***To Kill a Mockingbird***

***Chapter 12***

***Summary:***

* [**Jem's**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/jem-jeremy-atticus-finch) hit the middle school years, and everyone knows what that means: he's angsty, moody, prone to prolonged silences broken by angry outbursts, and he all of a sudden thinks Scout should act like a girl.
* Scout asks Atticus and [**Calpurnia**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/calpurnia) what's up with Jem and whether she can fix it by beating him up, but they say he's just growing up and she should leave him alone.
* To make things worse, Dill isn't coming for the summer.
* And then to make things the absolute worst, [**Atticus**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/atticus-finch) (who's a member of the state legislature) gets called into a special session and is away for two weeks.
* With Atticus away, Calpurnia doesn't trust Jem and Scout to go to church by themselves (there was a past incident involving tying up one of their Sunday School classmates in the furnace room), and decides to take them with her to her church instead.
* On Saturday night, Cal scrubs Scout down to her bare skin and makes sure that there's not a thread out of place on the kids' clothes.
* Why? As she says, "I don't want anybody sayin' I don't look after my children" (12.31).
* On Sunday, they head over to First Purchase African M.E. Church outside of town.
* Everyone's happy to see them, except one: a tall woman named [**Lula**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/lula) who asks Calpurnia why she's brought white children to the African-American church.
* For a minute, things look like they might get ugly, but then the crowd drives Lula off and welcomes the kids.
* The church is plain and there aren't any hymn-books, but Cal won't let Scout ask questions.
* The priest, [**Reverend Sykes**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/reverend-sykes), begins the service by welcoming the Finches, and then reads some announcements.
* One of the announcements is that the day's collection will go to [**Helen**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/helen-robinson), Tom Robinson's wife.
* Zeebo leads the congregation in a hymn by reading out each line of the lyrics, which everyone else sings after him, surprising both Scout and Jem, who had never heard of such a thing before.
* Reverend Sykes gives a sermon, which like that of the Finches' usual preacher, focuses on "the Impurity of Women" (12.79).
* Contrary to the Finches' usual church experience, the Reverend names names as to who's been sinning lately, and tells them individually to cut it out.
* After the collection, Jem and Scout are again surprised when Reverend Sykes counts the collection money in front of everyone and then announces they don't have enough—they need at least ten dollars to get Helen and her family through the week.
* The Reverend goes so far as to lock the doors and hold the congregation hostage until they cough up enough cash.
* Jem and Scout put in their dimes from Atticus.
* Once the ten dollars is finally collected, the doors are opened and the service is over.
* Afterwards, Scout asks Calpurnia why Helen can't find work. She says that Tom's family is being shunned because of his alleged crime.
* So, what'd he do? Cal reluctantly tells her that Bob Ewell has accused him of raping Ewell's daughter.
* First, Scout wonders why anyone would listen to the Ewells, and then asks Calpurnia what rape is.
* Uh, ask Atticus, Cal says.
* Now it's Jem's turn to ask questions. Why does the congregation sings their hymns the way they do, instead of saving up for hymn-books?
* Well, hymn-books wouldn't do them much good—hardly any people in the church can read.
* Cal only can because Miss Maudie's aunt, Miss Buford, taught her to read.
* Some other facts about Cal, which Jem and Scout only now think to ask her:
* She's older than Atticus though she doesn't know her age exactly, or even her birthday—she just celebrates it on Christmas to make it easy to remember.
* She grew up near Finch's Landing, and moved to [**Maycomb**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/analysis/setting) with Atticus when he married.
* She taught her oldest son Zeebo to read, too (but not using anything like "This is Spot. See Spot run.").
* Nope, she brought out the big guns: the Bible and a book Miss Buford used to teach her—Blackstone's Commentaries, a gift from the Finch kids' grandfather.
* Jem's blow away that she learned and taught English out of such a difficult book as the Commentaries. That must be why she doesn't talk like the other African-Americans he knows.
* Scout is blown away to think that Calpurnia has a whole other life besides being their cook, much like a child realizing that teachers don't sleep at school.
* One last question. Why does Cal talk differently at the African-American church than she does with white people? She says that it makes more sense to fit in.
* Okay, this is actually the last question: can Scout visit Calpurnia at her home some time? Sure.
* And then they arrive home to find [**Aunt Alexandra**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/alexandra-hancock) installed on their front porch.

***Brief Summary:***

By this time, [Jem](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/jem-finch/) has reached the age of twelve, and he begins to demand that [Scout](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/scout-finch/) “stop pestering him” and act more like a girl. Scout becomes upset and looks forward desperately to Dill’s arrival in the summer. To Scout’s disappointment, however, Dill does not come to Maycomb this year. He sends a letter saying that he has a new father (presumably, his mother has remarried) and will stay with his family in Meridian. To make matters worse, the state legislature, of which [Atticus](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/atticus-finch/) is a member, is called into session, forcing Atticus to travel to the state capital every day for two weeks.

[Calpurnia](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/calpurnia/) decides to take the children to her church, a “colored” church, that Sunday. Maycomb’s Black church is an old building, called First Purchase because it was bought with the first earnings of freed slaves. One woman, Lula, criticizes Calpurnia for bringing white children to church, but the congregation is generally friendly, and Reverend Sykes welcomes them, saying that everyone knows their father. The church has no money for hymnals, and few of the parishioners can read, so they sing by echoing the words that Zeebo, Calpurnia’s eldest son and the town garbage collector, reads from their only hymnal. During the service, Reverend Sykes takes up a collection for Tom Robinson’s wife, Helen, who cannot find work now that her husband has been accused of rape. After the service, Scout learns that Tom Robinson has been accused by Bob Ewell and cannot understand why anyone would believe the Ewells’ word. When the children return home, they find Aunt Alexandra waiting for them.

***Synopsis:***

Summer is back and [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem) will be turning 12 in a few weeks. It's apparent that Jem's adolescent angst is starting to show. He's continually telling [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) to stop bothering him, and, worst of all, he tells her to start acting more like a lady—after years of telling her to stop acting "like a girl."

Any hope for a fun summer feels lost when [Dill](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Dill) writes to say he can't come. He reports having a new stepfather and says they're going to build a fishing boat together. He then assures Scout of his love and promises to come get her when he saves enough money. On top of that [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus) is called to an emergency session of the state legislature.

In Atticus's absence [Calpurnia](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Calpurnia) takes the Finch children to her black church. Church leader Reverend Sykes greets them warmly and finds them a seat, but the congregation meets them with a mixture of kindness and prejudice. The discrimination Jem and Scout feel is an eye-opening experience. After the service Jem, Scout, and Calpurnia have a wild discussion about religion, education, and life experience—all revolving around the differences between blacks and whites. When Scout and Jem return home, they are surprised to find Aunt Alexandra waiting for them.

Because the story takes place over three years, [Lee](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/author/) is able to illustrate the children's physical and mental changes. As the novel progresses the children and the reader are reminded that even in the face of mounting differences, common ground can be found, whether it's between a brother and a sister, men and women, or people of different races.

[Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) comments about [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem)'s upcoming 12th birthday. As Jem reaches adolescence, his moodiness provides insight into the siblings' personality differences. Even though they occasionally get on each other's nerves, the underlying bond between them is always apparent.

The conversation between [Calpurnia](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Calpurnia), Jem, and Scout as they walk home from church is pivotal in the way it reveals Jem and Scout's development. Though the children have known Calpurnia for a long time, they come to realize how very different their life experiences are. The chapter also shows how Calpurnia is a divided character—a bridge between African Americans and whites in Maycomb.

***Critical Analysis :***

Part II begins with Scout emphasizing the divide between her and Jem. He's twelve now and has pulled away from Scout, bossing her around and telling her to act like a girl, though her tomboy clothes never bothered him before. This would be fine to Scout if Dill were there, but he's forced to stay in Meridian because he has a new stepfather. What's worse, Atticus is called away for an emergency meeting of the State Legislature, so Scout and Jem are left in the care of Calpurnia. If not for an incident where Scout and Jem, along with a few of their friends, took advantage of the absence of authority figures and tied a girl named Eunice up in the furnace room at Church, then maybe they'd be allowed to go to Church on their own on Sunday. Instead, Calpurnia decides to take them to First Purchase African M.E. Church, so called because it was the first purchase the freed slaves made with their wages.

For the most part, the African Americans Jem and Scout meet at First Purchase are very polite to them and don't mind having white children in their church. The primary exception to this is Lula, a large, seemingly seven foot tall woman who doesn't like that the kids are there. Lula wants this church to be just for African Americans, a safe space where their community can come together, without having to fear white people or their presence. Reverend Sykes, however, welcomes Jem and Scout to their church. Though they don't have hymnals, the Reverend is able to lead the flock through hymns using a process called "lining," that is, reading a hymn line by line so members of the congregation can read or sing it back. When collection time comes, Reverend Sykes demands that the congregation come together to give ten dollars to Helen Robinson, Tom Robinson's wife, who is, unsurprisingly, having trouble finding work. After Church, Scout finally learns what Tom is on trial for: he has been accused of raping Mayella Ewell, Bob Ewell's daughter.

In this same conversation, Scout also learns that Calpurnia is older than Atticus, that she's one of only four African Americans in Maycomb who can read, and that she was taught to read by Miss Maudie Atkinson's aunt, Miss Buford. When Jem asks Calpurnia why she speaks differently (that is, more colloquially) around African Americans, Calpurnia says if she spoke like a white person at home it would seem like she was putting on airs. This leads to Scout asking if she can come to Calpurnia's house sometime. Calpurnia says she would like that.

Unfortunately, when they get home from Church, they find that Aunt Alexandra has come to stay with them and that she might have something to say about Scout visiting Calpurnia.

**Allusion**

*The Commentaries on the Laws of England***by Sir William Blackstone.** First published from 1765 to 1769, Blackstone's *Commentaries* is divided into four volumes and for many years was considered the definitive book on English law. That Calpurnia taught Zeebo how to read out of it seems absurd to Jem, who knows that the commentaries are extremely dry and difficult to get through for a first-time reader.

**Gethsemane.**The Garden of Gethsemane, which sits at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Jesus and his disciples are said to have slept in the garden on the night before his crucifixion. Every pew in First Purchase comes with fans that have a "garish" image of Gethsemane on it (garish, no doubt, because the Garden of Gethsemane isn't appropriate subject matter for a cheap fan).

**"The Light of the World" by William Holman Hunt.** Hunt's allegorical painting depicts Jesus standing at a door, preparing to knock, as in Revelation 3:20: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me." First Purchase uses a rotogravure print of the painting as decoration.

**"On Jordan's Stormy Banks."** A religious hymn composed by Samuel Stennett, a Seventh Day Baptist. There are several other hymns sung during the scene in church, one of which is called "Jubilee."

**Moses.** A Biblical figure famed for parting the Red Sea and leading the Jews out of Egypt, where they'd been enslaved. Calpurnia alludes to him when she says that, if she were to talk "properly" (like a white person) at home, then it would seem like she was putting on airs like Moses, meaning that it would seem like she was trying to be bigger and more important than she is.

**Rotogravure Print.** A kind of print made using a rotary printing process, which is itself a type of intaglio printing in that it uses an image engraved onto a carrier (usually a cylinder) to print copies of a pre-created image for widespread distribution. The rotogravure print of William Holman Hunt's "The Light of the World" is the only piece of decoration in First Purchase, which indicates to the reader both that the church is poor and that the congregation believes Jesus is indeed the light of the world.

**Conflict**

Part II marks an important shift in the nature of conflict in the novel. In Part I, we saw that many of the conflicts were between either Scout and another character or Jem and another character. In Part II, as Scout's world starts to expand and the trial swings into full force, that changes, and the conflicts become more complicated, stemming from issues of racism, sexism, and classism.

**Calpurnia vs. Lula.** When Calpurnia takes Scout and Jem to First Purchase, most of the African Americans there are happy to accept the Finch children, in part because they know what Atticus is doing for Tom and respect him for it. Lula, however, doesn't want the children there, because she wants this space to be reserved solely for African Americans. In this, we can see the products of segregation, which has put unnecessary strain on this encounter.

**Diction**

We've seen before how Atticus's diction, as a lawyer, differs from Scout's. In this chapter, diction again becomes important when Jem asks Calpurnia why she uses the same colloquial diction that other African Americans use when she clearly knows better. Calpurnia explains this to him with an allusion: if she were to speak like a white person with her Black friends it would seem like she was putting on airs, like Moses. In this, we can clearly see how one's use of diction is associated with one's intelligence, with the assumption being that anyone who can't speak the "right" way in Jem's mind being uneducated and low class.

**Metaphor**

One example of this would be when Scout says the Governor of Alabama wants to "scrape a few barnacles off the ship of state," where the state government is figured as a ship with an underside littered with useless, clinging barnacles (laws, politicians, etc.) that need to be scraped off.

**Simile**

One example of this would be Scout's over-starched skirt coming up "like a tent" when she sits.

**Themes**

**Racism.** Understanding the effect racism and segregation has had on the African American community in Maycomb is key to understanding Lula's problem with the presence of the Finch children. Rather fairly, she wants First Purchase to be a safe haven for African Americans, who are persecuted by whites everywhere else they go. By bringing to white children to their church, Calpurnia has, in Lula's mind, betrayed her race and invited their enemy to sit at the table, so to speak. No one else in the congregation appears to feel this way about the Finch children in particular, but it's entirely possible that, if Calpurnia had brought any other white people, things would've been different.

**Religion.** Given that this novel is set in Alabama in the 1930s, it's safe to assume that everyone in town is Christian and belongs to some Protestant sect, if not to the Catholic Church. It's unclear exactly what denomination Calpurnia and the African Americans at First Purchase belong to, but this is of less importance than their religious practices, which seem to be founded on charity, devotion, and community. In this chapter, we get the sense that the African American community has come together to support Tom and Helen Robinson. This stems both from their belief in charity and the continued devotion they feel to the community.

***Critical Study:***

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](https://www.gradesaver.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/study-guide/character-list#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](https://www.gradesaver.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/study-guide/character-list#helen-robinson). He orders for the doors to be closed until 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](https://www.gradesaver.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/study-guide/character-list#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.

***Significance(Chapter 8-12):*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.

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.

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-removed 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 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.

***Notes***:

Jem turned twelve and Scout found it much harder to communicate with him. He was becoming a typical teenager and his younger sister wasn't ready for that change. Scout decides to bide her time with Cal until Dill came to visit. But, then she received a letter from Dill saying he had a new father and wouldn't visit that summer. He did remember they were engaged and promised to come for her when he had enough money.

Atticus leaves for a couple of weeks to work at the state legislature. Cal is worried about where the children will attend church the decision is made that they will attend her church. She makes sure they are bathed and dressed appropriately and they head to her church on Sunday morning. One woman raised a ruckus that two white children are in their church. Cal assures her that these children her company and then the garbage man stepped forward and welcomes them.

When it is announced that they will sing a hymn, Scout asks about hymn books. Cal tells her to be quiet and watch. The garbage man begins to sing and the congregation follows suit. Scout notes some of the other differences. Reverence Sykes speaks freely from the pulpit about the sins of specific members. Then each person stands and walks to the front to make a donation. When the last person drops theirs in the can, the reverend tells the congregation that isn't enough. Cal explains they sing that way because the people in the congregation can't read.

Jem and Scout question Cal about her double life. She speaks "proper" English when they are together, but speaks very differently when she is with her congregation. She tries to explain that she would be putting on airs to speak any other way.

We see the close-knit congregation and the black community in a positive light. They are close, supportive and reach out to help Helen Robinson in her time of need. We also learn that the townsfolk are shunning Helen and refusing to hire her, because of the allegations against her husband. This behavior furthers the victimization of Tom's family.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part***

***Summary Part 1:***

Seemingly overnight after [Mrs. Dubose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mrs-henry-lafayette-dubose)’s death, [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) becomes moody and starts telling [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) what to do, including to act like a proper girl. [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) assures Scout that Jem is just growing up and invites Scout to join her in the kitchen. Things look bright for a while, and Scout starts to suspect that there’s skill involved with being a girl. However, she receives a letter from [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) early in the summer, which says that Dill has to stay in Mississippi with his new father. He promises to return and marry Scout, which is little comfort—for her, Dill is summer. To make matters worse, [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) leaves for two weeks to attend an emergency legislative session. One morning, Scout and Jem find a cartoon in the paper that depicts Atticus chained to a desk. Jem tells Scout that it’s about Atticus doing things that nobody else will do.

***Analysis Part 1:***

As Scout begins to think that there’s more to being a girl than she thought, it shows that she’s starting to grow up and come to a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be an adult in the world. While there’s no indication of why Alabama called this emergency session or of what they’re working on, there is some truth to the idea that Atticus does things that nobody else will do. Remember that he shot Tim Johnson when Mr. Tate wouldn’t, and in the months to come, Atticus will defend Tom Robinson, something that nobody else will do or wants him to do.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) heads for the kitchen. [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) asks what to do about church this week. Scout points out that [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) left collection for them and they haven’t misbehaved in church in years, but Calpurnia invites Scout and [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) to come to her church instead. That night she bathes Scout roughly and supervises Jem. In the morning, Scout puts on her heavily starched dress. Calpurnia leads them to First Purchase, the black church, named because freed slaves bought it with their first earnings. Most people part respectfully and let Calpurnia lead Scout and Jem to the steps, but one woman, [Lula](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters), asks why Calpurnia has white children. Jem and Scout want to leave, but the rest of the congregation shuts Lula out and assures the children that they’re welcome.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Lula’s reaction indicates that among the black population of Maycomb, there’s prejudice, just like in white Maycomb. However, it’s also important to keep in mind that Lula has good reason to want to keep what likely feels like a safe space for her free from the racism of white people. Especially going forward from this point, Scout will see just how discriminatory Maycomb is and just how terribly most white people think of and treat their black neighbors.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Reverend Sykes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/reverend-sykes) leads [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia), [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout), and [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) to the front pew. Calpurnia gives dimes to Scout and Jem, telling them to keep theirs, and Scout asks where the hymnbooks are. Calpurnia shushes her. Reverend Sykes makes announcements and says that the collection this week will go to [Helen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters), [Tom Robinson](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/tom-robinson)’s wife. [Zeebo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters) comes to the front of the church to lead the first hymn. Scout can’t help herself and asks how they’re going to sing without books, but Zeebo leads the congregation in a call-and-response of the hymn. The sermon is forthright and familiar to Scout, but she finds it odd that people go to the front to offer their collection. Reverend Sykes counts it and says they need to reach $10 before people can leave. Jem takes his and Scout’s dimes up, and finally they reach $10.

***Analysis Part 3:***

In Scout’s mind, church looks, feels, and proceeds a certain way. It’s off-putting, then, to find herself without the usual amenities, like hymnbooks. This becomes an important moment in which Scout gets to see firsthand the way that other people in her town go about things, as it introduces her to the fact that not everyone in Maycomb lives like she does, or even the way that poor white families like the Cunninghams live. While they may all go through more or less the same rituals, there are distinct differences depending on a person’s skin color or their degree of wealth.

***Summary Part 4:***

Outside, [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) and [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) chat with [Reverend Sykes](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/reverend-sykes). He mentions that [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) is very kind and Scout asks why they’re taking collection for [Helen](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters). He explains that Helen can’t take her children to work, which seems odd to Scout. Reverend Sykes says that Helen can’t find work as [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) leads her away. Scout peppers Calpurnia with questions and learns that [Tom](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/tom-robinson) is in jail because [Bob Ewell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/bob-ewell) accused him of raping his daughter. Scout remembers how Atticus called the Ewells trash and asks what rape is. Calpurnia won’t say. Jem asks about the way they sing hymns and Calpurnia explains that most of the congregation is illiterate. She says that [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s aunt taught her to read. Calpurnia taught [Zeebo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters) from a book that Atticus’s father gave her—the Finches have employed her from the beginning.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Learning that Calpurnia and Zeebo are two of only a handful of literate black people in Maycomb drives home both how impoverished and how segregated Maycomb is—there’s no mention, for instance, that there’s even a school available for black children. Remembering what Atticus implied about the Ewells and how horrible they are, Scout believes right away that Tom Robinson probably isn’t at fault, simply because she so fully trusts her father to make good assessments and lead her in the right direction.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) comments that this is why [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) doesn’t talk like the other black people, and [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) realizes that she’s never thought of Calpurnia leading a double life and speaking two languages. She asks why Calpurnia speaks incorrectly to black people when she knows it’s wrong. Calpurnia points out that she’s black and notes that she needs to speak that way to make people feel comfortable. Scout asks if she can visit Calpurnia at her house sometime, and Calpurnia insists she’d be glad to have her. Jem points Scout’s attention to the porch. She looks first at the Radley porch, but then sees [Aunt Alexandra](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/aunt-alexandra) on their porch.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Calpurnia’s willingness to host Scout makes it clear that there’s more to her relationship with the Finch family than simply cooking for them: she truly is a member of the family. Scout’s desire to visit, meanwhile, shows that she’s beginning to understand how much she doesn’t know about even her immediate world—and her desire to figure it out speaks to the fact that she’s growing up and actively trying to be less prejudiced.