***To Kill a Mockingbird***

***Chapter 5***

***Summary:***

* [**Scout**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/scout-jean-louise-finch) convinces Jem to back off on the Radley game, and then Dill asks Scout to marry him. (Hey, it is the South.)
* Despite this moment of passion, the boys spend most of their time together and neglect Scout.
* So, Scout spends her time hanging out with [**Miss Maudie Atkinson**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/maudie-atkinson), a usually stand-off-ish old lady.
* Bonus: Miss Maudie makes the best cakes in the neighborhood, and best of all, shares them with the three kids.
* Flashback: Scout's [**Uncle Jack**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/john-hale-finch) has a history of flirting with Miss Maudie, though in a joking way.
* Miss Maudie tells Scout more about the Radleys, including that old Mr. Radley (Boo's father) was a "foot-washing Baptist" (5.27), which is apparently much more hardcore than just regular Baptists.
* In fact, some of Mr. Radley's fellow foot-washers have told Miss Maudie that she and her flowers are going to burn in hell, because any time spent not reading the Bible is time spent in sin, especially if it involves creating something pleasing to the senses. (No word on whether criticizing one's neighbors counts as a sin with them.)
* Miss Maudie says that the Radleys are "so busy worrying about the next world they've never learned to live in this one" (5.44).
* Is Boo crazy? Well, if he wasn't when this whole thing started, he probably is now.
* Scout finally breaks into Jem and Dill's Get Rid Of Slimy girls Club, and finds out what they've been planning to do: use a fishing pole to put a note to Boo through one of the upper windows of the Radley Place.
* When they put the plan into action, Jem has some difficulty maneuvering the fishing pole, which is too short to reach the window.
* And then Atticus shows up. And he doesn't look pleased.
* Atticus tells the kids to stop bothering [**Boo**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/boo-radley), who has a perfect right to stay in his house if he wants to.
* [**Atticus**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/atticus-finch) also tells them to stop playing their stupid game, and Jem says they weren't making fun of Boo, inadvertently revealing to Atticus that they were in fact playing at being the Radleys.
* Jem eventually realizes he's been fooled by the oldest lawyer's trick in the book. Oops.

***Brief Summary:***

The children decide to stop playing the Radley game, at least for a short time. Instead of stopping completely, they altered the story a little and changed the names of the characters in their plays. They all agreed that was a good alternative.

Earlier in the summer, Dill proposed to Scout, but that seemed to slip his mind. Jem and Dill became closer and Scout was left out. The boys spend time alone and when Scout tries to join them, Jem tells her to leave. Their days were spent in the tree house. They plotted and planned, but called Scout when they needed another person.

During this time, Scout began to spend more time with Miss Maudie. Atkinson. Miss Maudie hated her house. It was a big rambling house and she spends much of her time outside. Her plants and yard were beautiful. After long days in her overalls in the yard, she would take a bath and emerge onto her porch looking beautiful.

Miss Maudie became friends with all three children and revealed a well-kept secret to them. She baked incredible cakes, and she baked three individual cakes for each of the children.

Scout asked Miss Maudie questions about whether Boo Radley is still alive. She assures Scout that he hasn't been carried out, so he must still be alive. They share stories that circulated through the neighborhood about what Boo looked like, why he stays in the house and talk about his family being "foot-washing Baptist."

Jem and Dill find a new way to occupy their time. They decide to sneak a note to Boo and ask him out for ice cream. The plan is to stick the note on the end of a fishing pole and then stick it through a lose shutter on the house. Jem takes the pole to the house and tries to get the note to Boo. He struggles and tries, but the note slips off. Jem stands in front of the house with the dinner bell to alert Jem of trouble. Scout is behind the house as a lookout.

Jem is busy with the fishing pole and doesn't notice Atticus walking up the street. Dill rings the bell furiously, but Atticus stops him. He asks the children why they want to see Boo and they use the flimsy excuse that he might want to join them. Atticus tells them to stop tormenting Boo. Jem hollers out that he doesn't think he wants to be a lawyer anymore.

Miss Maudie plays an important role in revealing details about Boo. She explains some of the reasons why he lives like he does. The fanatical religious nature of his father, prompts the reader to be sympathetic to his situation. For Scout to understand the details Miss Maudie shares, will require her to have a more grown up viewpoint.

***Brief Analysis:***

Jem and Dill grow closer, and Scout begins to feel left out of their friendship. As a result, she starts spending much of her time with one of their neighbors: Miss Maudie Atkinson, a widow with a talent for gardening and cake baking who was a childhood friend of Atticus’s brother, Jack. She tells Scout that Boo Radley is still alive and it is her theory Boo is the victim of a harsh father (now deceased), a “foot-washing” Baptist who believed that most people are going to hell. Miss Maudie adds that Boo was always polite and friendly as a child. She says that most of the rumors about him are false, but that if he wasn’t crazy as a boy, he probably is by now.

Meanwhile, Jem and Dill plan to give a note to Boo inviting him out to get ice cream with them. They try to stick the note in a window of the Radley Place with a fishing pole, but Atticus catches them and orders them to “stop tormenting that man” with either notes or the “Boo Radley” game.

***Critical Analysis:***Jem and Dill have become closer friends, and Scout, being a girl, finds herself often excluded from their play. Dill, in childish fashion, has decided to get engaged to Scout, but now he and Jem play together often and Scout finds herself unwelcome. Instead of playing with the boys, Scout often sits with their neighbor, the avid gardener Miss [Maudie Atkinson](https://www.gradesaver.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/study-guide/character-list#maudie-atkinson), watches the sun set on her front steps, or partakes of Miss Maudie's fine homemade cake. Miss Maudie is honest in her speech and her ways, with a witty tongue, and Scout considers her a trusted friend. Scout asks her one day about Boo Radley, and Miss Maudie says that he's still alive, he just doesn't like to come outside. She also says that most of the rumors about him aren't true. Miss Maudie explains that the Radleys are foot-washing Baptists - they believe all pleasure is a sin against God, and stay inside most of the time reading the Bible. She says that Arthur was a nice boy when she used to know him.

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

***Detailed Analysis(Ch4-5):***

The school year passes slowly for Scout. Her grade is released a half hour earlier than Jem's, so Scout has to pass Boo Radley's house by herself every afternoon. One day, Scout notices something shiny in a tree at the edge of the Radley yard. When she goes back to investigate, she finds a stick of gum. Jem admonishes her for taking the gum, but Scout continues to check the knothole daily. On the last day of school, she and Jem find some coins in the tree, which they decide to keep until the next school year starts.

Dill arrives two days later to spend the summer. After an argument with Scout, Jem suggests they play a new game called "Boo Radley," which Scout recognizes as Jem's attempt to prove his bravery. Against Scout's better judgement, they enact Boo's life with great gusto until Atticus learns of the game. The children play the game less frequently after that, and Jem and Dill begin excluding Scout, spending more and more time together in the treehouse. Lonely, Scout begins spending more of her time with Miss Maudie.

When Scout insists that the boys include her in their plans, they tell her that they're going to deliver a note to Boo Radley asking him to come outside. She and Dill are posted as guards, while Jem tries to deliver the note, but Atticus intervenes, telling the children to leave the Radleys alone.

As Scout finishes her first year of school, Harper Lee expands on several of the novel's central themes.

**Education.**Scout's real education occurs outside of school, as it does throughout the story. Scout herself recognizes this fact at some level when she says, "As for me, I knew nothing except what I gathered from *Time*magazine and reading everything I could lay hands on at home, but as I inched sluggishly along the treadmill of the Maycomb County school system, I could not help receiving the impression that I was being cheated out of something." Scout not only learns more outside of school, but the things she learns are also more important.

**Prejudice.**When Jem suggests that knothole in the Radleys' oak is an adult's hiding place, Scout corrects him, saying, "'Grown folks don't have hidin' places.'" Jem and Scout discover later in the book that many adults hide behind their prejudices, religious beliefs, and their personal notions of right and wrong.

Miss Maudie is one of the most open-minded residents of Maycomb, and true to her more liberal leanings, she even likes the weeds in her garden. Her feelings about plants are symbolic of the way some townspeople feel about others. Scout reports that her neighbor "loved everything that grew in God's earth, even the weeds. With one exception: If she found a blade of nut grass in her yard it was like the Second Battle of the Marne" because "'one sprig of nut grass can ruin a whole yard.'" Metaphorically, the Ewells are a blade of nutgrass in the Maycomb community. Some of the town's residents would also say that the African Americans who live in Maycomb are blades of nutgrass that should be eradicated from "their" yard. These perceptions become important as the story progresses.

The blacks and whites separate themselves from each other by their speech — and at some level by their superstitions. When Jem tells Dill about Hot Steams, Scout says, "'Don't you believe a word he says, Dill,  . . . Calpurnia says that's nigger-talk.'" Calpurnia, an African-American herself, doesn't want the white Finch children to talk like most of the black community does or to buy into their superstitions. Granted, Calpurnia is more educated than the majority of her peers, but it still seems unusual that she doesn't want the children emulating that speech or those beliefs.

Calpurnia's attitude about the way the Finch children should speak shows that she, too, separates whites from blacks. Calpurnia is teaching the children to be white, just as she taught her own son, Zeebo, to interact appropriately with the African-American community. Keep in mind that Calpurnia's actions do not necessarily mean that she agrees with this separation; she is simply acting in a way that is consistent with life in the Southern United States during this time period.

**Bravery.**When Jem creates the Boo Radley game, Scout says, "Jem's head at times was transparent: he had thought that up to make me understand he wasn't afraid of Radleys in any shape or form, to contrast his own fearless heroism with my cowardice." As noted before, the concept of bravery is very important to Jem, and he cultivates it as much as he can. He has moved from weakly accepting a dare to touch the Radley house to retrieving a tire from the Radley yard to creating a game in which the children take on the personas of various Radley family members.

Jem's bravery increases when he and Dill decide to deliver the note to Boo. Scout, though, comically points out that Jem is not quite as brave as he fancies himself to be when she exclaims, "'Anybody who's brave enough to go up and touch the house hadn't oughta use a fishin' pole,  . . . Why don't you just knock the front door down?'" a sentiment Atticus later echoes a little less humorously.

Dill's part in getting a note to Boo presents a different side of the bravery issue. Sometimes, having someone else do the dirty work is less frightening — a belief that gives mob mentality its start. Dill admits almost gleefully that the whole plan is his idea, yet Jem is the person taking the greater risk. This mentality will play out in the adult world during Tom Robinson's trial.

**Trust.**At this point in the story, Scout's world is a safe place — her greatest fears are largely products of her own imagination. So even though she is terrified to pass by the Radley house, she takes the gum she finds in their tree. Comically, Scout reports, "The gum looked fresh.  . . . I licked it and waited for a while. When I did not die I crammed it into my mouth." As Scout moves from innocence or naiveté to maturity — part of a coming-of-age story — she will learn that she can't always trust those things that appear safe.

The children are beginning to understand this concept on an almost subconscious level. In comparing Miss Maudie to a seemingly more virtuous neighbor, Scout says, "she did not go about the neighborhood doing good, as did Miss Stephanie Crawford. But while no one with a grain of sense trusted Miss Stephanie, Jem and I had considerable faith in Miss Maudie." The clear differences between the things that Miss Stephanie does and the things she says are another indication to the children that things are not always what they seem.

**Truth.**Hand-in-hand with the issue of trust is that of truth. In the course of the novel, almost every character lies at some point. Although most of the lies are meant to keep people out of trouble, some of these untruths will have dire consequences for the town as a whole.

Scout is clear that "Dill Harris could tell the biggest ones I ever heard." Overall, Dill's lies are harmless, but during his summers in Maycomb, Scout gets her first lessons in discerning truth and recognizing fiction. When Scout questions Miss Maudie about the Boo Radley myths, Miss Maudie states "'That is three-fourths colored folks and one-fourth Stephanie Crawford,'" introducing Scout to the fact that "big ones" aren't limited to children.

Scout also begins to understand that sometimes people stretch the truth to get what they want. Jem tells Dill and Scout that if Atticus specifically says they can't play the Boo Radley game, he "had thought of a way around it." The fact that Scout is uneasy about "thinking of a way around it" foreshadows the severity of the lies told later in the story. Ironically, Atticus, who throughout the story upholds truth, is the person who dupes Jem into admitting the real purpose of the Boo Radley game.

**Femininity.**Introduced in these chapters, the issue of femininity and women's roles in Maycomb society is a significant theme in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Jem criticizes Scout for acting like a girl, frequently making statements like "'I swear, Scout, sometimes you act so much like a girl it's mortifyin'.'" Scout experiences a plight familiar to many women of that era when Dill proposes marriage: "He staked me out, marked me as property, said I was the only girl he would ever love, then he neglected me." This sense of people as property will play out in serious ways as the story progresses.

In these chapters, Lee makes mention of four very different kinds of women: Calpurnia, Miss Maudie, Miss Stephanie, and Mrs. Dubose. (Note that the only adult the children don't refer to as Miss or Mrs. is Calpurnia, who is black.) Scout will face many forms of femininity as she tries to understand what it means to "be a girl." Importantly, Scout most closely identifies with Miss Maudie, "a chameleon lady who worked in . . . an old straw hat and men's coveralls, but after her five o'clock bath she would appear on the porch . . . in magisterial beauty." As the story progresses, Scout will drift toward adopting Miss Maudie's brand of feminine behavior.

Glossary

**scuppernongs**a golden-green grape of the Southern U.S.

**foot-washing Baptist**rural missionary Baptists who essentially take the Bible literally.

***Critical Study:***

As [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem) and [Dill](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Dill)'s friendship grows, [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) finds herself excluded more frequently from their activities. She starts spending more time with their widowed neighbor, Maudie Atkinson. Scout finds a kindred spirit in the older woman.

From their conversations Scout learns that Miss Maudie grew up with the Finch siblings at Finch's Landing. Much like [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus) she is patient, kind, and open-minded. Miss Maudie also tells Scout more about the Radley family. For the first time Scout begins to think of [Boo Radley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Boo_Radley) not as a monster but as a sad and lonely person.

With that in mind, Scout is less than enthusiastic when she discovers Jem and Dill's plan to deliver a note to Boo via a fishing pole through a loose shutter. She reluctantly goes along with the plan, serving as a lookout for Jem as he delivers the note. Too late they realize that Atticus is on to them, and he sternly tells them to leave Boo Radley alone.

The three children are growing up a little. The boys prefer playing together without [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) tagging along everywhere. This causes something of an identity crisis for Scout, who feels at a crossroads. Throughout the book she's been told by her aunt and other women of Maycomb to act more like a lady. Meanwhile, her brother, whom she idolizes, criticizes her for acting "like a girl." Fortunately through her conversations with [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus), Maudie Atkinson, and even [Calpurnia](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Calpurnia), Scout is accepting herself.

Another important aspect of Scout and Miss Maudie's discussions about [Boo Radley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Boo_Radley) is that Scout begins to feel sympathy for Boo instead of fear. Scout will nurture this feeling throughout the book, and it will have great significance by the story's

***Significance:***That summer, Dill proposes to Scout and then forgets about it. Despite Scout’s attempts to jog his memory by beating him up, Dill ignores her and grows closer and closer to Jem. This frees her to spend more time with their neighbor, Miss Maudie Atkinson, a middle-aged woman who likes to garden and lets the Finch children run through her yard as much as they like as long as they don’t disturb her azaleas. Miss Maudie knew Scout’s uncle, Jack Finch, a strange man who proposed to her every Christmas by shouting across the street. She never married him and is, in fact, a widow, having been married to a man we never meet, but that doesn’t stop Uncle Jack from trying to get her goat, so to speak.

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One evening, Scout asks Miss Maudie if Boo is alive, and she explains that his real name is Mr. Arthur Radley and that of course he’s alive. His father, Mr. Radley, was a foot-washing Baptist (as opposed to a regular Baptist like Miss Maudie), and this appears to have had some effect on Boo, though it’s unclear what it is, exactly. According to Miss Maudie, most of the gossip about Boo comes from Stephanie Crawford and the African American community, which is commonly believed to be more superstitious than the rest of Maycomb. Miss Maudie didn’t put any stock in this gossip, though.

The next morning, Jem and Dill tell her about their cockamamie plan to send Boo a note through the broken shutter on the side of the Radley house. Jem plans to do this by sticking the note to an old fishing pole and trying to drop it onto the windowsill. This is, unsurprisingly, ineffective, and Atticus catches them in the act. He gives them a long lecture about not tormenting Boo, and then uses his skill as a lawyer to trick the truth about the play out of Jem. Jem, who used to say that he wanted to be a lawyer like Atticus, waits until Atticus is out of earshot to yell that he isn’t so sure he wants to be a lawyer after the way Atticus treated him.

**Allusions**

**The Second Battle of the Marne (July 15 - August 6, 1918).**Unbeknownst to the Germans, this was to be their last major offensive of World War I and would mark the beginning of the Allied advance. About one hundred days after the battle, the Armistice that ended the war was declared. This was a particularly bloody and important battle, and the fact that Scout compares it to Miss Maudie’s war against nut grass reflects the sheer level of intensity that Miss Maudie brings to this endeavor. It’s also a pithy observation that suggests that, in spite of Scout’s evident boredom in the classroom, she did, in fact, learn something.

**Idioms**

One example of an idiom is “get your goat,” which Uncle Jack uses in reference to his (repeated) proposals to Miss Maudie, whom he likes to tease (unsuccessfully, Scout says).

**Metaphor**

Miss Maudie tells Scout that foot-washing Baptists think "women are a sin by definition." This is untrue, of course, but it's still a metaphor because it equates two unlike things, women and sin, in an attempt to demonstrate how these foot-washers think and feel.

**Personification**

One example of this would be Miss Maudie telling Scout that the Radley house is a "sad house," meaning that it's not the fearsome place Scout believes it to be. It's "sad" because the things that happen inside it are sad or elicit pity from Miss Maudie.

**Themes**

**Gossip.**In this chapter, Miss Stephanie Crawford becomes a more prominent force within the Maycomb gossip mill. We'll later discover that she is in fact the biggest gossiper in town, but for now, she's just a source of amusement. When Miss Maudie asks her if she made room for Boo in bed, Scout misses the sexual implication and just thinks that it's Miss Maudie's voice that shuts Stephanie up for a while.

**Sin.**Miss Maudie tells Scout that foot-washers believe "women are a sin by definition." This won't be the last time we hear that something is a sin. Mr. Radley believed that anything that's "pleasure is a sin." Atticus thinks that it's a "sin to kill a mockingbird." The question of what is and isn't right in the eyes of God preoccupies many characters in the novel and establishes a kind of moral high ground that others either ignore or aspire to, depending on their own definition of sin.

***Notes:***

Jem and Dill continue to play their game about the Radleys, and Scout tries to get them to stop playing it. Jem says that they will continue to play it unless Atticus tells them not to, then they will change the characters' names.

Scout gets jealous that Jem is spending so much time with Dill and is leaving her out, so she spends her time with Miss Maudie Atkinson. Scout does not have a female role model in her life because her mother died when Scout was just two years old. She learns that Maudie grew up with the Finch siblings, and Maudie tells her about the Radley family. She finds out that Boo Radley's real name is Arthur. After learning more about Boo Radley, Scout soon realizes that instead of the scary, monstrous person she thought he was, he is actually a sad and lonely man.

Jem and Dill plan to give a note to Boo Radley through one of the shutters in the Radley house. In the note, they ask him to come out of his house and tell them what he does all day. Scout agrees to be a lookout for the boys. Atticus catches the children and tells them to leave Arthur alone. He also tricks Jem into telling him what they have been playing, which gets Jem to say '' 'I thought I wanted to be a lawyer, but I ain't so sure now!' '' (Chapter 5, To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee).

Analysis of Chapter 5 of To Kill a Mockingbird

There are many different scenes throughout Chapter 5 of To Kill a Mockingbird that can be examined in more detail. Here are three other parts of the chapter that will be reviewed for context and significance to the story.

Growing Up:

In Chapter 5, Scout gets upset because her brother and their friend Dill start leaving her out of their games. Dill and Jem even tell her that she cannot hear their plans because she is a girl. The children are starting to grow up and apart in this chapter. Scout goes to Miss Maudie for company, giving her someone else to talk to other than the boys, her father, and Calpurnia (their cook). Scout's perspective changes when Miss Maudie becomes a female role model for her and gives her some information about Boo Radley.

Boo Radley-Scout's Changed Perspective:

Throughout the beginning of the book, the children believe many of the stories they have heard about Boo Radley. Scout, in this chapter, brings up Boo to Miss Maudie by asking if he is still alive. Miss Maudie goes into Boo Radley's story since she has known him his entire life. She tells Scout that Boo's actual name is Arthur and that he has reasons for never wanting to come out of the house.

Miss Maudie talks about Arthur's father being a religious zealot and describes him as a foil to Atticus Finch. A foil is a character who demonstrates the contrasting qualities of one or more characters. It is also a person or thing that makes someone or something else seem better. She explains to Scout that some people act differently when they are not around other people than they would if they were.

Scout initially believes that Miss Maudie is insinuating that Atticus drinks a lot when she brings up the whiskey bottle. Miss Maudie is actually making an analogy to Scout about Mr. Radley. She is saying that Atticus would act nicer even if he were drunk than Mr. Radley does carrying his bible around. Mr. Radley is a religious zealot who cares more about what happens after death than in life. Miss Maudie questions what Mr. Radley has done behind closed doors with Arthur.

After talking with Miss Maudie and hearing what she says about Boo Radley, Scout starts to see the man in a different light than she had before. She sees him as a sad and lonely man. This conversation will also stay with her for the rest of the novel and affect her perspective of him from then on.

Uncle Jack in Chapter 5

When Scout tells Miss Maudie about Jem's belief that people stuck Boo Radley up the chimney because he was dead, Miss Maudie says he is ''more like Jack Finch every day.'' (Chapter 5, To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee). Jack Finch, or Uncle Jack, is Atticus's little brother. Atticus is ten years older than him. Jack is a doctor, and Scout is very close to him.

Miss Maudie has known Jack most of their lives because they were about the same age and grew up together on Finch's Landing. Uncle Jack came back every Christmas and would shout across the street at Miss Maudie, asking her to marry him. Jem and Scout always thought this was a strange way for a man to ask a woman to marry him, but Scout even says that Uncle Jack was a strange man. She realizes that he did this ''to get Miss Maudie's goat'' and that Miss Maudie was never interested in him in the last forty years.

Lesson Summary

Chapter 5 of To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee continues where Chapter 4 ends, with Jem and Dill continuing to play their ''Boo Radley'' game even though Atticus told them not to. Scout tries to get her brother to stop, but the boys start to leave her out of their games. She searches for companionship and goes to talk with Miss Maudie, their neighbor. Scout needs a female role model because her mother died when she was two. She then asks Miss Maudie if she knows if Boo Radley is still alive. Miss Maudie tells her that he is still alive and tells Scout how she has known Boo Radley his entire life. Scout asks if they stuffed him up the chimney, and says that is what Jem had said. After hearing this, Miss Maudie compares Jem to Scout's Uncle Jack, who is Atticus' brother.

After this, Miss Maudie starts telling Scout about Boo Radley, whose name is actually Arthur, and she explains about his father, who she describes as a religious zealot. She describes Mr. Radley as a foil to Atticus. A foil is a person or thing that makes someone or something else seem better. She shows how honorable Atticus is compared to a person like Mr. Radley, who treats his son differently behind closed doors than he would in public. At the end of the chapter, Dill and Jem convince Scout to try to help them get a letter to Boo Radley. The note asks Boo to come out of his house and tell the children what he does all day. Atticus gets them to stop and tricks Jem into telling them about the games they have been playing during the summer.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main events of chapter 5 in To Kill a Mockingbird?

Jem and Dill continue playing their ''Boo Radley'' game, which Atticus told them not to, and are starting to leave Scout out of their play. Scout goes to Miss Maudie and learns more about Boo (Arthur) Radley. She also learns that not all people are friendly and treat people like her father does. At the end of the chapter, Jem and Dill try to get a note to Boo Radley, and Atticus stops them.

What does Jem want to be when he grows up in chapter 5?

At the end of Chapter 5, Jem says he wants to become a lawyer like his father. He says he's not entirely sure of that, though, after his father tricks him in the chapter.

What characters are introduced in chapter 5 of To Kill a Mockingbird?

The characters introduced in Chapter 5 of To Kill a Mockingbird are Miss Maudie, Uncle Jack, and Arthur Radley (Boo Radley's actual name). Scout spends some time with Miss Maudie, who tells Scout about the real Boo Radley. Scout finally learns about this character in a way different from what she thought of him before. Scout's Uncle Jack is also introduced in this chapter.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) nags [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) about their game and they stop playing it so much, though Jem does decide that if [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) tells them to stop playing it, they can just change the characters’ names and it’ll be okay. [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) agrees with Jem and frustratingly for Scout, the boys spend most of their time plotting in the tree house without her. This is especially frustrating since Dill asked Scout to marry him early in the summer and then seemed to forget about her. Scout starts spending time with [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson), who up to this point has only been a benign presence in her life. Scout and Jem have always been allowed to play on Miss Maudie’s property and eat her grapes, so they don’t speak to her much to preserve their relationship.

***Analysis Part 1:***

When the boys shut Scout out, it impresses upon her that no matter how hard she tries to not live up to Jem’s assessment that she’s being too girly, it’s impossible for her to succeed all the time. When Scout turns to Miss Maudie, however, it suggests that at least for Scout, being the victim of this kind of prejudice does give her the opportunity to expand her community and learn more about where she lives from Maycomb’s other residents.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson) is a widow who hates her house. She spends her day gardening and her evenings dressed beautifully. She tells [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) that nut-grass is the only weed she ever kills and allows Scout to inspect her bridgework (fake teeth), a gesture that makes them friends. Miss Maudie is kind 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), too, and she calls them to eat her exceptional cakes. Scout spends evenings on Miss Maudie’s porch, and one day they discuss whether [Boo Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo) is alive. Miss Maudie tells Scout that his name is Arthur and he’s not dead—they haven’t carried his body out yet. Scout shares that Jem thinks Boo’s body was stuffed up the chimney, which makes Miss Maudie declare that Jem is turning into [Uncle Jack](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/uncle-jack), a childhood friend.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Letting Miss Maudie in on Jem’s questionable beliefs about the Radley family shows that Scout truly trusts her and is willing to let her in on how she and Jem see the world. Miss Maudie, like Atticus, shows that she believes that the Radleys deserve respect and kindness, in particular when she corrects Scout to use Arthur’s name rather than the neighborhood nickname. The fact that she only knows Boo isn’t dead because he hasn’t been carried out, meanwhile, does betray that Miss Maudie finds the family mysterious and hard to understand.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson) explains that [Arthur](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo) just stays in the house. [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) wants to know why, so Miss Maudie explains that [Mr. Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-radley) was a “foot-washing Baptist.” This confuses Scout. Miss Maudie says that foot-washers think anything pleasurable is a sin, including her flowers—they take the Bible literally. Scout parrots that according to [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch), God means loving people like a person loves themself, but Miss Maudie gruffly says that the Bible in the hands of some men is worse than a whiskey bottle in Atticus’s hands. Shocked, Scout insists that Atticus doesn’t drink, and Miss Maudie says that men like Atticus are better at their worst than others are at their best.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Here, Miss Maudie makes the case that it’s possible for different men to interpret something, like the Bible, in wildly different ways that in turn allow lesser men to excuse horrendous behavior. This, she suggests, also leads to prejudice and an inability to take pleasure in one’s life. When Miss Maudie holds up Atticus as an exceptionally moral and good individual, it asks the reader to think of him the same way and to take his assessments of others as truth.

***Summary Part 4:***

[Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) tells [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson) about the rumors surrounding [Boo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo), but Miss Maudie insists they all came from black superstitions and [Miss Stephanie Crawford](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-stephanie-crawford). She says that as a boy, Arthur always spoke kindly to her, but she has no idea what goes on behind closed doors. This again offends Scout, as Atticus treats her well inside, but Miss Maudie agrees with her and sends her home with pound cake.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Scout betrays her youth and innocence here when she mistakes Miss Maudie’s insinuation of abuse to be about Atticus, rather than about Mr. Radley. It suggests that she’s not entirely aware that other men, presumably like Mr. Radley, aren’t good or kind people like her father when they’re in private, no matter how upstanding they may seem in public.

***Summary Part 5:***The next morning, [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) and [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) rope [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) into joining them to give [Boo Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo) a note by dropping it through a broken shutter with a fishing pole. Dill will keep watch and ring a bell if anyone comes along. Scout is terrified, especially when Dill explains that they wrote that they’d like to buy Boo an ice cream and sit with him on the porch. They discuss the lengthy beard that Boo must have and Scout catches Dill in a lie about his father, but Jem stops their squabbling and sends them to their places.

***Analysis Part 5:***The contents of the note suggest that Dill, at least, is starting to come around and acknowledge that Boo might not be a terrifying monster—he might be (and indeed, probably is) just another person who might enjoy an ice cream. This situates Dill as one of the least prejudiced characters in the novel, especially since this shows that he can reevaluate his ideas and come to a kinder way of thinking.

***Summary Part 6:***The fishing pole is too short, so [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) struggles to get the note close to the window. [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) is looking down when the bell rings. She whips around expecting to see [Boo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo), but instead she sees [Dill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/charles-baker-harris-dill) ringing the bell at [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch). Jem trudges out looking extremely guilty. Atticus tells the children to leave Arthur alone and let him live his life, even if it seems odd to them, and then tricks Jem into admitting that they’ve been performing the Radley family history all summer.

***Analysis Part 6:***Atticus’s scolding shows again that in his mind, the Radleys are people, not something to gawk at as though they’re subhuman. Despite Dill’s understanding that Boo might be a person, the choice to pass this note via a fishing pole indicates that at least on some level, Dill is still terrified—too terrified to just leave the note at the door.