Chapter 2 Summary- To Kill a Mockingbird

* Summer's over, and Dill heads back home to Meridian.
* Jem takes Scout to school, and explains that it's different from home—and he doesn't want his first-grade sibling cramping his fifth-grade style.
* The Scout's teacher is Miss Caroline Fisher, who's from North Alabama, otherwise known to the native Maycombians as Crazy Land.
* Miss Caroline reads the class a story about cats and seems unaware that she's already completely lost her audience, a bunch of farm kids who the narrator says are "immune to imaginative literature"
* Miss Caroline puts the alphabet up on the board. All of the class already knows it.
* Amazing! Is it a class full of geniuses? Nope. Most of them are starting first grade for the second time.
* Miss Caroline asks the Scout to read, and is not pleased that she's already good at it.
* The teacher assumes that Atticus has taught her how to read. Apparently, these lessons must stop because Atticus isn't a licensed teacher and therefore is doing his child more harm than good. (According to Miss Caroline…)
* The narrator gets the impression that reading, which seems to come as naturally as breathing, is something like a sin when it's done out of class.
* When Scout complains to Jem, Jem says that Miss Caroline is at the center of educational reform in the school, which he calls "the Dewey Decimal System" (2.25).
* This new system results in boring class time, so the Scout starts writing (in cursive) a letter to Dill. Miss Caroline makes the narrator stop, saying that first graders print, and cursive isn't taught until third grade.
* Scout remembers that Calpurnia had passed rainy days by giving writing lessons.
* Miss Caroline is halted in her inspection of her students' lunches by Walter Cunningham, who doesn't have one.
* She tries to lend him a quarter for lunch, but he refuses to take it.
* Scout steps in, explaining to Miss Caroline that Walter is a Cunningham.
* That explanation, crystal clear to Scout, doesn't mean much to Miss Caroline, so she explains further: the Cunninghams won't take anything from anybody, preferring to get by on the little they have.
* Flashback: Scout knows about the Cunninghams because Walter's father hired Atticus for some legal work, and paid for the service by barter rather than in cash.
* Back to the schoolroom present: Scout wants to explain but can't, so she just says that Miss Caroline is making Walter ashamed by trying to lend him money he can't pay back.
* Miss Caroline cracks at this, and calls Scout up to the front of the class, where she pats her hand with the ruler and makes her stand in the corner.
* The class breaks out laughing when they realize that the ruler taps were supposed to be corporal punishment.
* The bell rings and everyone leaves for lunch. Miss Caroline collapses with her head in her hands at her desk.

Chapter 3 Notes

* Scout catches Walter Cunningham in the schoolyard and beats him up for being the reason she got in trouble, but Jem stops her.
* She explains to Jem (who calls her Scout, so we will too) what happened.
* Jem invites Walter to come home for lunch with Scout and him.
* At the Finch house, Atticus talks to Walter about farming.
* Walter asks for molasses, which he proceeds to pour all over his food.
* Scout is all, "What?," and he stops in embarrassment.
* Calpurnia calls Scout into the kitchen, where she gives her a lecture on hospitality—Walter's a guest and so he can basically do whatever he wants.
* The kids go back to school, and Scout grumps silently about Calpurnia's lecture.
* She's called back to the here and now by a shriek from Miss Caroline, who's seen a "cootie" (3.37)—probably a louse, which may sound more familiar in the plural, lice—on one of the students.
* Miss Caroline tries to send the student, named Burris Ewell, home to wash his hair (after looking up lice remedies in a reference book), and says he should take a bath (which he apparently really needs, since he looks worse than Pigpen from Peanuts) before coming back to class.
* But Burris tells her that he's not coming back.
* What? Apparently, Burris is one of the Ewells. Ewells come the first day to satisfy the truant officer and then skeddaddle.
* Burris decides he's already done with school for the year even though the first day isn't over yet, and manages to make Miss Caroline cry before he leaves.
* The other students try to cheer Miss Caroline up, and she reads them another boring story.
* Highly dissatisfied with her first day of school, Scout goes home and makes plans to run away.
* Atticus comes home from work, having apparently forgotten about Scout's lunchtime misbehavior, and Calpurnia gets back on Scout's good side with tasty [crackling bread](http://www.theoldfoodie.com/2010/08/crackling-bread.html).
* After dinner, Atticus invites Scout to come read with him, which brings up unpleasant memories.
* Scout tries to convince Atticus that she doesn't really need to go to school, but he's not buying it.
* She tells him about her first day of school, and Atticus tells her to try to think about things from the other person's perspective—in this case, Miss Caroline, who was only trying to do her best in a strange place, whose ways she doesn't yet understand.
* Scout says that Burris Ewell stays home from school so she should be able to do so too, but apparently what holds true for Ewells doesn't apply to Finches.
* Finally, Atticus proposes a compromise: they'll keep reading at home if she'll keep going to school—but she shouldn't tell Miss Caroline about it.

Chapter 4 Notes

* Every day Scout runs by 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 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](http://coins.about.com/library/US-coin-values/bl-US0001-Indian-Head-Penny-Values.htm).
* Should they keep it? Chewing gum is one thing, but money is another entirely.
* Soon Dill 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 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.