***To Kill a Mockingbird***

***Chapter 4***

***Summary:***

* Every day Scout runs by the [**Radley Place**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/analysis/the-radley-place) to get home after school.
* One day she notices something, and works up the nerve to go back and look at it.
* A tree at the edge of the Radley yard has some tinfoil stuck to a knothole, and inside the hole Scout finds two pieces of chewing gum.
* She takes it home, and, after some testing to try to make sure it's not poisoned, she chews it.
* [**Jem's**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/jem-jeremy-atticus-finch) not too pleased with this and makes her spit it out… and then gargle.
* Finally, it's summer. Hooray! School's out!
* On their way home, they find another piece of tinfoil in the same knothole, and behind it a jewelry box, decorated with more tinfoil, containing two Indian-head pennies.
* Should they keep it? Chewing gum is one thing, but money is another entirely.
* Soon [**Dill**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/dill-charles-baker-harris) shows up, full of stories. They're already bored, so Dill kick things up a notch by saying he can smell death, and tells Scout that her end is nigh.
* She tells him to shut it, and Jem mocks both of them for being (or pretending to be) superstitious.
* They horse around a little, and Scout ends up flying down the sidewalk in a tire (don't ask), which ends up dumping her in …
* The Radleys' front yard.
* Thanks to this adventure, Jem invents a new game: acting out the life and times of Boo Radley.
* The game starts out simple, but gets more and more complex as the summer goes on.
* [**Atticus**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/atticus-finch) gives this game the side-eye, but he doesn't explicitly forbid them from doing it since he doesn't know for sure what they're doing.
* But Scout isn't so sure. She's pretty convinced that when she got dumped out of the tire she heard someone laughing inside the Radley house.

***Brief Summary:***

Scout is eager for the end of the school year. It means vacation from school and Dill would visit for the summer. Since Jem is still in class, Scout walks home and notices a flicker in the knothole in the tree in front of the Radley's house. She reaches into the knothole and finds two pieces of chewing gum. Checking them, she sees nothing wrong and chews them. When Jem gets home, she tells him about her discovery. He gives Scout a lecture about finding things in strange places and eating it. Scout has been chewing the gum and since she hasn't died and doesn't feel bad, she assumes it's all right.

Scout comes to the realization that her relationship with Calpurnia is changing. They used to argue all the time, but Scout now makes an effort to get along. To her surprise, Calpurnia admits that she has missed Scout while she is at school.

Jem and Scout pass the tree and find a small box in the knothole. When Jem opens the box, there are two Indian head pennies. He knows they are valuable and tries to figure out whose they are. It couldn't belong to any adults because they wouldn't hide things in a knothole. They cannot imagine that it is anyone else's since no one really passes that tree. Their belief is that "finders are keepers until title is proven."

Dill returns to Maycomb and the friends try to find ways to see Boo Radley. Scout grabs an old tire and climbs inside. Jem rolls her down the street and she rolls into the Radley's yard. She gets out of the tire and lay on the cement. Jem calls to her to hurry and get away from the Radley's house. Scout looks at the Radley's front steps and struggles to stand. Jem calls to her, to grab the tire and get out of there. She gets on her feet and runs away from the Radley's.

Scout reaches Jem and Dill, but Jem complains that she didn't bring the tire with her. She reminds him that he once touched their house, so walking over to retrieve the tire should be easy. He races to grab it and returns to Scout and Dill.

Jem, Scout and Dill invent a new game. They make up plays about the Radley's. Each child plays a different part and Jem usually plays Boo. This goes on for some time, they even "borrow" Cal's scissors. Then one evening, Atticus comes home and asks the children what they are doing. They don't reveal the truth, but Atticus suspects they are imitating the Radleys. Scout keeps a secret of her own, she thinks that she heard laughter coming from the Radley's house when she fell out of the tire.

Boo Radley plays a part in Chapter 4, although we never actually see him. The items in the knothole allude to his presence, but the children don't seem to know for sure. These gifts help change Boo from being the "monster" to being more of a real person to Scout and Jem.

***Brief Analysis:***

The rest of the school year passes grimly for [Scout](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/scout-finch/), who endures a curriculum that moves too slowly and leaves her constantly frustrated in class. After school one day, she passes the Radley Place and sees some tinfoil sticking out of a knothole in one of the Radleys’ oak trees. Scout reaches into the knothole and discovers two pieces of chewing gum. She chews both pieces and tells [Jem](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/jem-finch/) about it. He panics and makes her spit it out. On the last day of school, however, they find two old “Indian-head” pennies hidden in the same knothole where Scout found the gum and decide to keep them.

Summer comes at last, school ends, and Dill returns to Maycomb. He, Scout, and Jem begin their games again. One of the first things they do is roll one another inside an old tire. On Scout’s turn, she rolls in front of the Radley steps, and Jem and Scout panic. However, this incident gives Jem the idea for their next game: they will play “[Boo Radley](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/boo-radley/).” As the summer passes, their game becomes more complicated, until they are acting out an entire Radley family melodrama. Eventually, however, [Atticus](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/atticus-finch/) catches them and asks if their game has anything to do with the Radleys. Jem lies, and Atticus goes back into the house. The kids wonder if it’s safe to play their game anymore.

***Detailed Analysis:***

The author whisks [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) through much of the school year, which she sums up as no better than Scout's first day. By this time Scout has gained enough confidence to pass the Radley house on her own, even if she feels compelled to run. On one particular day she spies something shiny in the knothole of one of the two oak trees at the edge of the Radley lot. A closer inspection reveals that it's two pieces of gum in foil wrappers.

Scout starts chewing the gum, and [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem) questions where she got it. When he threatens to tell [Calpurnia](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Calpurnia) that she found it by the Radley lot, Scout is forced to spit it out. The gum is the first of many small gifts they'll find in the knothole. On the last day of school they find a small box containing two Indian head pennies. At this point they're still not sure whose hiding spot they've stumbled upon, so they agree to keep the pennies until school starts.

When [Dill](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Dill) returns for the summer, Jem and Scout are so excited they seem to forget about the mysterious knothole. The three of them launch into play, rolling Scout down the street in an old tire. When Jem gives the tire an extra hard push, it shoots down the road and slams into the Radley's porch. Scout abandons the tire, leaving Jem to retrieve it.

Jem comes up with a new idea for a play they can perform called "[Boo Radley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Boo_Radley)." It consists of reenacting many of the stories they've heard about the Radley family, including the one where Boo stabs his father with scissors. They perfect their play over many days, but they are embarrassed when [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus) discovers them during their performance and gives them a stern lecture.

Scout is ready to quit the play even though Jem tells her she's acting like a girl, a taunt that often gets Scout to do exactly what Jem wants. Scout explains that it's not just Atticus's disapproval that makes her want to quit but also what happened the day the tire hit the porch: she had heard someone laughing inside the house.

It becomes obvious that [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout)'s intellect and curiosity aren't mixing well with the rigid Maycomb school system. Like Maycomb's residents, the school wants conformity. A free thinker, Scout feels oppressed by the school, although the author suggests that with her support system of [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus), [Calpurnia](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Calpurnia), and [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem), she'll be fine.

A mystery enters the lives of Scout and Jem with the arrival of gifts in the oak tree. They puzzle over who the mysterious gift giver might be, but spend no time questioning the gift giver's motives.

[Lee](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/author/) uses most of the chapter to celebrate [Dill](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Dill)'s return to Maycomb. With Dill present it is certain there will be more focus on his obsession: luring Boo outside.

***Critical Study:***

Unsurprisingly, Scout finds the Dewey Decimal System boring and finds school to be a waste of time. One day, while running past the Radley house on her way home, she spots a bit of tinfoil in the knothole of an oak tree on the Radley lot. Inside, Scout finds two pieces of chewing gum. It’s unclear at first who leaves her this gift. Jem doesn’t believe she found it and makes her spit it out when he gets home from school, but later, when they find more tinfoil with a pair of Indian head pennies, he becomes curious. He knows there aren’t many people who go by there (Cecil Jacobs walks a mile out of his way to avoid the Radley house), which makes it especially strange.

Two days after Jem and Scout find the Indian heads, Dill arrives from Meridian. He tells them a bunch of tall tales about seeing conjoined twins and riding with the train engineer, then pretends to predict the future. Jem scorns these superstitions, explaining to Dill about Hot Steams, which are spirits that can’t get to Heaven and hang around on Earth, trying to suck the life out of people who pass through them. Tired of talking and playacting, they decide to roll around in a spare tire, which leads to Scout accidentally rolling too fast onto the Radley property. When Scout recovers she runs out of the yard, leaving the tire for Jem to retrieve.

After this, the children act out a play, One Man’s Family, based on the rumors about the Radleys (in particular, Boo’s attack on Mr. Radley). Whenever Nathan Radley walks by, they pause in the middle of a scene so he won’t know what they’re doing. Atticus figures it out, though, and this is Scout’s second reason for wanting to quit the game—the first, she says, is the fact that when she rolled onto the Radley property, she heard someone inside the house laughing. She assumes this is Boo.

**Alliteration**

One example of this would be "we polished and perfected it" (referring to the Boo Radley play).

**Allusions**

*Time***Magazine.**A popular magazine first published in March, 1923. It’s among the most influential magazines in the United States, and the fact that Scout reads it is further proof of her intelligence and her very advanced reading level.

**Metaphor.**A good example of this would be Scout inching "sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system," where school is compared to a treadmill that runs endlessly and gets you nowhere. This is very telling and reveals Scout's true feelings about school.

**Simile.**One example of this would be Scout popping out of the tire "like a cork onto the pavement."

**Themes**

**Games.**“Summer was Dill,” Scout says, meaning that when he arrives, their lives are enriched, and they play bigger, more elaborate games, like the play they act out in this chapter. This play marks the beginning of a major shift in the character of their games, which become less innocent and more dangerous in the proceeding chapters.

**Lies.**Characteristically, Dill’s first words in this chapter are lies, which he insists on telling despite the fact that nobody believes them. Dill’s lies are, however, innocuous, and cover up his insecurities, so that one can hardly fault him for having a little fun. Other characters don’t have such innocent intentions, though, and we’ll see the damage that lies can do during Tom Robinson’s trial.

**Superstition.**Like a hain’t, a Hot Steam is a spirit, like a ghost, who can’t get to Heaven. A Hot Steam is more malevolent than a regular hain’t, however, and hangs around Earth, trying to squeeze the life out of people who walk through their namesake hot places. That most of the biggest superstitions in this novel have to do in some way with death represents the fear that an untimely death produces in the main characters.

[Previous](https://www.enotes.com/topics/to-kill-a-mockingbird/chapter-summaries/chapter-3-summary-analysis)

***Significance:***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.

***Notes:***

Leading up to Chapter 4, Scout tells the reader about her struggles in adjusting to a classroom environment during her first year in school. Scout is already well educated for her age and was very much looking forward to first grade, but school is not what she expected. In Chapter 2 she gets off to a rocky start with her teacher, Miss Caroline, who is upset that Scout already knows how to read and write. In Chapter 3, Scout is about to get into a fight with fellow student Walter Cunningham, but luckily her brother Jem intervenes. Scout was angry at Walter for getting her into trouble. In Chapter 2, Scout stuck up for Walter with Miss Caroline, who didn't understand the Cunninghams' financial situation. Miss Caroline didn't appreciate this and rapped Scout's knuckles with a ruler as punishment. Another day at school, Miss Caroline is horrified by a bug that crawls out of Burris Ewell's hair; the Ewells are even poorer than the Cunninghams and represent the bottom societal rung for white people in Maycomb. Burris gets upset over Miss Caroline's reaction and storms out of class, which only upsets the teacher further. Scout goes home and informs her father that she doesn't wish to go to school anymore, asking if Atticus can teach her instead. Chapter 4 continues to focus on Scout's struggles at school.

### To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 4 Characters

To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 4 characters:

* Scout Finch: Main character and narrator of the novel
* Jem Finch: Scout's elder brother
* Dill Harris: Scout and Jem's friend who lives in Maycomb during the summer
* Atticus Finch: Scout and Jem's father

## To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 4 Summary

As the school year drags on, Scout continues to be frustrated and bored. The curriculum is clearly behind her learning level, and Scout begins to question the usefulness of a formal education. One day after school, Scout passes by the Radley place and spots something inside a knot in one of their trees. Inside she finds chewing gum. Scout runs home to "examine her loot", and then proceeds to pop it in her mouth. When she tells Jem about it, he makes her spit it out. He scolds her both for eating something she found outside and for touching the Radley's property. On the last day of school, Jem and Scout walk past the Radley's together. Scout once again tries to convince her brother that she found the gum in the knothole when she spots that, once again, there is something shiny in there. The two of them rush over to investigate and find two Indian head pennies. Despite Jem's earlier scolding, he decides to keep the pennies.

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| Mural |
| Mural depicting Scout, Jem and Dill in To Kill a Mockingbird. Located in Monroeville, Alabama |

Now that it's summer, their best friend Dill returns to Maycomb. Together the three of them start up their usual games when Jem has an idea for a new game he calls ''Boo Radley.'' As the summer goes on, their game becomes more and more intricate as it becomes a full-on enactment of the Radley family's life. Jem steals Calpurnia's scissors to act out Boo stabbing Mr. Radley. Scout and Jem's father, Atticus, discovers them playing with the scissors and scolds them for it. He asks if their game has anything to do with the Radleys, but they lie and tell him no. They decide to quit the game, both because they are worried about Atticus finding them out and due to Scout overhearing laughing coming from the Radley place.

### To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 4 Quotes

Throughout the chapter, author Harper Lee uses several literary devices to enrich her writing. Two of those devices are similes and metaphors. The following table gives examples of their uses and explains their definition.

| Quotes | Literary Device |
| --- | --- |
| The tire bumped on gravel, skeetered across the road, crashed into a barrier and popped me like a cork onto pavement. Dizzy and nauseated, I lay on the cement and shook my head still, pounded my ears to silence, and heard Jem's voice: "Scout, get away from there, come on!" | In this excerpt, Harper Lee is using a simile with the phrase, "popped me like a cork onto pavement." A simile is a literary device that draws a comparison between two different things using the word "like". The purpose of simile is to create a more distinct image in the reader's mind. |
| Summer was on the way; Jem and I awaited it with impatience. Summer was our best season: it was sleeping on the back screened porch in cots, or trying to sleep in the treehouse; summer was everything good to eat; it was a thousand colors in a parched landscape; but most of all, summer was Dill. | This excerpt shows Harper Lee using a metaphor. Similar to a simile, a metaphor creates a comparison between two concepts in order to create a more vivid image in the reader's mind. The key difference is that metaphors don't use the word "like" to draw the comparison. Consider the phrase: "it was a thousand colors in a parched landscape". This metaphor gives a more powerful image of what summer means to Scout. It explains that, to Scout, summer was the best part of her otherwise boring life. |

## Lesson Summary

Chapter 4 begins with Scout lamenting about how school dragged on. She makes it clear that her own education is ahead of what is being taught to her in first grade. The lack of challenge is boring her, causing Scout to question the validity of formal education. One day after school, Scout finds some gum in a knothole of a tree on the Radleys' property. She takes the gum home and begins to chew it, but when her brother Jem discovers it, he forces her to spit it out. On the last day of school Jem and Scout pass by the Radley place, where this time they discover two Indian head pennies in the knothole. Now that it is summer, their friend Dill Harris returns to Maycomb. Together they begin playing a game where they act out the Radleys' family life. Jem steals a pair of scissors from Calpurnia so that he can pretend that Boo Radley stabs Mr. Radley. Atticus, their father, discovers them playing with scissors. He scolds them and asks them if they are pretending to be the Radleys. The kids lie, but decide to stop playing the game both out of fear that Atticus will discover their deception and because Scout overheard laughter coming from the Radley place.

Throughout the chapter, Harper Lee uses several literary devices to improve upon the reader's experience. Two of those devices are similes and metaphors. Both of these, when used, draw comparisons between two concepts in order to create a more vivid image in the reader's mind. The key difference is that similes use the word ''like'' and metaphors do not.

Frequently Asked Questions

#### What does Scout share at the end of Chapter 4?

Scout shares that she overheard laughing coming from the Radley house. This, in part, leads to them questioning whether they should continue playing their game.

#### Who is Mrs. Dubose in Chapter 4?

Mrs. Dubose is only very briefly mentioned. She plays no role in the chapter, but is described as the meanest person in the neighborhood.

#### What are the main points in Chapter 4 of To Kill a Mockingbird?

The main point of Chapter 4 is to recount Scout and Jem's childhood adventures. This sets up their innocence that will be "killed" in part two of the novel. This happens when they begin to experience the racist prejudice of Maycomb due their father representing Tom Robinson, an African-American who is falsely accused of raping a white woman.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The rest of [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout)’s school year proceeds much like her first day. She can’t help but think she’s missing something, since [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) was educated at home, not with the Dewey Decimal System, and he’s been elected to the state legislature unopposed for years. Scout gets out of school 30 minutes before [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem), so she races past the Radley Place. One afternoon, something catches her eye and she returns to one of the big oak trees in the Radley yard. In a knothole, she finds two pieces of chewing gum in tinfoil, which, after checking to make sure they’re not poisonous, she shoves in her mouth. Jem is aghast when he finds her and makes Scout gargle.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Again, the fact that Scout can identify that her formal education seems less useful in light of what Atticus has been able to accomplish through a home education speaks to both her precocious nature and the uselessness of the school system as she experiences it. Choosing to chew this gum despite the rumor that everything on the Radley property is poison suggests that a small kindness like leaving the gum can be enough to help a person like Scout overcome their prejudices and fears.

***Summary Part 2:***

On the last day of school, [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) get out early. They discuss [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill)’s impending arrival and as they pass the Radley Place, Scout points to the knothole. There’s more tinfoil in it, and this time, Jem pulls out a shiny package. At home, Jem finds a ring box containing two polished Indian head pennies. They deliberate over whether to keep them and wonder if [Cecil Jacobs](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters) might be hiding things in the knothole, but they reason that Cecil goes an extra mile per day to avoid the Radley Place and mean [Mrs. Dubose](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mrs-henry-lafayette-dubose). They decide to keep them until school starts again in case they belong to a classmate. Scout points out that nobody would want to save chewing gum, but Jem insists that the pennies are important to someone since Indian head pennies are magic.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Jem and Scout’s genuine attempts to ensure that they’re not stealing from one of their classmates illustrates how kind they are and how important it is to them to do the right thing, even if they might lose out on something exciting like pennies or gum. Their aside about Cecil Jacobs’s long walk to school, meanwhile, indicates that the fear of the Radleys extends throughout the community and suggests that the “evil” in Maycomb is easy to identify and avoid, if one is willing to literally go the extra mile.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) arrives two days later on the train. He announces that he rode the train, helped the engineer, and that he met his father over the school year. The children squabble over what to play and Dill sniffs, declaring he can smell death at the Radley Place. They argue over whether Hot Steams are real and [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) insults [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem)’s courage. Scout suggests they roll in the tire, which Jem and Dill agree to. Scout goes first and folds herself into the tire. She only realizes once Jem pushes her with all his might that Jem was offended by her insult. As the tire rolls, Scout feels like she’s suffocating. She crashes and finds herself on her back in the Radley front yard. Jem screams at her to run.

***Analysis Part 3:***

“Hot Steams” are ghosts or spirits with unfinished business on Earth, which makes it clear that the children’s superstitious beliefs don’t just involve their reclusive neighbors: they’re part of a much larger belief system. Because of this, however, note that the Radley Place becomes not just another house on the street, but something fundamentally different in the children’s eyes—and because of this, it’s terrifying.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) runs on wobbly legs back to [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) and [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) and then argues with Jem about who should get the tire. Jem is furious, but he dashes in to get the tire and insults Scout for acting too much like a girl. [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) calls them in for lemonade and as they sit on the porch, Jem announces expansively that they can play [Boo Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo). Scout knows this is supposed to make him look fearless and her look scared. He doles out parts (Scout is Mrs. Radley, Dill is old [Mr. Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-radley), and Jem is Boo) and chastises Scout for being scared of Boo, whom he insists is dead. Their game evolves over the summer and though Jem and Dill love it, Scout plays anxiously.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Insulting Scout about being too girly shows that in addition to the class warfare at work in Maycomb, Scout also experiences sexism, even from those closest to her. This betrays Jem’s prejudice, as he’s clearly suggesting that feminine attributes—or in this case, fear, which everyone, regardless of gender, experiences—are less desirable than those he believes come along with masculinity. This is another attempt to get Scout to conform as well.

***Summary Part 5:***The play draws from neighborhood gossip. [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) plays villains, and for once [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) gets a good part when she plays the judge. [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) steals [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia)’s scissors daily so he can mime stabbing Dill in the leg, and the children stand silent when [Nathan Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/nathan-radley) passes or when they catch neighbors watching. One day, they don’t notice [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) watching. Jem evasively insists that they’re not playing anything. Atticus shrewdly takes the scissors and asks if their game has to do with the Radleys. Jem insists it doesn’t, and Atticus tells them it shouldn’t as he enters the house. Scout hisses that Atticus knows, but Jem accuses her of being a girl and imagining things. She doesn’t tell him that she’s anxious because on the day she rolled into the Radley yard, she heard someone laughing.

***Analysis Part 5:***As far as Atticus is concerned, the children are being extremely rude to their neighbors by acting out this family drama on the lawn. This suggests that in Atticus’s mind, the Radleys aren’t scary or untouchable. Rather, they’re neighbors who deserve respect and kindness, even if they’re different and don’t interact with the Finches the same way other people do. While it’s likely that Scout interpreted the laughter she heard in the Radley house as sinister, a more generous reading suggests that whoever laughed simply found the children’s antics funny and means them no harm.