***To Kill a Mockingbird***

***Chapter 8***

***Summary:***

* [Maycomb](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/analysis/setting) gets a season it hadn't seen in a while: winter.
* Mr. Avery tells the kids that bad children makes the seasons change, which—what?
* Mrs. Radley dies, and [Atticus](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/atticus-finch) goes to pay his condolences at the Radleys. When he comes back Jem and Scout pounce on him to ask if he saw Boo in the flesh (he didn't).
* [Scout](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/scout-jean-louise-finch) is terrified when she wakes up one morning to see white stuff pouring from the sky.
* Yep, it's snow.
* School is cancelled, so [Jem](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/jem-jeremy-atticus-finch) and Scout set out to make a snowman, though they don't really know how and there isn't much snow.
* That night, it's freezing.
* Atticus wakes Scout in the middle of the night because Miss Maudie's house—next door to the Finches'—is on fire.
* Once the fire is finally put out (and Miss Maudie's house reduced to a smoking hole in the ground), the Finches return to their fortunately undamaged home.
* And then Atticus notices something. Scout is wrapped in a blanket that she didn't have when she left the house.
* Scout says that she stayed right where he told her to, in front of [the Radley Place](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/analysis/the-radley-place), but she and Jem saw Mr. Nathan fighting the fire. So if he wasn't the stealthy blanket-deliverer, it must have been some other occupant of that house.
* Hmm, who could that be?
* Jem tells Atticus all about the knothole and the cement and his mended pants.
* Atticus finally says outright that it must have been [Boo Radley](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/to-kill-a-mockingbird/boo-radley) who brought the blanket, and Scout, who's been late for the clue train, is hit by belated terror.

***Brief Summary:***

The coldest winter since 1885 hits Alabama. Mr. Avery tells Scout and Jem that the weather changes in response to children misbehaving. They feel guilty for causing the cold weather. Mrs. Radley died that winter, but people didn't seem to notice. She was rarely seen and her death didn't really affect anyone in the neighborhood.

Scout looks out the window and screams and says the world is ending. Atticus comes to her side and tells her that it's only snow. Jem and Scout carry snow from Miss Maudie's yard and their own backyard. With several buckets of dirt, Jem forms the torso and head of a mudman. Once the mudman is complete, he plasters it with snow. When the snowman is finished, the family notices that it resembles the neighbor, Mr. Avery. Atticus insists that they alter the snowman so it does look like Mr. Avery and they use Miss Maudie's gardening hat and shears.

The temperature dips that night and Miss Maudie's house caught on fire. The local fire department pushed the truck to the scene and the hose burst when they turned on the fire hydrant. Two neighboring trucks come to put out the fire. Neighbors help get Miss Maudie's furniture from the house. Mr. Avery gets stuck trying to get out his window, but he eventually makes it to safety.

Jem and Scout stand in front of the Radley's house and watch the fire from a distance. Firemen spray water on their house to protect it from the fire. When Atticus comes to check on the children, he asks the children why they didn't stay where he left them. They assure him that they did and he asks where the blanket around Scout's shoulders came from. They don't have an answer, but Atticus figures out that it had to be Boo.

They sleep late the next morning and see Miss Maudie when they go outside. They apologize about her house, but she says that she wanted to burn it down many times. The fire will give her a chance to rebuild and have a smaller house which will leave her more yard.

The relationship between Miss Maudie and Scout is a positive influence on Scout. While the other woman in town berates her for being a tomboy and wearing pants, Miss Maudie is encouraging to her. Later when Miss Maudie's house burns, she could have reacted differently, but instead she comments that now she can have a smaller house and more room for her gardening. This is a bright light in a dark situation.

***Synopsis:***

For the first time in years, Maycomb endures a real winter. There is even light snowfall, an event rare enough for school to be closed. Jem and Scout haul as much snow as they could from Miss Maudie’s yard to their own. Since there is not enough snow to make a real snowman, they build a small figure out of dirt and cover it with snow. They make it look like Mr. Avery, an unpleasant man who lives down the street. The figure’s likeness to Mr. Avery is so strong that [Atticus](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/atticus-finch/) demands that they disguise it. Jem places Miss Maudie’s sunhat on its head and sticks her hedge clippers in its hands, much to her chagrin.

That night, Atticus wakes Scout and helps her put on her bathrobe and coat and goes outside with her and Jem. Miss Maudie’s house is on fire. The neighbors help her save her furniture, and the fire truck arrives in time to stop the fire from spreading to other houses, but Miss Maudie’s house burns to the ground. In the confusion, someone drapes a blanket over Scout. When Atticus later asks her about it, she has no idea who put it over her. Jem realizes that [Boo Radley](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/boo-radley/) put it on her, and he reveals the whole story of the knothole, the presents, and the mended pants to Atticus. Atticus tells them to keep it to themselves, and Scout, realizing that Boo was just behind her, nearly throws up.

Despite having lost her house, Miss Maudie is cheerful the next day. She tells the children how much she hated her old home and that she is already planning to build a smaller house and plant a larger garden. She says that she wishes she had been there when Boo put the blanket on Scout to catch him in the act.

***Critical Analysis:***

The weather turns unseasonably cold in Maycomb, and [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem) and [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) get their first glimpse of snow. School is canceled, so they spend their day making a snowman with mud and slush. The snow stops in the afternoon but the temperature continues to drop, prompting people to keep their fireplaces going for warmth.

Late that night Scout is awakened by [Atticus](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Atticus) and ordered to dress and leave the house. Maudie Atkinson's house is on fire. Atticus tells Scout and Jem to wait in front of the Radley house while he goes to help the other men salvage Miss Maudie's belongings and prevent the fire from spreading to more homes.

The fire is finally brought under control, although Miss Maudie's home is lost. When it is safe to go home, Atticus suggests they go inside for hot chocolate. Atticus notices a foreign blanket around Scout's shoulders and wonders where it came from. Neither Scout nor Jem can remember how she came to be wearing it. It suddenly dawns on them that the elusive [Boo Radley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Boo_Radley) must have put the blanket on her. When Atticus suggests wrapping up the blanket to return it, Jem refuses. Then, as if the burden of keeping their secrets had become too much for him, Jem blurts out what he'd been holding back: about the gifts in the tree, the evening in the Radley garden, and finding his stitched pants. Calming Jem, Atticus agrees that the blanket had best be kept a story between them.

In the morning Jem and Scout find Miss Maudie in her backyard, amid the ruin. They are surprised to find she isn't grieving the loss of her belongings. She admits she always disliked the house and is already planning the house she'll build in its place. When Scout looks confused as to why she isn't more distraught, Miss Maudie explains that she was more worried about her neighbors.

By [Chapter 8](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/chapter-8-summary/) both [Jem](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Jem) and [Scout](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Scout) are beginning to look at [Boo Radley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Boo_Radley) in a different way. No longer is he the monster of neighborhood lore; he is human. The fact that he is so lonely now seems more sad than scary. Miss Maudie is the reason Jem and Scout start opening their hearts to someone who is very different from them.

While they still have some unease about Boo Radley, they begin to see him as someone who should be protected rather than feared. Their changing attitude toward Boo Radley signifies an openness that, were it practiced more widely in their community, would provide greater objectivity, or fairness, in [Tom Robinson](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/To-Kill-a-Mockingbird/character-analysis/#Tom_Robinson)'s case.

Miss Maudie's relaxed attitude toward her lost possessions surprises Scout, but Miss Maudie explains she was more worried about the fire hurting her neighbors than she was about the fate of her possessions. Miss Maudie's kindness and selflessness foreshadow a source of strength the Finch family will need later in the book.

***Critical Study:***

Maycomb has an unusually cold winter that year. Mr. Avery tells Jem and Scout that the weather changes when children disobey adults, which makes them feel responsible for the cold. When old Mrs. Radley dies, people hardly take notice. Atticus goes over to the house, which prompts Scout and Jem to ask after Boo, but Atticus rebuffs their questions. The next morning, it starts snowing, and Scout assumes the world is ending. When she realizes it's not, she wants to play in the snow, and she and Jem go about making a snowman with a frame of dirt and a covering of snow. When Atticus sees it, he tells them to alter it a bit so it doesn't look too much like Mr. Avery.

That night, the temperature dips to 16°—the coldest night Atticus can remember. He wakes Jem and Scout up because a fire has broken out at Miss Maudie's house. Atticus tells them to stand in front of the Radley house, where they'll be out of the way while the men work. The fire truck has to be pushed from the center of town, because the cold made it stall out. Meanwhile, Atticus and the other neighbors carry Miss Maudie's furniture out of the house. Mr. Avery manages to fall off the upstairs porch. Unfortunately, the fire truck is too late, and the fire eats up into Miss Maudie's roof. Eventually, the house collapses, and the fire trucks leave. One had come from Clark's Ferry, sixty miles away.

When Atticus rejoins the children, he's cross with Scout, because he thinks she disobeyed him to fetch herself a blanket. In fact, Scout hadn't realized that she had a blanket or that Boo slipped up to her while the house was burning to lay the blanket on her shoulders. When Atticus figures out what happened, Jem begs him not to tell Nathan Radley about it, telling him that Nathan is crazy and might be keeping Boo from contacting them. Atticus agrees to keep it between them, and he tells the kids they don't have to go to school the next day because of what happened. So the next day they sleep in until noon and then head over to Miss Maudie's. She's in pretty good spirits for someone whose house just burned down. She already has plans to build a new one.

**Appomattox.**It's unclear whether Miss Maudie is referring to the Battle of Appomattox Court House or to the Battle of Appomattox Station. The former was one of the final battles of the American Civil War and resulted in a decisive Union victory and the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia. The latter was fought the day before the Battle of Appomattox Court House and is considered part of the Appomattox Campaign. The battles took place on April 8th and 9th, 1865. Atticus alludes to Appomattox to emphasize that it hasn't been this cold in Maycomb for a very long time.

**The Rosetta Stone.** Discovered in 1799, the Rosetta Stone was the key to deciphering the Egyptian hieroglyphs. Mr. Avery alludes to it when he lies to the Finch children about their bad behavior being the cause of the cold weather. According to him, it's written on the Rosetta Stone that when children disobey adults, the seasons change. Of course, the Rosetta Stone says no such thing. Mr. Avery is trying to make them feel bad by using an elevated allusion that they won't understand. It works.

**Malapropism**

**Absolute Morphodite.** The Finch children's naive pronunciation of "hermaphrodite," which refers to any organism with both male and female sexual organs or characteristics. Their snowman isn't a hermaphrodite, but they continue to use this term, to the great amusement of Miss Maudie.

**Personification.** Some examples of this would be the fire that "devoured" Miss Maudie's house and the siren that "wailed" down the street, "screaming" like a person would.

**Simile**

Some examples of this would be Miss Maudie's house looking "like a pumpkin" as it burns orange and Miss Maudie's hat encased in ice "like a fly in amber."

***Significance:***Winter arrives in Maycomb and it is unexpectedly harsh. Mr. Avery blames the children for causing the bad weather, saying that disobedient children make the seasons change. Mrs. Radley dies, and Atticus goes to the Radley house to pay his respects. Upon Scout's questioning, he sternly states that he did not see Boo there.

A snowstorm arrives, and it is the first snow Scout and Jem have ever seen. School is canceled and Jem and Scout decide to make a snowman. However, there is only a little snow, and Jem and Scout aren't even sure how a snowman is made. Determined, they decide to make a snowman using soil and snow collected from their yard and from Miss Maudie's. The snowman looks quite like Mr. Avery. Atticus admires their work, but suggests they disguise the identity of their creation to avoid offending their neighbor. Jem gives the snowman Miss Maudie's hat and pruning shears, and Miss Maudie laughs at the impersonation.

The night following the snowfall is bitterly cold. Scout wakes up in the middle of the night with Atticus over her telling her she must get up and go outside. Miss Maudie's house is on fire. Three fire trucks are trying to put out the flames, but they are hampered by the cold, and one of the hoses bursts. Atticus makes the two children wait by the Radley house so they are well out of the way. In front of the Radley yard, they shiver and hope that the flames won't come too near their own house. Miss Maudie's house collapses and her tin roof helps put out the flames. Scout understands that Miss Maudie will have to live at Miss Stephanie's house for a while.

Back at home, Atticus notices that Scout has a blanket wrapped around her shoulders and scolds her for straying from the one spot he told her to stay in. Scout explains that neither she nor Jem left the Radley yard and that they don't know where the blanket came from. They realize that [Boo Radley](https://www.gradesaver.com/to-kill-a-mockingbird/study-guide/character-list#boo-radley) must have slipped the blanket over Scout while she and Jem were engrossed by the fire. Mr. Radley, his brother, had been busy helping everyone else at Miss Maudie's house, so Boo is the only person that could have given Scout the blanket. Scout is amazed that she was so close to Boo and didn't even know it.

Miss Maudie is unexpectedly cheery about her house being burnt down and says she wanted a smaller house anyway, because she always wanted a bigger garden. She also notes that the fire probably started because she kept a fire going that night to keep her potted plants warm.

***Notes:*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.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

Maycomb experiences its coldest weather since 1885. [Mr. Avery](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-avery) insists that the Rosetta Stone indicates that when children disobey, smoke cigarettes, and fight, the seasons change, so [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) feel guilty for causing themselves and everyone else discomfort. Mrs. Radley dies over the winter with little fanfare. Jem and Scout suspect that [Boo](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo) got her, but [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) insists that she died of natural causes and gives Scout a scathing look when she asks if he saw Arthur. The next morning, Scout wakes up and screams in fear—it’s snowing, and she’s never seen snow before. [Eula May](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters) calls to inform Atticus that school is canceled.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Once again, when Scout and Jem buy Mr. Avery’s explanation without question, it drives home how young, naïve, and trusting they are—for one, the Rosetta Stone says no such thing. Regardless, this does have the effect of making Scout and Jem feel bad about their shenanigans over the summer, which suggests that next year, they may think twice before tormenting their neighbor just because he’s different.

***Summary Part 2:***

[Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) wants to know how to make a snowman, but [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) doesn’t know and cautions his children that there might not be enough snow to do so. [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) arrives and Jem and Scout race outside. Jem scolds Scout for eating the soggy snow and walking in it, which he insists is wasting it. They walk in [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s yard, where [Mr. Avery](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-avery) accuses them of bringing on this bad weather. Scout, knowing that Mr. Avery knows it’s her fault because of the Rosetta Stone, doesn’t question him. Miss Maudie wraps her azaleas in burlap to keep them from freezing and when Jem asks, suspiciously lets him borrow a basket to cart away her snow.

***Analysis Part 2:***

The fact that the snow is something entirely unheard of in Maycomb foreshadows what’s to come—a summer in which other things previously unheard of will also come to pass. This then represents a major disruption to Maycomb life, even as Miss Maudie behaves normally by caring for her plants and Mr. Avery does the same by blaming the bad weather on the children.

***Summary Part 3:***

Back in their yard, [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) fetches laundry hampers of dirt and leads [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) in sculpting a mud man. At first the figure looks like [Miss Stephanie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-stephanie-crawford), but Jem mischievously makes it look like [Mr. Avery](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-avery). Once he’s satisfied with the shape, he and Scout cover the mud with snow. They call [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch) and he expresses pride when he gets home. He laughs when he realizes it looks like Mr. Avery, insists the snowman is libelous, and tells Jem to alter the “caricature.” Jem insists it’s not a caricature since it looks just like Mr. Avery, but he fetches [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s sunhat and clippers. Miss Maudie shouts for her hat and she and Atticus discuss the snowman. Miss Maudie calls the snowman “an absolute morphodite.”

***Analysis Part 3:***

“Morphodite” is a slang term for hermaphrodite. Miss Maudie uses it to refer to the fact that Jem changed the snowman from female (Miss Stephanie) to male (Mr. Avery) and back to female (Miss Maudie). Jem shows here that he’s still too young to entirely understand why it might not be a polite thing to make a snowman depicting one’s neighbor with whom he doesn’t have the best relationship, since he doesn’t recognize that his “perfect” image of Mr. Avery might be more offensive than even a caricature.

***Summary Part 4:***

By afternoon, the snow stops, and it freezes. [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) declines [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch)’s offer to stay the night and [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) goes to sleep cold. She wakes up confused when Atticus shakes her. She hears a horrifying sound and asks whose house is burning. It’s [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s. Atticus sends Scout and [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) to stand in front of the Radley Place for safety. They watch as the old fire truck, which can’t start in the cold, arrives, and the hydrant bursts. Half-dressed men carry Miss Maudie’s furniture out and [Mr. Avery](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-avery) has to climb out a second-story window. When the flames reach the second floor, men hose down Atticus and [Miss Rachel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-rachel-haverford)’s houses next door. Scout frets while Atticus and Miss Maudie look unconcerned.

***Analysis Part 4:***

The fire creates an opportunity for Scout to see her community come together around a common goal and put out the fire. This speaks to one of the positive aspects of how close-knit and intimate Maycomb is, as there’s no indication that anyone is sitting this one out—especially since even Scout and Jem are outside watching, even if they’re not old enough to help.

***Summary Part 5:***

[Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout) watches the Abbottsville fire truck arrive and spew water on her house and on [Miss Rachel](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-rachel-haverford)’s. The “Absolute Morphodite” melts as men fight the fire in pajamas. Scout is frozen by the time another fire truck arrives and [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s house collapses. Men leave around dawn and [Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) and Scout approach Miss Maudie and [Atticus](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/atticus-finch). Atticus leads them home and sternly demands to know where Scout got her blanket. She realizes that there’s a strange woolen blanket around her shoulders. Neither she nor Jem know where it came from. Atticus starts to grin and says that all of Maycomb was out. He suggests wrapping up the blanket to take it back, but Jem spills every secret about his dealings with [Boo Radley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/arthur-radley-boo). Scout is confused, but Atticus smiles and says that that Boo must’ve given her the blanket. She almost vomits.

***Analysis Part 5:***

Receiving a blanket from Boo shows the reader (even if Scout herself doesn’t understand) that even if Boo is a recluse he still cares deeply for the wellbeing of his neighbors. Though he’s not fighting the fire, he’s still making sure that the most vulnerable individuals on the street are safe and warm. Though Scout doesn’t understand it now, this will later begin to impress upon her that Boo is generous and human, just like she is. In this sense, Boo’s simple gesture here is something that will, later on, spur some of Scout’s most profound coming-of-age moments.

***Summary Part 6:***

[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) sleep until noon, when [Calpurnia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/calpurnia) wakes them and sends them to clean up the yard. They find [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s hat and clippers and take them to her. They offer condolences for her house, but she reminds them that she hated her house and now, she’ll have more room for azaleas. They discuss how the fire started and Miss Maudie asks Scout about her unexpected company last night. She says that she wishes she’d been with Scout and Jem. Scout looks perplexed, but Miss Maudie says that she was most worried about the danger the fire posed to everyone else, especially [Mr. Avery](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/mr-avery). She notes that she’ll make him a Lane cake when [Miss Stephanie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-stephanie-crawford) isn’t looking, since Miss Stephanie wants her recipe.

***Analysis Part 6:***

Though Scout and Jem might not understand it, Miss Maudie is promoting a courageous view of what happened in that rather than wallowing in what she lost, she’s doing her best to look on the bright side and focus on the good that will come of the fire. However, when she mentions Mr. Avery’s bravery, the novel does make room for the fact that sometimes, courage and bravery does mean doing something physical rather than simply hoping for the best.

***Summary Part 7:***

[Jem](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jeremy-atticus-finch-jem) notices [Miss Maudie](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/miss-maudie-atkinson)’s dirty and bloody hands. He suggests she hire a black man to help and offers his and [Scout](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/to-kill-a-mockingbird/characters/jean-louise-finch-scout)’s help for free. Miss Maudie reminds Jem that he has his own yard to attend to, but Scout assures Miss Maudie that they can rake up the morphodite quickly. Miss Maudie stares silently and then laughs. Jem and Scout don’t understand why she’s laughing.

***Analysis Part 7:***

In this instance, Scout and Jem’s innocence and Scout’s total lack of understanding provides a spot of humor for Miss Maudie. This begins to make the case that one of the most meaningful things the children can do at this point (albeit without their knowledge) is to help people laugh.