

SUMMARY

TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD

Part One

Chapter 2

- It is September; Dill goes back to his hometown of Meridian. Scout gets ready to go to school, but it is not as she hoped.
 - Miss Caroline, her teacher, becomes angry when she realises that she has already been taught to read, and so she asks Scout to tell Atticus that he must stop educating her - she thinks that only schools should be a place of education.
 - Walter Cunningham, a poor boy in Scout's class whose family has been hit terribly by the Great Depression, has no money for lunch. Miss Caroline offers to lend him some, but he refuses as he knows he'll not be able to pay it back. Scout tries to explain this, but Miss Caroline becomes angry and punishes her.
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Chapter 3

- Scout rubs Walter's nose in dirt to play roughly with him, but Jem tells her off and invites Walter to 'dinner' (lunch), as he and Scout go home for their lunch each day. Scout is shocked when Walter pours syrup all over his vegetables, but Calpurnia scolds her, saying he's a guest in their house and that she should respect him.
 - At school, Miss Caroline is scared by a 'cootie' - a bug - in Burris Ewell's hair. She gets into an altercation with him, and he upsets and threatens her. The children try to explain that the Ewell family only come to school once a year and then leave, and that they are a mean group that it's best to avoid. Miss Caroline tells Burris to leave, and he makes her cry.
 - Scout has a talk with Atticus and asks if she can skip school and learn at home, he tells her she needs to keep going.
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Chapter 4

- Scout is bored at school for the rest of the year, she passes by the Radley Place and finds an oak tree with a hole in it - inside, there are two pieces of gum. She takes them out and chews them; Jem is horrified. They go back on the last day of school and find two Indian head pennies (an old type of currency) in the trunk.
 - Summer returns and so does Dill, the three friends start playing a game where they roll around in a tire, and they invent a game called 'Boo Radley', where they act out different Radley family members - including exploring the gossip and rumours of the Radley family. Atticus finds them and is annoyed, Jem worries that it may no longer be safe to play the game.
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Chapter 5

- Jem and Dill become closer friends and Scout feels left out. She develops an interest in Miss Maudie Atkinson, a widowed neighbour who introduces her to domestic pastimes, such as gardening and baking. Boo Radley's father has now died, but Miss Maudie tells Scout that Boo is still alive - she says his father was too religious and strict (a Baptist), and that Boo was always a nice boy as a child.
 - Jem and Dill plan to invite Boo out for ice cream, but Atticus catches them and tells them off.
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Chapter 6

- On Dill's last day before he returns home, he, Jem and Scout sneak up to the Radley Place and peer through the window - they see a silhouette of a man in a hat, and they run, hearing a gunshot behind them as they flee. Jem's pants get caught on the fence between the Radley Place and their school as they're escaping.
- When they get back home, a lot of people from the town are there. Miss Maudie says that Boo Radley 'shot a Negro' (a black man) in his yard. Miss Stephanie says he is still waiting in his yard with a gun, ready to shoot. Atticus asks where

Jem's pants are, and Dill says he won them in a game. At night, Jem sneaks back to the fence to get them.

Chapter 7

- Jem says the pants were mended and hung on the fence. They also find a small ball of grey twine in the oak tree hole, and decide to take it after a few days.
 - Scout is still unhappy in second grade, and in the Autumn (Fall) they find another present in the tree - carved figures that look like themselves. Later they also find chewing gum, a spelling bee medal and a watch. The next day, the hole is filled with cement and Jem asks Mr Radley (Nathan, Boo's brother) about it - he says it was filled because the tree is dying.
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Chapter 8

- It is winter, and snow falls lightly on the town for the first time in years. Jem and Scout work hard collecting snow to build a snowman - there's not enough for a full man, so they build a small dirt figure and cover it with snow; it looks like Mr Avery (a nasty neighbour of theirs). They disguise it a little so it's less obvious with Miss Maudie's hat and hedge clippers.
 - In the middle of the night, Atticus wakes Scout because Miss Maudie's house is on fire. They help to save furniture, but the house is destroyed. Someone puts a blanket on Scout, and they later realise it was Boo Radley. Jem tells Atticus about the tree hole and his pants, Scout feels sick and Atticus says to not tell anybody about it. Miss Maudie is feeling positive about rebuilding the house and planning a garden.
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Chapter 9

- Atticus is defending Tom Robinson, a black man accused of raping a white woman - he doesn't expect to win but morally feels he must defend Tom anyway. At school, a classmate of Scout's called Cecil Jacobs tells the class that 'Scout Finch's daddy defends niggers'; Scout is enraged. Atticus tells her to 'hold your

head high, and keep those fists down', teaching her that some battles should not be fought or won through violence.

- Uncle Jack, Atticus' brother, comes to stay. Scout curses in front of him and Jack warns her never to do that. At Christmas the family go to Finch's Landing to see Alexandra, Atticus' sister who still runs the farm there. Alexandra tries to get Scout to dress like a 'lady', which she hates.
 - Francis, Alexandra's grandson, is very 'boring' to Scout but he also has a mean streak: he teases Scout and calls Atticus a 'nigger-lover', so she attacks him. He then tells Alexandra that Scout hit him and Uncle Jack spanks her, but later in Maycomb she tells him the truth and he's furious, although he agrees not to cause a fuss because he promised Atticus not to react to anything that's said about him.
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Chapter 10

- Scout and Jem start the chapter remarking how 'feeble' Atticus is (he's almost fifty and much older than other kids' fathers). He reads, whereas others go fishing and hunting. A mad dog comes to town, and Atticus shoots the dog with 'one shot', impressing the children and causing them to reconsider their judgement of him.
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Chapter 11

- Mrs Dubose, an old woman in a wheelchair, also makes a nasty comment about the Tom Robinson trial. Atticus expects Jem to respect her because of her age, but one day she says that Atticus works for 'niggers and trash' and that he is as bad as his clients. Jem attacks her camellia plants and is punished by Atticus, who makes her go to Mrs Dubose's house and read to her for a month - it's a painful experience. Mrs Dubose dies soon after Jem stops reading to her and leaves him a present - a white camellia flower. Atticus tells the children that she was addicted to morphine and that the reading helped her fight against it.
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Part Two

Chapter 12

- Jem is getting older, he's 12 and doesn't want to be followed around by Scout anymore. Scout is further disappointed because Dill won't be coming to Maycomb any more as his father has remarried. Atticus' work also forces him to travel more, and Calpurnia looks after Scout and Jem in his absence. She takes them to her 'colored' church, it is a First Purchase building that was bought with the first money earned by freed slaves.
 - Reverend Sykes is kind to them even though a few of the others there show disapproval. They learn that Bob Ewell accused Tom Robinson, and that Tom's wife Helen can no longer find work because of it. Though the members of the church are all struggling black people living in poverty, they are depicted very positively.
 - They leave and find Aunt Alexandra waiting at home for them.
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Chapter 13

- Aunt Alexandra thinks that the children need a 'feminine influence', so she stays with them for a while. She is welcomed into Maycomb, and ladies in the town bake her cakes. She tries to educate the children in 'Finch breeding' - their family history, forcing Atticus to take her side and making Scout cry.
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Chapter 14

- Aunt Alexandra is frustrated when she learns that Calpurnia took the children to her church, and refuses to let Scout go to Calpurnia's house. She tells Atticus that they no longer need a cook and tries to get him to fire her; he refuses.
- Jem tells Scout not to annoy Aunt Alexandra, but she takes offense and attacks him. They are sent to bed early, and Scout thinks she sees a 'snake' in her room - it turns out to be Dill hiding under the bed.

- Dill has run away from home - his parents had been ignoring him, so he took a train to Maycomb Junction and part walked, part rode on a cotton wagon to get to the town of Maycomb itself.
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Chapter 15

- A group of men including the sheriff come to tell Atticus that Tom Robinson has been moved to Maycomb jail, they are worried that there might be a lynch mob (a group of people who band together to take the law into their own hands and kill someone they perceive as a criminal).
 - Alexandra and Atticus have been arguing about the trial - Alexandra thinks it is shameful for Atticus to be involved. Atticus goes into town and Scout and Jem sneak after him. They see a group of men get out of a car and threaten Atticus, Scout runs into the middle of the crowd, followed by Jem and Dill, and tension rises. Scout notices Mr Cunningham, Walter's dad, in the crowd and asks him to say 'Hey' to Walter. He is ashamed, and the men leave. Mr Underwood, the owner of the newspaper, comes out and says he was hiding with a gun ready to protect Atticus.
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Chapter 16

- The trial begins, everyone in town attends - except for Miss Maudie, who feels it is too brutal to watch a man fight for his life. A crowd of people eat lunch in the town square, Jem, Scout and Dill sneak in late to watch, and Reverend Sykes lets them sit in the balcony with the black folk (as they are segregated from the white folk). Judge Taylor is introduced - an old man who reminds Scout of 'a sleepy old shark'.
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Chapter 17

- Heck Tate is the first witness; he is interrogated by the prosecutor, Mr Gilmer. Tate says that on the night of November 21st he says Bob Ewell told him to go to the Ewell's house - he saw Bob's daughter Mayella bruised and beaten, she says she has been raped by Tom Robinson. Bob Ewell speaks next, he is a rough spoken and rude little man. He says he was collecting firewood from the local

forest and on his way back home, when he looked up and saw Tom through the window with Mayella. Atticus asks why no doctor was present, Bob replies that it was too expensive - but this presents a problem as Mayella was not officially examined at the time of the incident.

- Tate says that Mayella's bruises were to the right side of her face, and Scout notices that Tom's left arm is damaged (it was destroyed by a cotton machine when he was a boy), so he could not have attacked her that way.
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Chapter 18

- Mayella speaks next - she is a 19 year old girl, who seems sweeter than the rest of the Ewell family, and she is frightened. She says she asked Tom Robinson to fix a door for her, he came in, attacked her and raped her.
 - Atticus begs Mayella to admit that there was no rape and she was beaten by her father, but she refuses - she shouts and causes a fuss, accusing everyone of being too weak to prosecute Tom. She cries and won't speak further.
 - Atticus calls Tom Robinson.
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Chapter 19

- Tom tells the truth: Mayella often asked him to do work for her, and she asked him to come in and fix a door. He got inside the house, but there was no broken door and the other children weren't there either. Mayella hugged him and asked him to kiss her. At this point, Bob appeared - he called Mayella a whore and threatened to kill her, Tom ran away.
 - Link Deas, Tom's white employer, also stands up and states that he never had any trouble from him. Judge Taylor is angry, and sends Link out of the courtroom.
 - Mr Gilmer questions Tom harshly and intensely. Tom admits he may have had the strength still to hurt Mayella, and that he feels sorry for her.
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Chapter 20

- Dill becomes upset and he has to leave the courtroom, Scout follows him. They return just in time to hear the last part of Atticus' speech.
 - Atticus uses logic and reason in his presentation to the jury: he states that there was no doctor present to assess the situation, and that the witnesses are highly unreliable because of their personal vested interests. He feels that Mayella was lonely, and wanted Tom's company, but then became ashamed when she was discovered and so accused him of rape to protect herself. Atticus begs the jury to not just blindly assume that all black people are criminals with evil intentions. Calpurnia arrives in the courtroom.
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Chapter 21

- Calpurnia says the children have not been at home for hours, and Atticus sends them home. The jury debates for many hours, and the children wonder what the outcome will be - Jem is hopeful. After 11pm, the jury enters. They do not look at Tom as they walk. They declare him guilty.
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Chapter 22

- Jem is very upset. The black community of Maycomb deliver a large parcel of food to Atticus' house to give thanks for his efforts. The children speak to Miss Maudie, and Jem explains his positive perspective on Maycomb and its inhabitants has been ruined.
 - Miss Maudie is more positive, she says that some people were on Tom's side and the jury took a long time to decide so they must have been unsure of their decision, which shows progress for the black community even if it's too late for Tom.
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Chapter 23

- Atticus remarks that he wishes Bob Ewell wouldn't chew tobacco, while Miss Stephanie explains that Bob Ewell swore and spat at Atticus, telling him he would get revenge. Jem and Scout are afraid, and Atticus explains that it is because Atticus damaged Bob Ewell's reputation.
 - A few weeks later, Atticus and Jem discuss the legal system. Atticus explains that the jury may be made out of decent people, but that difficult situations may cause them to draw the wrong conclusions, especially when race is involved.
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Chapter 24

- Aunt Alexandra invites her missionary circle to tea, and Scout helps - wearing a dress. The women discuss the African Mruna tribe, who are being converted to Christianity. They also complain about their own black servants, who have been badly behaved since Tom's trial verdict.
 - Atticus appears and tells everyone that Tom tried to escape, so he was shot seventeen times and killed
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Chapter 25

- In September, Scout finds a roly poly bug, and tries to kill it but Jem persuades her not to.
 - Scout remembers Dill telling her that he and Jem went swimming in late August, they met Atticus and Calpurnia driving as they attempted to flag down a car for a lift. They all went to Helen Robinson's house, and she collapsed before they even told her that her husband Tom was dead.
 - Mr Underwood writes a long article about how Tom was innocent and his death was murder. Bob Ewell says that Tom's death makes 'two more to go'.
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Chapter 26

- Scout and Jem are older, but they still pass by the Radley Place often and think of Boo Radley, wishing to see him. At school, Miss Gates teaches Scout about the atrocities of Hitler and the Nazis, discussing the persecution of the Jews and

inequality. Scout finds this hypocritical as Miss Gates openly showed racist opinions towards the black folk in her town during the trial, stating that someone needed to teach them a lesson.

Chapter 27

- Bob Ewell briefly gets a job through one of the Great Depression job programs, but then he soon loses it and blames Atticus.
 - Link Deas, Tom Robinson's former employer, gives Helen (Tom's widow) a job, but Bob Ewell follows her to work and tries to frighten her. Deas threatens him with arrest, and Aunt Alexandra observes that Bob Ewell seems to have a grudge against everyone who was involved in the trial.
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Chapter 28

- The ladies of Maycomb organise a Halloween pageant, Scout is going dressed as a ham. They are on their way to the pageant when Cecil Jacobs jumps out and scares them. Scout accidentally falls asleep and misses her cue to go onstage, the ladies are very angry with her.
 - On their way home, Jem hears noises and at first they think it must be Cecil Jacobs again. Scout is still dressed up and can't see, but she hears Jem scream and someone tries to crush her - Jem pulls the attacker off and Scout drops to the floor, feeling around to try and find Jem - she only finds a man with stubble who smells of whiskey lying on the ground. She finally manages to see a man carrying Jem up to the front door. She thinks he's dead.
 - Aunt Alexandra explains that Jem is just unconscious and calls for the doctor, Atticus calls for the sheriff. Jem has a broken arm and a sore head, but he will be fine.
 - Heck Tate (the sheriff) appears and tells Atticus that Bob Ewell has been found dead under a tree - he was stabbed.
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Chapter 29

- Scout tells everyone what she saw, and Heck Tate shows her where the costume was ripped by a knife. Scout realises that the man who carried Jem into the house is Boo Radley.
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Chapter 30

- They all go down to the porch, Atticus and Tate discuss Bob's death, and Atticus realises that Boo Radley was the one who stabbed Bob Ewell. Tate says that Bob fell on his knife by accident, as he is trying to defend Boo. He doesn't want the town to turn on Boo.
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Chapter 31

- Scout takes Boo upstairs to say goodnight to Jem, when he leaves she never sees him again. She returns home and Atticus reads to her until she falls asleep, he then goes to Jem's room and stays with him there.

