

On his return to Australia, Towers is promoted to Commanding Officer of the U.S. Naval Forces. There are no other American officers left.

7. Having little work on his hands, Towers spends several days at Harkaway, the Davidson's farm, recovering from an illness. Moira gives him the pogo-stick she has had specially made for Helen. Osborne comes to visit in his Ferrari and tells him the radioactive dust will reach them by the end of August. More and more people stop working, in order to spend the last few weeks of their lives doing the things they like best. The fishing season is put forward and races are organized to give those motorists who have some fuel left a chance to practise their hobby. In a race in which Osborne participates, many drivers are killed because they take much greater risks than they normally would. Osborne manages to come in second place, thereby qualifying for the last Australian Grand Prix.

8. While Peter and Mary take care of their garden and their baby, Dwight and Moira go on a fishing trip. Even now, they keep their relationship on a level of friendship for the sake of his wife. On the radio they hear that John Osborne has won the Grand Prix. Everybody lives in a dream world of unreality until the first cases of radiation sickness in Melbourne are reported.

9. Soon everybody is affected by radiation. John Osborne takes pills to kill himself while sitting in his Ferrari. Peter Holmes gives Jennifer an injection so that she will die painlessly. Then Mary and he take the pills together in bed. Dwight Towers sinks his submarine several miles from the beach. Moira watches him go out before taking a pill herself.

Questions (The numbers refer to the chapters.)

1. Why does Mary Holmes ask Moira to keep Dwight Towers occupied all the time?
2. Why has Moira not been able to get a job?
3. a. What living creature does the crew of the *Scorpion* see at Cairns?
b. How did it happen that the Americans bombed Russia during the war in the Northern Hemisphere?
4. What is the 'Jorgensen effect'?
5. Why does Dwight wish he could have the pogo-stick before leaving on his cruise?
6. Why does Ralph Swain abandon the submarine at Edmonds?
7. How does it happen that cars are seen on the roads again in the spring?
8. Explain why the purchases that Peter and Mary make in Melbourne are ridiculous.
9. Why does Peter Holmes lie to his wife on the last day of their lives?

To Think About

Do you think people would really act like the characters in this book if they knew human life was coming to an end soon?

17. TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD (1960)

by Harper Lee

Author

Harper Lee was born at Monroeville in the state of Alabama in the U.S. in 1926. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was at once a great success and won its author the 1960 Pulitzer Prize.

Title

In Chapter 10 Miss Maudie says it is a sin to kill a mockingbird. Mockingbirds make music and they harm nobody. The death of Tom Robinson is like the useless death of a mockingbird. And at the end of the book Jean Louise and her father realize that making the heroic deed of Boo Radley widely known would be a cruel and senseless thing to do — like killing a mockingbird.

Genre

To Kill a Mockingbird is a psychological novel. It deals with the mind of a young girl and her reactions to the events in the book, in particular those concerning Boo Radley and the Tom Robinson case.

Setting and Theme

The story takes place in the state of Alabama, in the south of the U.S., in the 1930s. In the southern states racial prejudice has always been stronger than in the north. The struggle for equality between black and white, and the children's growing awareness of this issue, is an important theme of the story.

Point of View

Jean Louise, a girl who is six years old when the story begins and nine when it ends, is the narrator of the story. We see everything through her eyes. Most of the time she sees things in a childlike way, not understanding everything. Sometimes, however, for instance at the very beginning of the book, she makes it clear that the story she is telling happened a long time ago and she is now an older person looking back.

Main Characters

Atticus Finch, a lawyer in Maycomb, Alabama.

Jeremy (Jem), his son, who is 10 at the beginning of the story.

Jean Louise (Scout), his daughter; she is 6 when the story begins.

Calpurnia (Cal), their negro cook.

Dill (Charles Baker Harris), their friend who comes to town during the summer holidays, 7 years old when the story begins.

Other Characters

Tom Robinson, a negro accused of rape, defended by Atticus Finch.
Helen Robinson, Tom's wife.
Bob Ewell, a scoundrel who lives on the outskirts of Maycomb.
His daughter *Mayella Ewell*.
Aunt Alexandra, Atticus' sister, and her grandson *Francis*.
Miss Maudie, *Mr Avery*, *Miss Stephanie*, the *Radleys*, *Mrs Dubose* and *Miss Rachel Haverford*, neighbours of the Finches.
Arthur (Boo) Radley, a neighbour who leads a mysterious indoor life.
Heck Tate, sheriff in Maycomb.
Judge Taylor.
Mr Gilmer, the Public Prosecutor (*officier van justitie*).
Uncle Jack, Atticus' younger brother, a doctor.
Miss Caroline Fisher and *Miss Gates*, Scout's teachers.
Braxton Underwood, editor of the local paper.
Dolphus Raymond, a white man who lives among negroes.

The Story

Part 1

1. Atticus Finch is a lawyer in Maycomb, Alabama. He has two children, Jeremy (Jem) and Jean Louise, who is called Scout. Their mother is dead and Calpurnia, a negro woman, looks after them. One day the children meet Dill. He is seven and has come to spend the summer with his Aunt Rachel. They play together, and Dill suggests that it would be fun to try to make Boo Radley come out of his house. Since his arrest by the police for a juvenile crime 15 years ago, Boo's parents have kept him indoors. All sorts of mysterious stories about Boo circulate in Maycomb. Dill becomes a hero to his friends by daring to run into the Radley yard and touch the house.
2. In September Dill leaves Maycomb and Scout goes to school for the first time. Her teacher, Miss Caroline Fisher, is irritated because Scout can already read and write.
3. Jem and Scout take Walter Cunningham home for dinner. He is a poor boy but he knows everything about farming. In the afternoon Miss Caroline has trouble with Burris Ewell, a dirty boy who comes to school only once a year. Scout does not like school and wants to follow Burris' example, but Atticus convinces her that the Ewells are a special kind of people and that she will have to go to school.
4. One day Scout finds chewing gum in a knot-hole (*knoestgat*) in a tree near the Radley house. Jem makes her spit it out because it may be poisoned. At the beginning of the summer holidays Jem and Scout find a box with two coins in it in the same tree. When Dill arrives for the summer, they play 'Boo Radley' for days.

5. Jem and Dill play together more and more, and so Scout often visits Miss Maudie, their neighbour. Miss Maudie does not know why Arthur Radley still stays inside the house. She remembers that his father was a very strict, religious man. The three children try to give a note to Boo by putting it on a long pole and sticking it through the shutters (*raamluiken*). But Atticus sees them and orders them to leave Arthur Radley alone.
6. The last evening Dill is in Maycomb, the boys decide to peek through one of the windows of the Radley house. Scout is very frightened but she goes with them. While Jem is trying to have a look through a back window they see a dark shadow moving along the porch. As the children run away, they hear a gunshot. Jem's pants get stuck in the barbed wire (*prikkel-draad*) fence and he has to leave them behind. Dill makes up a story about playing strip poker and Atticus believes it. Later that night Jem sneaks out of the house to fetch his pants.
7. Not until school has started again does Jem tell Scout that he found his pants lying carefully folded across the fence, and inexpertly mended. Several times they find little presents in the knot-hole in the tree. They write a thank-you note, but when they go to put it in the tree they find that the hole has been filled with cement.
8. That winter, Mrs Radley dies. Jem and Scout see snow for the first time. That night Miss Maudie's house burns down. When the fire has been put out Scout finds herself with a blanket round her shoulders. Atticus thinks Boo must have put it there. Miss Maudie says she is not sorry about losing her house, because she has always wanted a smaller house with a big garden.
9. Scout has a bad time at school. This becomes worse when the other children tease her and Jem because Atticus is defending a negro called Tom Robinson. Atticus expects he will lose in court but his conscience tells him to defend Tom anyway. On Christmas Eve Atticus' brother Jack arrives; he is a doctor.
On Christmas morning Jem and Scout each get an air rifle from their father. They visit Alexandra, Atticus' sister, who does not agree with the way Atticus is bringing up his children. Scout has a fight with Alexandra's grandson Francis because he calls Atticus a nigger-lover. That evening she overhears her father telling Uncle Jack that the Robinson case may have serious consequences for him and his children.
10. Atticus warns his children never to shoot a mockingbird. Miss Maudie tells them that mockingbirds sing beautifully and do not harm anyone. Scout wonders why Atticus is different from other fathers. She thinks he has no achievements she can be proud of. But when Atticus kills a mad dog with one shot, she sees she was wrong.
11. Mrs Dubose, an old and sickly lady, tells Jem and Scout that their father is no better than the 'niggers' he defends. Jem angrily cuts off the

tops of all the camellias in Mrs Dubose's garden. Atticus orders Jem to apologize to Mrs Dubose. She makes him come and read to her every day. When Mrs Dubose is dead, Atticus says that she had been using opium as a pain-killer. She wanted to stop using it before she died. The reading sessions, which became longer every day, helped to distract her from thinking about the drug.

Part 2

12. One Sunday when Atticus is out of town, Calpurnia takes Jem and Scout to her own church. Scout is surprised to see that Calpurnia behaves and talks differently when she is with the other negroes. The money collected during the service is for Tom Robinson's wife Helen. Tom has been accused of raping Bob Ewell's daughter and now nobody wants to employ Helen. When the children get home, they find Aunt Alexandra waiting for them.

13. Atticus has asked his sister Aunt Alexandra to come and stay with them for some time. She is soon accepted in Maycomb society. She wants Jem and Scout to behave like a gentleman and lady. It is obvious that Atticus does not entirely agree with his sister's ideas.

14. Alexandra thinks Calpurnia should leave the house but Atticus refuses to let her go. Now that Jem is twelve he treats Scout like a little girl. One night Scout finds Dill hiding under her bed. He has run away from home, because he feels that his mother and his new stepfather do not really care about him.

15. One evening Sheriff Tate and some other men come to talk to Atticus. They are afraid Tom Robinson will be lynched. That same night Jem, Scout and Dill find Atticus sitting in front of the prison. Some men arrive who have come to get Tom. Scout starts talking to one of the men, Mr Cunningham. This takes away the tension and the men leave.

16. The next day is Tom Robinson's trial. The children go to the courthouse, although Atticus has told them to stay at home.

17. Sheriff Tate tells the court that on the night of the supposed rape, Bob Ewell came to tell him that his daughter Mayella had been raped by a negro. Mayella told the sheriff it was Tom Robinson. Mayella had a black right eye and other wounds. Her father says that he saw Tom raping his daughter, but that the negro escaped. Mr Ewell is shown to be left-handed. Jem thinks Atticus is trying to show that Mayella was beaten by her own father.

18. Mayella Ewell testifies that she asked Tom to do a little job for her and that when she went inside Tom followed her, grabbed her from behind and took advantage of her. Atticus shows the court that Tom's left arm is much shorter than his right one and that his left hand is shrivelled (*verschrompeld*).

19. Tom says that he often did odd jobs for Mayella because she seemed to be lonely and had no one to help her. That evening Mayella tried to seduce him. He was very scared and ran away. Suddenly Dill begins to cry and Scout has to leave the court-room with him.

20. Mr Dolphus Raymond gives Dill a drink. Everybody looks down on Mr Raymond because he lives among negroes and seems to be drunk all day. Back in the court-room they hear Atticus address the jury. He states that Mayella tried to seduce Tom Robinson. Now she is trying to have Tom done away with because he is a reminder of what she did. Atticus winds up by saying that all people ought to have the same rights. He tells the jury they should not condemn Tom because he is a negro.

21. Calpurnia comes to the court-room, very anxious because she does not know where the children are. Atticus sends them home for lunch but says they may come back to hear the verdict of the jury. Jem is sure Atticus has won the case but he is wrong: the jury declares Tom Robinson guilty of rape.

22. The next morning Atticus finds the kitchen filled with gifts from people who appreciate the way he defended Tom Robinson. Miss Maudie comforts the children with cake. But Miss Stephanie tells them that Bob Ewell has spat in their father's face and threatened him.

23. The children are afraid something will happen to Atticus, but their father understands Bob's anger. Atticus says it will take many years before a black man will win a case against a white man. He is glad, at least, that it took the jury a long time to come to a unanimous verdict. If Tom loses his appeal (*hoger beroep*) he will be killed in the electric chair. Jem and Scout discuss the resentment (*haat*) some people feel for others.

24. Jem is teaching Dill to swim. Scout is sitting among Aunt Alexandra's visitors, dressed up like a lady. The women gossip (*roddelen*) while having tea. Suddenly Atticus comes home. He says Tom Robinson tried to escape from prison and was shot. He no longer believed in Atticus' assurance that he had a good chance to get free.

25. Atticus and Calpurnia go tell Tom's wife Helen what has happened. Ewell is glad of Tom's death, and says that two more people have got to be killed.

26. When school begins again Scout's interest in Boo Radley is renewed. At school Miss Gates condemns Hitler's treatment of the Jews. Scout wonders how Miss Gates can hate Hitler for that, whereas she looks down on negroes herself.

27. Bob Ewell loses his job and blames Atticus. He tries to frighten Helen Robinson but she is protected by her employer Link Deas. Scout is to play the part of a ham in a Halloween play. (At Halloween, 31 October,

children dress up in costumes and play tricks on people.)

28. On the evening of the performance Scout falls asleep backstage and walks onto the stage at the wrong moment. When she and Jem walk home she does not want to take off her ham costume for shame. As they pass a very dark place, they are attacked by someone. Another person comes to their rescue but Scout cannot recognize anyone. Jem, who has a broken arm, is carried home by the rescuer. Sheriff Tate finds Bob Ewell lying dead under a tree.

29. It appears that the wire in Scout's costume has saved her life: the scratch of a knife is clearly visible. The man who saved them turns out to be Boo Radley.

30. Atticus assumes that Jem stabbed Bob Ewell in an act of self-defense. But Tate knows that, in fact, Arthur Radley killed Ewell. He convinces Atticus that in order to keep the shy Radley from becoming a public figure, they should agree on the story that Ewell killed himself when he fell on his own knife.

31. Scout takes Arthur Radley home. She fancies that he must have been watching her and Jem for many years from his window. When she gets home Atticus reads to her until she falls asleep. She never sees Boo Radley again.

Questions (The numbers refer to the chapters.)

4. For what two reasons does Scout want to stop the Boo Radley game?
7. What is remarkable about the soap dolls that Jem and Scout find in the tree?
8. How does Jem manage to make a snowman with such a little bit of snow?
10. What does this chapter show about Atticus' character?
12. Why is Dill not coming this summer, according to his letter?
15. What has Mr Underwood been doing during the confrontation in front of the prison?
18. What are the weak points of Mayella Ewell's statement?
19. Why does Dill start crying in the court-room?
20. What secret does Dolphus Raymond tell the children?
22. What is Atticus' reaction to the verdict?
23. Why does Boo Radley stay inside his house all the time, according to Jem?
24. For what purpose do the ladies meet?
25. How do most people react to Tom's death? How does Mr Underwood react?
29. What strikes you about Arthur Radley's appearance?

To Think About

1. What do most people in Maycomb regard negroes? Who are the exceptions?
2. What connections and similarities can you find between the Boo Radley plot and the Tom Robinson plot?
3. At the beginning of Chapter 25, why doesn't Jem want Scout to kill the roly-poly (centipede)?
4. Where did Sheriff Tate really get the switchblade that he says he took from a drunk man (Chapter 30)?