saying the bug never did anything to harm her. Scout heeds his request and carefully takes the bug outside, noting internally that if anything, Jem is becoming more like a lady than she is. As she returns to her cot, she thinks of Dill and remembers his story of the day Tom Robinson died in late August.

Atticus and Calpurnia were driving out to see Tom's wife when they spotted Jem and Dill on their way back from swimming. Jem and Dill ask for a ride, and although hesitant at first, Atticus finally agrees to let them come along. Apparently, when Tom's wife saw Atticus and Calpurnia, she seemed to faint, falling to the ground in a heap. Tom's death was only news in Maycomb for two days, and was regarded as "typical," since prevailing opinion was that black men tend to run away without any plan.

Scout reflects that "in the secret courts of men's hearts," nothing Atticus could have said could have freed Tom. Upon hearing the news, Mr. Ewell is rumored to have said, "one down and about two more to go," and Scout is afraid for Atticus. Jem confidently tells Scout that Mr. Ewell won't really take any action on his threats.

### Chapter 26

School is in session again, and Scout has lost her fear of the Radley place. Every now and then she daydreams about seeing Boo sitting on the porch, and greeting him as if they spoke to each other every day. School is hard for the Finch children: their peers are generally somewhat cold toward them due to Atticus defending Tom Robinson, as if their parents had instructed them to be civil but not outwardly friendly.

One day during Current Events, Scout's class gets into a discussion about Hitler and the persecution of the Jews. Her teacher, Miss Gates, speaks at length about how the German dictatorship allows for the Jews to be persecuted by a prejudiced leader, but she claims that in America, "we don't believe in persecuting anybody." Scout finds Miss Gates hypocritical because she remembers that on the day of Tom's trial, she overheard Miss Gates say that she thought it was, "time somebody taught them a lesson, they thought they was getting' way above themselves, an' the next thing they think they can do is marry us." "Them" meant black people. In Scout's mind, this doesn't make sense and she goes to talk to Jem about it. Jem responds very angrily, and tells her he never wants to talk about anything having to do with that trial again. Scout is taken aback and goes to Atticus, who assures her that Jem just needs some time to think about things, and then he'll be himself again.

### Chapter 27

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Scout relates a few events that have recently occurred in Maycomb. Mr. Ewell holds down a job for a few days, but then is fired from the WPA (Work Projects Administration) for laziness. One night, alone in his study, Judge Taylor finds the strange shadow of a prowler in his house and proceeds with his reading, but with a gun across his lap. Helen Robinson has been working on the property of Mr. Link Deas, but walks nearly a mile out of her way in order to avoid walking past the Ewell's house, because they "chunk" at her when she passes by. When Mr. Link Deas finds out, he approaches the Ewell house and yells to them, warning them not to bother Helen, or else he'll have them put in jail. The next day, Mr. Ewell follows Helen to work, "crooning foul words" the entire way, but Mr. Link Deas again threatens him with jail and he stops this behavior. Aunt Alexandra thinks that these events bode poorly for Atticus, as she is convinced that Ewell's threat after the trial carries more weight than Atticus is willing to believe.

It is nearly Halloween, and Mrs. Grace Merriweather writes a pageant for Maycomb people to perform about the history of the county. She wants children to play the parts of Maycomb's agricultural products, and Scout is assigned to play the part of the pork. She will wear a large costume made of chicken wire and wrapped around with brown cloth, which comes to just above her knees. She can't put it on or take it off without someone else's help because it pins her arms down, and she can't see well through the eyeholes. Jem escorts her to the pageant, because Atticus is too tired to go, and Aunt Alexandra opts to stay home with him.

## Chapter 28

Jem and Scout walk past the Radley house on the way to the school, where the pageant and country fair will be held. It's very dark, and they can barely see a few feet ahead of themselves. Cecil Jacobs, a classmate of Scout's runs out to scare them, and definitely succeeds. Cecil and Scout entertain themselves at the fair until the pageant begins, visiting different booths and taking part in the fair. When the pageant begins, Scout goes backstage to prepare for her entrance. The section before her entrance, a history of Maycomb, is very long, and she decides to squat down inside her costume to rest. Lulled by Miss Merriweather's speech, Scout falls asleep. During the last song, she wakes up and realizes she has missed her cue. She rushes out to the stage, and makes a very amusing entrance that pleases the entire crowd. Scout is embarrassed about her performance and stays backstage with Jem until everyone leaves. She decides to keep her costume on for the walk home, and Jem escorts her.

The walk back is even darker than before, and near the school, Scout remembers that she left her shoes backstage. She is thinking of returning to get them, when Jem stops her because he hears a strange noise. Scout hears it too, but thinks maybe it's just Cecil again. They call out taunts to Cecil in order to get a response, but there is only silence. Jem thinks maybe Scout should take off her costume, but she doesn't have any clothes underneath, and can't get her dress on in the dark. They are almost home, near the dark shadow of the tree by the Radleys' house, and are trying to walk faster. It sounds like the person behind them is wearing thick cotton pants. The next time they stop walking, the footsteps behind them suddenly quicken into a run. Jem yells to Scout to run, but her costume throws her off balance. Something is crushed against her and she hears metal ripping. Jem's hand tries to pull her, but she is tangled up in her costume. There is a crunching sound and Jem screams. The man whom they are struggling with grabs Scout and begins to strangle her, when suddenly he is

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jerked backwards and thrown to the ground. Scout thinks Jem must have saved her, but she still can't see anything. She hears the sound of someone breathing heavily and, walking toward the tree to lean on, reaches out with her toes to find a person on the ground with stubble and the smell of stale whiskey. She makes her way in the direction of the road, and in the streetlight she sees a man carrying Jem, whose arm is hanging down at an odd angle.

Scout arrives home. Aunt Alexandra calls Dr. Reynolds and Atticus calls Heck Tate, the sheriff. Alexandra removes Scout's costume and hands her Scout's infamous, un-ladylike overalls to put on. Scout says she will never forget that gesture. Jem is unconscious and has a broken arm. Scout checks on him, noting the man who carried him sitting quietly in the corner. She assumes he is a countryman she doesn't recognize who happened to hear the fight and come running. The sheriff investigates outside and comes back to report that Mr. Ewell is lying outside dead with a kitchen knife in his ribs.

### **Chapter 29**

Scout tells the story of what happened outside to Atticus, the sheriff, and everyone else assembled. Mr. Tate notes the mark that Mr. Ewell's knife made in Scout's costume, and points out that Mr. Ewell meant to seriously harm or kill the children. When Scout points out the man who carried Jem, she finally takes a good look at him. He is very, very pale, with thin cheeks and feathery hair, and seems somewhat tense and nervous. She suddenly recognizes him as Boo Radley and, moved to tears, says "Hey, Boo."

### **Chapter 30**

The doctor returns and everyone moves to the back porch. Trying to be as friendly as possible, Scout leads Boo to the porch and assists him into a rocking chair placed in a darker corner, where she thinks he will feel most comfortable. As she helps Boo along, she feels the odd sensation of her fantasy about finding him sitting on the porch one day coming true. Meanwhile, the others are discussing who killed Mr. Ewell. Atticus thinks that Jem must have done it since Scout named Jem as her protector in her story. However, the sheriff insists continually that Mr. Ewell fell onto his knife and killed himself, which irritates Atticus, who wants Jem to be treated as fairly as anyone else and not have exceptions made. After much arguing, finally the sheriff yells out that he's not trying to protect Jem (he is trying to protect Boo). The sheriff urges Atticus, this once, to accept the situation even if it's not perfect according to law: Mr. Ewell was responsible for Tom's death, and the sheriff urges Atticus to "let the dead bury the dead." He says that it would be a sin to drag shy Boo Radley out into the limelight, and declares officially that Mr. Ewell fell on his own knife. Atticus, deeply moved by this revelation, asks Scout if she understands. Scout assures him that she does, explaining that having it another way would be like shooting a mockingbird. Atticus looks at Scout with a sense of wonder, and thanks Boo for the lives of his children.

### **Chapter 31**

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Scout asks Boo if he'd like to say good night to Jem. Boo doesn't say a word; he just nods. Scout sees that Boo would like to reach out and touch Jem, and tells him he can. She shows him how to gently stroke Jem's hair. After Boo does this, she perceives that he wants to leave, and she leads him to the porch, where he asks her in a near-whisper, "Will you take me home?" She accepts, and allows him to escort her down the block, just like a lady should. She leads him home and he goes inside his house and shuts the door. The narrator, speaking as an older Scout, says she never saw him again.

Standing on Boo's porch, Scout look out over the neighborhood imagining how Boo must have seen it, and how, for all these years, he watched over "his" children. Back home, Scout sits with Atticus, who begins to read her one of the scary children's stories he has picked up, which ironically mirrors the story of Boo Radley. Scout says she wasn't scared by the night's events, saying just as Jem had on their fateful walk home, that "nothing's really scary 'cept in books." She falls asleep while Atticus reads to her, and wakes up while he carries her to bed. She tells him she was listening all the time, and that the book is about a character who was chased and caught and then found to be innocent and "real nice." Atticus tells her, "most people are, when you finally see them." Atticus then spends the rest of the night by Jem's side.

#### Analysis

Maycomb's reaction to the news of Tom's death demonstrates how willingly the citizens interpret the actions of one black person negatively in order to maintain their social construct of subjugating the black population. Scout realizes that the decision to see the world fairly can only occur within each individual's heart, and that there is no way to reach a person who has not become personally convinced of the equality of all races and the virtue of following a moral course of action.

However, for the black community, the news of Tom's death is devastating, as exemplified by Helen's collapse. Atticus could not promise Tom that he would eventually go free, because he did not want to promise anything he couldn't be sure of. Unable to live an indefinite existence, Tom lost his courage and determination, and chose to run for freedom. Possibly, like Jem, Tom lost hope that people would listen to the voice of reason. Given all the injustices he had experienced in his life, Tom did not think it possible that his case would be appealed or that the outcome would be favorable.

The roly-poly incident is yet another example of Jem's increasing maturity. Having witnessed Tom's trial and his family's reaction of his death, Jem has an even greater sense of the need to protect the innocent. Therefore, the roly-poly bug is a symbol of the weak and oppressed who are often "stomped on" by society. Jem believes in the equality of all people, and his choice to protect the roly-poly demonstrates how deeply ingrained this value is. Jem is becoming a young man of honor and moral virtue, just like his father.

In **Chapter 26**, the coldness of the schoolchildren demonstrates that children who grow up in racist households tend to develop racist attitudes quite early in life. Just as Jem and Scout grow up in a household valuing fairness and equality, and therefore adhere to such morals. This dichotomy once again shows how people's identities and

values are shaped by the society and family life in which they are raised.

In this chapter, Boo has made the full transition from monster to sad recluse and potential friend. The events of the trial have made the children consider that maybe Boo needs a good home to run to (Dill's theory) or maybe he prefers to stay out of contact with people (Jem's theory). Scout dreams of finally getting to talk to Boo, showing her desire to make him feel at home, and to show him that people might not be so bad.

Miss Gates's statement that the persecuted Jews have contributed to every society they've been a part of implies that blacks are not contributing in any way to American society. She hypocritically believes that the Jews deserve sympathy because they are white, whereas the persecuted group of the blacks still deserves second-class citizenship. She also insinuates that because the United States is a democracy, fairness is available for all, when blacks are suffering from the same kinds of discrimination and segregation that Jews experience in Hitler's dictatorial regime. The "democracy" she speaks of is not an all-inclusive one that offers the same rights to all. Scout's awareness of her teacher's hypocrisy once again demonstrates her powerful understanding of the true meaning of fairness and equality. Jem is clearly still distraught by the trial, and needs time to allow his still adolescent mind to understand the events in a more adult way.

In **Chapter 27**, Mr. Link Deas is revealed as another member of the forces working for fairness in Maycomb by his defense of Helen against the menace of Mr. Ewell. (During Tom's trial, Mr. Deas stood up and shouted that he had never had a problem with Tom Robinson, and that he was a good worker and a good man. The judge immediately quieted him and instructed the jury to ignore his statements in order to avoid a mistrial.) Meanwhile, Mr. Ewell is again shown to be cowardly and evil, threatening those who can defend themselves least. This chapter continues to provide a building tale of suspense, as the book is clearly coming to a close, and we will soon learn how Jem broke his arm, and the final events the novel has been leading up to. The ordinary and harmless event Halloween pageant develops into an evening fraught with horror.

The night of the pageant, in **Chapter 28**, is filled with foreshadowing of the violent events to occur. Before the children leave, Aunt Alexandra has a feeling that something is going wrong and Scout notices a strange look pass over her face. Alexandra blames it on "someone walking over her grave". The intense darkness of the night also creates a sense of foreboding, as does Scout's inability to see things around her, trapped inside the large, bulky costume. Then, Scout misses her cue, and ends the night upset and embarrassed. When she and Jem turn around to go back for her shoes, the school lights go out, leaving the children alone in the darkness.

The attack occurs all around Scout and the sense of her helplessness makes the account of the violence more intense. Though the book began with a fear for the monstrous, phantom-like figure of Boo Radley, this chapter solidifies a reversal: Boo becomes the children's savior against the real evil, a human man. One reason that Dill dwells in fantasy rather than real life is that nothing can be as frightening in fantasy as it can be in reality. Now that the children have grown older, they come to know vividly that the real source of evil to be concerned about comes from their fellowman, not from imaginary ghosts.

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In **Chapter 29**, with the description of his hair as "feathery," Boo is immediately identified with the "mockingbird," especially with his slight appearance and fluttery hand movements. He has finally become a real person, completing the progression from monster to human; meanwhile, Mr. Ewell's evilness has turned him into a human monster, whose bristling facial stubble felt by Scout suggests an animal-like appearance. When Scout addresses Boo directly, she makes her final step into the beginnings of maturity, leaving her childhood imaginary tales behind. As a mature young girl, she recognizes Boo as a real person, and treats him as such.

In **Chapter 30**, Atticus is trying to uphold the law by demanding that Jem be brought to trial for the crime of murdering Mr. Ewell, not realizing that the sheriff is trying to protect Boo. As seen before in the case of the Ewell's, who are allowed to hunt in season, the law must be bent in order to protect certain people; in this case Boo needs protection. When Atticus understands the sheriff's motivation, he relents, realizing that it is in everyone's best interests to allow Boo to unofficially punish the Ewell's for the crime of trying to send Tom to his death. By this point, the "mockingbird" theme has already been made clear, but this chapter rehashes the idea that the innocent should not suffer in the hands of the powerful. When Scout compares putting Boo on trial to shooting a mockingbird, she again demonstrates her newfound maturity and adult understanding. Scout understands it is necessary to prevent Boo from receiving excessive public attention, and that Boo should be allowed to live the quiet life he has always known. She knows that at heart, Boo is a good person.

In **Chapter 31**, Scout finally acts the part of the hospitable Southern lady in assisting Boo around the house and seeing him home. She interacts with him in a serious and grown-up fashion. Though she runs to tell Jem when she first discovers Boo is in their house, she reacts against this childish reflex and tactfully gives Boo his privacy. Scout has learned how to be a guide for others, as shown by her symbolic act of leading Boo to safety. She can visualize things from his perspective now, as Atticus once advised her to do, and from his front porch, she imagines how he has seen the years pass, and watched herself, Jem and Dill grow up. In this reflective moment, Scout also neatly summarizes the events of the book, reminding the reader of all that passed for her and her family to reach this point.

Scout shows that even though she has discovered that people (Mr. Ewell) can be evil in unfathomable ways, she still upholds her faith in humankind and can face anything with courage. Unlike Dill, she finds that the real world does follow patterns, and once one knows them, the world of fantasy and books is the only place where real fear can exist. Despite her growth and maturation, Scout is still a child at only eight years old, and we last see her as she falls asleep in her father's arms. The author very carefully avoids giving the reader any information about Scout's future. Instead, we are left with an image of Scout when she is discovering fundamental truths about the world. She understands that the world carries both good and evil, and she has an unshakeable faith in the inherent goodness of "folks."

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## Related Links

[http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont\\_HS/tkm/index.html](http://www.lausd.k12.ca.us/Belmont_HS/tkm/index.html)

General information This site provides a list of relevant vocabulary, allusions, and idioms from the text of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The summaries are not very helpful, but the other links are. There are also links to pictures of the plants named in the book, recipes for the foods eaten, a map of Alabama, and even a picture of a mockingbird.

<http://library.thinkquest.org/12111/SG/SG5.html#author>

The Author and the Book Historical background.

## Suggested Essay Questions

Analyze the relationship between Boo Radley and the children. How does this relationship change throughout the book? What are the causes of the developments in this relationship?

Discuss the concept of fear as presented in the novel. Compare the children's early fear of Boo Radley to their fear or lack thereof when Bob Ewell attacks them. Is Scout correct in stating that real fear can only be found in books?

Discuss the concept of family and Lee's presentation of the American family. What does it consist of?

Although criticized openly, Atticus is respected throughout the town of Maycomb. Why is this true?

Discuss the concept of education. Does Lee argue for a dominance of education in the home or institutionalized education? What evidence does she provide?

Trace the theme of the mockingbird throughout the novel and analyze what the bird symbolizes or represents.

Trace Boo Radley's development from monster to savior. How does Scout's understanding of Boo develop? What lessons does Boo teach Scout?

Discuss Atticus's approach to parenting. What is his relationship with his children? Can his parenting style be criticized? If so, how?

Scout and Jem mature considerably through the course of the novel. What developmental changes do they go through, and what causes these changes?

Discuss the town of Maycomb as you might discuss a main character in the book. What is the identity or "character" of the town, and how (if at all) does it change and grow over the years? How does its diversity give it a pluralistic character?

Discuss law as it is represented in *To Kill A Mockinbird*. What power and limitations exist within the legal system according to Atticus, Jem, and Scout?

## Quotations with Analysis

### Chapter 1

#### Quotation

"Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. In rainy weather the streets turned to red slop; grass grew on the sidewalks, the courthouse sagged in the square. Somehow it was hotter then: a black dog suffered on a summers day; bony mules hitched to Hoover carts flicked flies in the sweltering shade of the live oaks on the square. Men's stiff collars wilted by nine in the morning. Ladies bathed before noon, after their three-o'clock naps, and by nightfall were like soft teacakes with frostings of sweat and sweet talcum." Page 5

#### Analysis

The descriptive detail paints a vivid picture of the town of Maycomb, which provides some insight on Scout's feelings about Maycomb. In addition, the narrator provides the setting for the story and sets the mood for a quiet and somewhat dull town, which sets the stage for the conflict of Tom's trial.

### Chapter 2

#### Quotation

"Your father does not know how to teach. You can have a seat now.'

I mumbled that I was sorry and retired meditating upon my crime." Page 17

#### Analysis

Scout's first grade teacher makes her feel bad about being able to read, when she should feel proud that she can read and write at such a young age. Scout even apologizes and referred to her ability as a crime. This exchange demonstrates how many people in Maycomb are very small minded in their views.

### Chapter 3

#### Quotation

"First of all,' he said, 'If you can learn a simple trick, Scout, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks. You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view-'

'Sir?'

'-until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.'" Page 30

**Analysis**

This passage exemplifies the special bond between Atticus and his daughter, Scout. Throughout the novel, Scout learns more from her father than anyone else. Atticus teaches Scout important things about life and the world that she does acquire from school. Scout listens to Atticus very carefully, has great respect for him, and deeply values his advice.

Chapter 4

**Quotation**

"Two live oaks stood at the end of the Radley lot; their roots reached into the side-road and made it bumpy. Something about one of the trees attracted my attention.

"Tin-foil was sticking out of a knot-hole just above my eye level, winking at me in the afternoon sun. I stood on my tiptoe, hastily looked around once more, reached into the hole, and withdrew two pieces of chewing gum minus their outer wrappers." Page 33

**Analysis**

One of the first indications that Boo Radley wants to be friendly toward the children and has noticed their interest in him is his knot-hole gifts. By leaving simple, harmless and thoughtful gifts for them, it becomes clear that Boo is a good person, which differs markedly from Scout and Jem's original feelings about him. Scout does not realize that the gifts may be a gift from Boo, although Jem is suspicious. Later on, Scout understands.

Chapter 5

**Quotation**

"So that's what you were doing, wasn't it?'

'Makin' fun of him?'

'No," said Atticus, "Putting his life's history on display for the edification of the neighborhood.'

Jem seemed to swell a little. 'I didn't say we were doin' that, I didn't say it!'

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Atticus grinned dryly. 'You just told me,' he said. 'You stop this nonsense right now, every one of you.'" Page 49

**Analysis**

Atticus is rarely very stern with his children. Here, with his strong words, he shows that the Radleys should not be made fun of and are not bad people. This creates some unspoken tension between father and children, as they are not entirely convinced.

Chapter 6

**Quotation**

"Then I saw the shadow. It was the shadow of a man with a hat on. At first I thought it was a tree, but there was no wind blowing, and tree trunks never walked. The back porch was bathed in moonlight, And the shadow, crisp and toast, moved across the porch towards Jem.

Dill saw it next. He put his hands to his face.

When it crossed Jem, Jem saw it. He put his arms over his head and went ridged." Page 53

**Analysis**

The children believe this shadowed man is Boo Radley and are frozen in fright. In this passage, the reader realizes how deeply afraid the children are of this mystery man, and how intensely his existence has affected their lives.

Chapter 7

**Quotation**

"As Atticus once advised me to do, I tried to climb into Jem's skin and walk around in it: if I had gone alone to the Radley Place at two in the morning, my funeral would have been held the next afternoon. So I left Jem alone and tried not to bother him." Page 57

**Analysis**

Here is one example of many where Scout uses Atticus' advice to resolve conflict in her life. Clearly, Scout has great respect for both her father and brother, and demonstrates a high level of maturity for her young age.

Chapter 8

**Quotation**

"'Thank who?' I asked.

'Boo Radley. You were so busy looking at the fire you didn't know it when he put the blanket around you.'

My stomach turned to water and I nearly threw up when Jem held out the blanket and crept toward me. 'He sneaked out of the house-turn 'round-sneaked up, an' went like this!'" Page 72

**Analysis**

Even though Scout appears frightened to hear that Boo Radley was only inches from her, she is beginning to realize that the mysterious man is trying to protect and befriend her. Boo gains the sympathy of Scout and the reader in this passage.

Chapter 9

**Quotation**

"Atticus said, 'You've a lot to learn, Jack.'

'I know. Your daughter gave me my first lessons this afternoon. She said I didn't understand children much and told me why. She was quite right. Atticus, she told me how I should have treated her-oh dear, I'm so sorry I romped on her.'" Page 87

**Analysis**

Uncle Jack admits that Scout has taught him a lesson. Atticus has brought Scout up by instilling in her wisdom and compassion beyond her years. Here, she proves wiser than Uncle Jack, a grown man. In truth, Scout is much like Atticus -- she has strong moral principles and can explain things to people in ways that allow them to understand her perspective.

Chapter 10

**Quotation**

"Atticus said to Jem one day, 'I'd rather you shoot at tin cans in the back yard, but I know you'll go after birds. Shoot all the blue jays you want, if you can hit 'em, but remember it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.'

That was the only time I ever heard Atticus say it was a sin to do something, and I asked Miss Maudie about it.

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'Your father's right,' she said. 'Mockingbirds don't do one thing but make music for us to enjoy. They don't eat up people's gardens, don't nest in corncribs, they don't do one thing but sing their hearts out for us. That's why it's a sin to kill a mockingbird.'" Page 90

## Analysis

In addition to bearing the title of the novel, this passage demonstrates yet again how similar Atticus and Mrs. Maudie are. Both agree quite strongly that it is a sin to kill a mockingbird, an animal symbolic of Boo Radley and Tom Robinson, as neither has caused harm, and prove only to have pure hearts.

## Chapter 11

### Quotation

"'A lady?' Jem raised his head. His face was scarlet. 'After all those things she said about you, a lady?'

'She was. She had her own views about things, a lot different from mine, maybe...Son, I told you that if you hadn't lost your head I'd have made you go read to her. I wanted you to see something about her. I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It's when you know you're licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what. You rarely win, but sometimes you do.'" Page 112

## Analysis

Here, Atticus educates his children as to the true meaning of heroism. Mrs. Dubose was a rather cranky and offensive old woman who lived nearby. She spoke out harshly against Atticus, and in a fit of rage, Jem attacked her flower bed. As punishment, he had to read to her every day after school. Unknowingly, Jem was helping the woman overcome her morphine addiction. Atticus reveals this to his children after the woman has passed, and lets them evaluate the situation for themselves. Atticus treats his children as adults and shows them the meaning of true courage. The last two lines in the passage serve as an analogy to the Tom Robinson case and show that Atticus knows he will not win, but must try his best in his search for justice.

## Chapter 12

### Quotation

"'It's not necessary to tell all you know. It's not ladylike -in the second place, folks don't like to have someone around knowin' more than they do. It aggravates 'em. You're not gonna change any of them by talkin' right, they've got to want to learn themselves, and when they don't want to learn there's nothing you can do but keep your mouth shut or talk their language.'" Page 126

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## **Analysis**

Here, Calpurnia explains her understanding of different kinds of people. Cal speaks proper English in the Finch home, proves that she is educated and cares about how she is perceived. On the other hand, she also shows respect for the people at her church and in her community by speaking the way they do. Here, Calpurnia also sets an example for Scout by telling her what it means to be ladylike.

## Chapter 13

### **Quotation**

"I never understood her preoccupation with heredity. Somewhere, I had received the impression that Fine Folks were people who did the best they could with the sense they had, but Aunt Alexandra was of the opinion, obliquely expressed, that the longer a family had been squatting on one patch of land the finer it was." Page 130

### **Analysis**

Here, Scout explains how differently she and Aunt Alexandra see the world. Scout is far younger, but has a more mature understanding of people than Aunt Alexandra, demonstrating a keen sense of wisdom.

## Chapter 14

### **Quotation**

"'That's because you can't hold something in your mind but a little while,' said Jem. 'It's different with grown folks, we-'

His maddening superiority was unbearable these days. He did not want to do anything but read and go off by himself." Page 138

### **Analysis**

The Finch children's feelings toward each other change throughout the novel as Jem grows older and the differences between brother and sister become more over. Scout understands that Jem feels superior toward her and no longer treats her as a playmate. She is frustrated with Jem's airs of superiority and wishes they could play together and talk together as they used to.

## Chapter 15

### **Quotation**

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"What's the matter?' I asked.

Atticus said nothing. I looked up at Mr. Cunningham, whose face was equally impassive. Then he did a peculiar thing. He squatted down and took me by both shoulders.

'I'll tell him you said hey, little lady,' he said.

Then he straightened up and waved a big paw. 'Let's clear out,' he called. 'Let's get going, boys.'" Page 154

### **Analysis**

This exchange occurs after Scout has diffused the potentially dangerous crowd of men outside the jailhouse. Scout knows something is wrong and reaches out to a man she recognizes in the group, Mr. Cunningham. She does as she has been told and tries to connect with him by talking about his son who is a schoolmate of hers. Unknowingly, Scout appeals to the man's humanity and forces him to realize he must behave honorably and leave Atticus and Tom Robinson alone.

Chapter 16

### **Quotation**

"This was news, news that put a different light on things: Atticus had to, whether he wanted to or not. I thought it odd that he hadn't said anything about it—we could have used it many times defending him and ourselves. He had to, that is why he was doing it, equaled fewer fights and less fussing." Page 163

### **Analysis**

Atticus wanted to take the case so justice would be served, and never wanted his children believing he took it only because he had to. For Atticus, this case was about protecting human rights, and he wanted his children to understand that he cared deeply about this issue. Scout does not quite yet understand this, but the revelation allows the reader to see Atticus as, yet again, an excellent father and parent.

Chapter 17

### **Quotation**

"Mr. Ewell wrote on the back of the envelope and looked up complacently to see Judge Taylor looking at him as if he were some fragrant gardenia in full bloom on the witness stand, to see Mr. Gilmer half-sitting, half standing at his table. The jury was watching him, one man leaning over with his hands over the railing.

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'What's so intrestin'?' he asked.

'You're left handed Mr. Ewell,' said Judge Taylor." Page 177

### **Analysis**

This quote demonstrates Atticus' intelligence and the first major weakness in Bob Ewell's case. Atticus believes Mr. Ewell beat Mayella, not Tom, and demonstrates Ewell's left-handedness in comparison to Tom's disabled left arm. With this revelation, the reader cannot place any trust in the words of Bob Ewell.

Chapter 18

### **Quotation**

"It's not an easy question Miss Mayella, so I'll try again. Do you remember him beating you about the face?' Atticus's voice had lost it's comfortableness; he was speaking in his arid, detached professional voice. 'Do you remember him beating you about the face?'

'I don't recollect if he hit me. I mean yes I do, he hit me.'" Page 185

### **Analysis**

Mayella's weak testimony calls the reader to become even more suspicious of her claims. According to Mr. Tate and Mr. Ewell's testimony, Mayella was certainly beaten up. It's odd for Mayella's reaction to the question to be so questionable if she is telling the truth.

Chapter 19

### **Quotation**

"Mr. Gilmer smiled grimly at the jury. 'You're a mighty good fellow, it seems- did all this for not one penny?'

'Yes suh. I felt right sorry for her, she seemed to try more'n the rest of 'em-'

'You felt sorry for her, you felt sorry for her?' Mr. Gilmer seemed ready to rise to the ceiling." Page 197

### **Analysis**

It seems as though Mr. Gilmer thinks it is horrible that Tom Robinson, a poor black field worker, feels sorry for Mayella, a white citizen of Maycomb. It should be acceptable, considering the condition that she lives in, but in

regard to the racial standards of the time, Tom's statement causes some resentment.

### Chapter 20

#### Quotation

"The state has not produced one iota of medical evidence that the crime Tom Robinson is charged with ever took place. It has relied instead upon the testimony of two witnesses whose evidence has not only been called into serious question on cross-examination, but has been flatly contradicted by the defendant. The defendant is not guilty, but somebody in this courtroom is." Page 203

#### Analysis

Atticus' strong closing arguments prove what an excellent lawyer he is. Atticus speaks only the truth and tries to force those in the courtroom, including his children, to examine the facts rather than the race of the accused. This speech must have taken a lot of courage, but to Atticus, it is absolutely necessary.

### Chapter 21

#### Quotation

"Miss Jean Louise?"

I looked around. They were all standing. All around us, and in the balcony on the opposite wall, the Negroes were getting to their feet. Reverend Sykes's voice was as distant as Judge Taylor's:

'Miss Jean Louise, stand up. Your father's passin'.'" Page 211

#### Analysis

The people on the balcony have great respect for Atticus due to how deeply he pursued the case and how well he defended Tom. Atticus worked to let the truth be known. When Reverend Sykes asks Scout to stand, she understands how much her father's work means to him and the rest of those seated with her in the balcony.

### Chapter 22

#### Quotation

"Indoors, when Miss Maudie wanted to say something lengthy she settled her fingers on her knees and settled her bridgework. This she did, and we waited.

"I simply wanted to tell you that there are some men in this world who were born to do our unpleasant jobs for us. Your father's one of them." Page 215

**Analysis**

Mrs. Maudie tries to make the children understand the difficult situation of the Tom Robinson case. Mrs. Maudie explains things well, telling the children even though Atticus lost, he won by forcing the town to truly examine their perceptions of race and equality. It took a great deal of time for the jury to come to their verdict, and this alone demonstrates that Atticus succeeded in causing the men of the jury to examine their views of race. Therefore, although unpleasant, Atticus's work is of great importance and will affect the future of race relations in Maycomb.

Chapter 23

**Quotation**

"Scout, I think I'm beginning to understand something. I think I'm beginning to understand why Boo Radley's stayed shut up in the house all this time. It's because he wants to stay inside." Page 227

**Analysis**

Jem is growing up and realizes that the myths about Boo are unlikely to be true. Jem has also grown distressed by the lack of honor in society, and realizes Boo might prefer to live alone rather than among corrupt men.

Chapter 24

**Quotation**

"Tom's dead."

Aunt Alexandra put her hands to her mouth.

"They shot him," said Atticus. "He was running. It was during their exercise period. They said he just broke into a blind raving charge at the fence and started climbing over. Right in front of them-" Page 235

**Analysis**

Tom Robinson never harmed a soul, but was convicted and awaiting his appeal in a local prison. Atticus believes Tom hated being imprisoned for a crime he did not commit, and could not imagine going through another trial. Atticus believes the stress of the situation and the inevitability of struggle and pain led Tom to run.

Chapter 25

**Quotation**

"Why couldn't I mash him?" I asked.

'Because they don't bother you,' Jem answered in the darkness. He had turned out his reading light." Page 238

**Analysis**

Here, Scout was preparing to "mash" a rolypoly and Jem stopped her. Here, Jem demonstrates a desire to protect anything that does no harm. He witnessed the innocent Tom Robinson suffer humiliation and death, and has begun to understand that it is sinful to take advantage of or destroy something weaker than one's self, just as it is a sin to kill a mockingbird.

Chapter 26

**Quotation**

"So many things had happened to us, Boo Radley was the least of our fears. Atticus said he didn't see how anything else could happen, that things had a way of settling down, and after enough time had passed people would forget that Tom Robinson's existence was ever brought to their attention." Page 243

**Analysis**

When Scout tells us that "Boo Radley was the least of our fears", it ironically foreshadows his eventual reappearance.

Chapter 27

**Quotation**

"I don't like it Atticus, I don't like it at all,' was Aunt Alexandra's assessment of these events. 'That man seems to have a running grudge against everyone connected with the case. I know how that kind are about paying off grudges, but I don't understand why he should harbor one-he had his way in court, didn't he?'" Page 250

**Analysis**

Here, Aunt Alexandra is referring to Bob Ewell, who has publicly proclaimed a vendetta against Atticus Finch after Atticus made him look like a fool in the courtroom. Atticus believes Ewell just likes to sound proud and

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will never take action, but Aunt Alexandra is concerned. Later on, Atticus is, for once, proven wrong.

## Chapter 28

### Quotation

"Shuffle foot had not stopped with us this time. His trousers swished softly and steadily. Then they stopped. He was running, running toward us with no child's steps.

'Run, Scout! Run! Run!' Jem screamed.

I took one giant step and found myself reeling: my arms useless, in the dark, I could not keep my balance.

'Jem, Jem, help me, Jem!'" Page 261

### Analysis

This is a highly suspenseful passage. Lee tells this part of the story through hints and subtle clues rather than direct statements, i.e. "no child's steps" (an adult is chasing them).

## Chapter 29

### Quotation

"When I pointed to him his palms slipped slightly, leaving greasy sweat steaks on the wall, and he hooked his thumbs in his belt. A strange small spasm shook him, as if he heard fingernails scrape slate, but as I gazed at him in wonder the tension slowly drained from his face. His lips parted into a timid smile, and our neighbor's image blurred with my sudden tears.

'Hey, Boo,' I said." Page 270

### Analysis

Here, for the very first time, Scout and Boo interact directly. Scout is no longer afraid, and treats Boo as an equal. She knows he saved her life and Jem's life, and looks upon him with respect. The power of this moment brings Scout to tears, but, as always, she handles herself with maturity beyond her age.

## Chapter 30

### Quotation

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"Atticus looked like he needed cheering up. I ran to him and hugged him and kissed him with all my might. 'Yes sir, I understand,' I reassured him. 'Mr. Tate was right.'

Atticus disengaged himself and looked at me. 'What do you mean?'

'Well, it'd be sort of like shootin' a mockingbird, wouldn't it?'" Page 276

### **Analysis**

Here, yet again, Lee reveals Scout's phenomenal understanding of life. Scout is quite young and her father is not certain if she understands all that was said. However, she surprises him and makes him incredibly proud by comparing Mr. Arthur Radley (Boo) to a mockingbird. Just like a mockingbird, Boo has never harmed a soul, and it would be a sin to bring him to trial for the death of Mr. Bob Ewell, who he killed to protect Scout and Jem.

Chapter 31

### **Quotation**

"Atticus was right. One time he said you never really know a man until you stand in his shoes and walk around in them. Just standing on the Radley porch was enough." Page 279

### **Analysis**

Standing on the Radley porch allows Scout to finally see the world from Boo Radley's point of view. Earlier in the novel, she was terrified every time she passed the house. Now, as she stands on his porch, she recognizes how much she has grown and how much she has learned.

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## Author of ClassicNote and Sources

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## Essay: The Impact of Class Structure

by **John Florio**  
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The rigid class structure and social stratification of Maycomb County had a profound effect on the events in the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee. The impact of this class structure and the underlying prejudice was especially evident in the trial of Tom Robinson, a Maycomb black man. Because of the strict class system of Maycomb County and the extreme prejudice of the town, Tom Robinson was unjustly convicted of, and sentenced to death for, a crime he did not commit.

The society of Maycomb County had a definitive structure containing four classes. The first and upper class consisted of white collar Caucasians who were considered "rich" in the post-depression years. Characters who fit into this class were Atticus Finch, a wealthy, highly respected lawyer and citizen in town, and Judge Taylor, the justice of Maycomb County and presiding judge at the Robinson trial. Other characters who belonged to this upper class were Miss Maudie Attkinson, an open-minded, kind woman, and Miss Stephanie Crawford, the renowned gossip of the town.

The second class in Maycomb County included the blue collar, white workers, and primarily farmers who struggled to make ends meet. The Cunninghams, Dolphus Raymond, and the mysterious Radley family represented this group. The third class of Maycomb County was the "white trash."<sup>2</sup> The Ewells, who lived at the dump and relied on welfare for survival, were members of this group. It is important to note that the difference between the second and third class was not a financial one. Both were "poor."<sup>2</sup> The difference, however, was in the way they interacted in society. The Cunninghams, unlike the Ewells, refused to accept charity and they paid their debts with what little they had. The Cunninghams were also different from the Ewells because they didn't take advantage of Black men.

The fourth and lowest class in Maycomb included all the blacks that lived in this small county of Alabama. Prejudice ran deep in Maycomb County. Although several social levels existed within the Black community, a person of color was always in the lowest class of society in general. Therefore, the Blacks lived apart from the whites in their own section of town and seemed to have a society separate from the whites.

The strong prejudice of Maycomb County and the negative effects of its social strata were demonstrated by the trial of Tom Robinson. Tom was a hard-working, warm-hearted Black man who went out of his way to be kind and helpful to some poor white trash. He helped Miss Mayella because he felt sorry for her. His major shortcoming was the fact that he was black. Bob Ewell, a white drunk, who was an eyesore and a problem for the town, accused Robinson of raping his daughter Mayella. Atticus Finch, Tom Robinson's lawyer, made it immensely clear to the jury that Tom was innocent. It was actually Mayella who made sexual advances towards Tom, and as a result was beaten by her father for kissing a Black man. However, despite the obvious,

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undeniable facts of the case, the all white jury found in favor of the Ewells and sentenced Tom Robinson to death. Tom eventually died when he was shot in an attempt to escape from prison.

In examining the case, one can see how the four classes in Maycomb were involved to varying degrees. The first two classes were represented at the trial by the presiding judge and attorneys and many jurors. It was the responsibility of all these people to see that Tom received a fair trial despite the cord of prejudice that had a stranglehold on the townspeople of Maycomb. However, this had to be a difficult task because they would have to challenge the attitudes of the townspeople and Atticus alone seemed to be willing to do that. <sup>3</sup>The older citizens, the present generation of people who had lived side by side for years and years, were utterly predictable to one another: they took for granted attitudes, character shadings, even gestures, as having been repeated in each generation and refined by time<sup>2</sup>(Lee page#). Instead of these people taking an interest in seeing that justice was done, they treated the trial as <sup>3</sup> a gala occasion. There was no room at the public hitching trail for another animal, mules and wagons were parked under every available tree. The courthouse square was covered with picnic parties sitting on newspapers, washing down biscuit and syrup with warm milk from fruit jars. It was a crime that the upper classes of Maycomb condoned and even participated in this kind of behavior.

The litigants, the Ewells, and the defendant, Tom Robinson, a kind, black man, represented the two lower classes. The jury's decision proved one sad, undeniable fact: when a black man's word went against a white man's word, the white man, regardless of his background or his character, would always be victorious. Despite the jury's doubts pertaining to the Ewells' accusations against a Black man, they had to find in favor of Mayella because she was white. In spite of the jury's knowledge of Tom Robinson's character, they could not allow Mayella 's accusations to go unanswered. To do so would have made the two races equal, an idea which was unconscionable at that time. There was no justice or mercy for a Black man, even one as upstanding as Tom Robinson. Atticus may have stated this point best when referring to the jury's decision, "They've done it before and they did it tonight and they'll do it again and when they do it, seems that only children weep" (Lee page #).

The strong prejudices and social strata of Maycomb County had a negative effect on the events in the novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This fact was evident in the trial of Tom Robinson, an innocent black man unjustly convicted of rape. Atticus is correct. Many atrocities will be committed in the name of justice until we <sup>3</sup>learn to be compassionate and understanding of the problems and conditions of life faced by other people.

## Quiz

- 1. The narrator of the story is \_\_\_\_.**
  - A. Jem
  - B. Boo
  - C. Dill
  - D. Scout
- 2. The first chapter focuses on telling stories. This primarily serves to:**
  - A. Mimic the random thoughts in Scout's mind
  - B. Tie each of the individual characters to their family and history
  - C. Lengthen the novel
  - D. Make the story appealing to a younger audience
- 3. Scout and Jem are how old when the novel begins? (respectively)**
  - A. 5 and 8
  - B. 6 and 10
  - C. 8 and 12
  - D. 9 and 13
- 4. What is the reason for the author's choice of a young narrator?**
  - A. To allow the story to be presented by someone who cannot take an active role
  - B. To remove moral bias from the story
  - C. To allow the narrator to mature as the story progresses
  - D. All of the above
- 5. Superstition causes the children to be afraid of which family's house?**
  - A. Radley
  - B. Harris
  - C. Robinson
  - D. Finch
- 6. Scout is unusual for a first grader because:**
  - A. She can read and write
  - B. She speaks a foreign language
  - C. She can outrun all the boys
  - D. She is taller than all the other children

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7. **The school setting in the second chapter allows Lee to:**
- A. Introduce the reader to the various families, as well as their peculiarities, in Maycomb county
  - B. Show the general disrespect that children have for authority
  - C. Blame the education system for the incidents which follow in the novel
  - D. Denounce the segregation of blacks and whites
8. **How much time do the Ewell children spend in school?**
- A. The first day of every school year
  - B. Through college
  - C. Through the sixth grade
  - D. None
9. **The Ewell family is**
- A. Supportive of equal rights for all races
  - B. A family of both black and white people
  - C. Highly respected in town
  - D. One of the poorest, least educated families in Maycomb
10. **Walter Cunningham surprises Scout in which of the following ways?**
- A. He discusses farming in a very mature way with Atticus
  - B. He pours molasses onto his food
  - C. He failed to pass first grade due to his having to leave to work on the farm
  - D. All of the above
11. **What items to Scout and Jem take from the knot-hole in one of the oak trees in the Radley's front yard?**
- A. Pennies
  - B. Gum
  - C. both Gum and Pennies
  - D. None of the above
12. **What activity do Dill, Scout and Jem frequently like to play with respect to the Radley family?**
- A. They all pretend to be various members of the Radley family and act out the stabbing scene
  - B. They all role tires into the yard
  - C. They all run into the Radley yard and touch the house before fleeing
  - D. None of the above

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13. **When Jem and Dill start to exclude Scout from their activities, with whom does she spend more time?**
- A. Atticus
  - B. Maudie Atkinson
  - C. Boo Radley
  - D. Calpurnia
14. **What do Jem, Dill and Scout do that causes Mr. Radley to shoot at them?**
- A. He catches them once again play-acting Boo Radley stabbing his father
  - B. He catches them stealing money that has been hidden in a tree in his yard
  - C. They sneak into the Radley yard and try to peak into a window
  - D. Jem accidentally hits the Radley house while practicing with his new gun
15. **Mr. Radley's plugging up the knot-hole best symbolizes which of the following?**
- A. The withdrawal of Boo Radley from society forever
  - B. The sealing off of generosity
  - C. The futile attempt to prolong life by patching up deadly wounds
  - D. The loss of childhood pleasures and the transition to adulthood responsibilities
16. **Which two characters are the "outcasts" of the novel, maligned by Maycomb society?**
- A. Calpurnia and Aunt Alexandra
  - B. Boo Radley and Maudie Atkinson
  - C. Jem and Scout
  - D. Boo Radley and Tom Robinson
17. **After Atticus Finch agrees to defend Tom Robinson, what does Scout hear at school?**
- A. Atticus is "an immigrant"
  - B. Atticus is "a nigger lover"
  - C. Atticus is "a coward"
  - D. Atticus is "a racist"
18. **For Christmas, Jem and Scout receive what presents while staying with their Uncle Jack?**
- A. Pennies
  - B. Puppies
  - C. Gum
  - D. Air rifles

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19. **Aunt Alexandra's grandson Francis calls Atticus a "nigger-lover"; how does Scout react?**
- A. She punches him in the mouth
  - B. She screams at him and waits until the adults arrive
  - C. She runs away
  - D. She stays silent, exactly as Atticus had ordered her to
20. **Why does Atticus know that he will lose his case with Tom Robinson?**
- A. Because the Ewells are well respected in the town
  - B. Because it is the word of a black man against a white man, and the jury will listen to the white man
  - C. Because Tom actually committed the rape, and everyone in the town knows it
  - D. Because the judge is biased
21. **What is the best reason for why Atticus accepts a case that he knows he will lose?**
- A. To raise a furor within the town of Maycomb
  - B. Because he is befriended with the Robinson family
  - C. To maintain his conscience and his integrity
  - D. Because he needs the money
22. **Which of the following are parallels in the novel?**
- A. Tom Robinson and Boo Radley being ostracized by society
  - B. Atticus and Scout fighting communal tradition to maintain their individual identities
  - C. Both of the above
  - D. None of the above
23. **When Jem and Scout get their air guns, what does Atticus tell them it is a sin to shoot?**
- A. A mockingbird
  - B. Tin cans
  - C. Bluebirds
  - D. Dogs
24. **Atticus' role in shooting the rabid dog best foreshadows what future role that he will assume?**
- A. His status as a single father to Scout and Jem
  - B. His role in putting down the mob that wants to lynch Tom Robinson
  - C. His role as being a defender of the truth for the entire community
  - D. None of the above

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25. Which character is most like a mockingbird in the metaphorical sense?
- A. Atticus Finch
  - B. Boo Radley
  - C. Scout Finch
  - D. Tom Robinson

## Quiz Answer Key

1. **(D)** Scout
2. **(B)** Tie each of the individual characters to their family and history
3. **(B)** 6 and 10
4. **(D)** All of the above
5. **(A)** Radley
6. **(A)** She can read and write
7. **(A)** Introduce the reader to the various families, as well as their peculiarities, in Maycomb county
8. **(A)** The first day of every school year
9. **(D)** One of the poorest, least educated families in Maycomb
10. **(D)** All of the above
11. **(C)** both Gum and Pennies
12. **(A)** They all pretend to be various members of the Radley family and act out the stabbing scene
13. **(B)** Maudie Atkinson
14. **(C)** They sneak into the Radley yard and try to peak into a window
15. **(D)** The loss of childhood pleasures and the transition to adulthood responsibilities
16. **(D)** Boo Radley and Tom Robinson
17. **(B)** Atticus is "a nigger lover"
18. **(D)** Air rifles
19. **(A)** She punches him in the mouth
20. **(B)** Because it is the word of a black man against a white man, and the jury will listen to the white man
21. **(C)** To maintain his conscience and his integrity
22. **(C)** Both of the above
23. **(A)** A mockingbird
24. **(C)** His role as being a defender of the truth for the entire community
25. **(D)** Tom Robinson

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