Chapters 5-11 Notes

* Scout 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, a usually stand-off-ish old lady.
* Flashback: Scout's Uncle Jack 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"
* 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](http://calvinandhobbes.wikia.com/wiki/G.R.O.S.S) 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, who has a perfect right to stay in his house if he wants to.
* Atticus 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.

Chapter 6

* Jem and Scout spend the day with Dill at his aunt's fish pond.
* Scout wants to keep an eye out for Mr. Avery, a neighbor who had previously astonished them by peeing in an impressive arc off his front porch, but Dill just wants to go for a walk.
* Scout, knowing that no one in Maycomb just goes for a walk, smells a rat.
* Oh, you know, they're just going to go to the streetlight by the Radley Place.
* And then they just want to peek in the window.
* Scout doesn't like this at all, but stops complaining when they accuse her of being a girl about it.
* The trio go under the wire fence at the back of the Radley Place and, after dealing with swishy collard greens, a squeaky gate, and clucking chickens, make it up to the house.
* Jem and Scout raise Dill up so he can look through the window, but all he sees is curtains.
* They're still skulking when Scout sees a shadow—a man's shadow, heading towards Jem.
* The shadow goes up to Jem, raises his arm, drops it again, and then leaves.
* The kids scram, and Scout trips as she hears a loud noise—someone's shooting at them.
* The kids make it home (Jem loses his pants along the way) and see a bunch of neighbors in front of the Radley Place.
* Miss Maudie tells them that Mr. Radley has been shooting at a "Negro" (6.60) in his yard.
* Suddenly everyone notices that Jem doesn't have any pants on.
* Dill tries to save the day by saying they were playing strip poker, but playing cards is a big no-no in Maycomb, so Jem says that they were actually playing with matches.
* Whatevs, everyone says, and they head off to bed. Scout worries that every sound she hears might be Boo Radley coming to wreak his revenge. But Jem's off to get his pants. Scout tries to stop him, but Jem heads off anyway.
* Scout sits outside on the porch, listening for the dreaded shotgun blast and waiting for Jem to return.
* Finally Jem returns. With the pants.

Chapter 7

* After his adventures at the Radley Place, Jem is in a bad mood for a week.
* Scout starts second grade. It's just as bad as first grade.
* Jem finally tells Scout what happened when he went back to the Radley House: his pants were folded up on top of the fence, and the tear in them had been sloppily mended.
* CREEPY.
* Passing by the knothole tree, they see a ball of twine resting inside it.
* Scout wants to take it, but Jem thinks it might be someone's hiding spot.
* When the twine is still there after a few days, Jem takes it, and from then on there are no more qualms about taking things found in the knothole.
* A few months later, the knothole holds their best find yet: two figures carved out of soap that bear a striking resemblance to Scout and Jem.
* Scout throws them on the ground, thinking about voodoo dolls, but Jem rescues them.
* Who could have made them?
* The knothole haul keeps getting better and better: a whole pack of chewing gum, a spelling bee medal, and a broken pocket watch (which Jem tries but fails to fix).
* Scout and Jem decide to write a letter to their secret benefactor.
* But the next day, they find that the knothole has been filled with cement.
* Jem stakes out Mr. Nathan and asks why.
* Mr. Nathan says that the tree's sick and the cement is an attempt to cure it.
* Jem asks Atticus if that's true. Atticus says it looks healthy to him, but Mr. Radley should know his own trees.

Chapter 8

* Maycomb 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 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 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 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, 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 who brought the blanket, and Scout, who's been late for the clue train, is hit by belated terror.

Chapter 9

* Scout is ready to fight Cecil Jacobs on the schoolyard when he says that her father defends "ns"
* When Scout asks Atticus about it, he tells her not to say "n."
* Scout then asks him if all lawyers defend Negroes, and he says that of course they do.
* See, just because lawyers have black clients doesn't mean they actually do a good job at defending them. But Atticus does.
* For him, it boils down to self-respect: he couldn't hold his head up if he did less than his best.
* Is he going to win the case? No, but they have to try anyway.
* Atticus reassures Scout: "But remember this, no matter how bitter things get, they're [the residents of Maycomb are] still our friends and this is still our home" (9.27).
* The next day at school, Scout is about to fight Cecil Jacobs when she remembers what Atticus told her and walks away instead, even though she gets called a coward.
* Soon it's Christmas, which means a visit from Uncle Jack (good), but also a visit from Aunt Alexandra (bad).Even worse, it means having to spend time with Aunt Alexandra's grandson Francis, who is the yin to Scout’s yang.
* Uncle Jack arrives with two long packages of mysterious contents.
* Scout cusses while Uncle Jack's around, and later he tells her that she shouldn't do that if she wants to grow up to be a lady (which she doesn't).
* The next day is Christmas morning, and they open the mysterious packages to find a pair of long-desired air rifles.
* They head down to Finch's Landing, sans air rifles (to Scout's dismay, as she'd already had fantasies about shooting Francis).
* Jem abandons his sister to schmooze with the adults, leaving Scout to deal with the dreaded Francis—whose main problem so far seems to be liking boring Christmas presents.
* Apparently Aunt Alexandra has strong ideas as to what girls should be and wear (frilly dresses) that are very different from Scout's (overalls).
* Oh, here's the problem: eventually, Francis quotes Aunt Alexandra, calling Atticus a "n-lover" who's "ruinin' the family" (9.98).
* Scout whales on Francis, gets in trouble with Uncle Jack, and then heads back home to sulk. Eventually, Uncle Jack asks Scout to explain her side of the story. When she explains, Uncle Jack wants to go beat up the little punk himself, but instead he just bandages her still-bleeding hand.
* Later Scout overhears Uncle Jack and Atticus talking. Atticus tells Uncle Jack some things about children: answer them truthfully, and bad language is less dangerous than hotheadedness.
* Atticus says that Scout needs to learn to control her temper because things are only going to get harder.
* How bad are things are going to get? Really bad.
* He also says that he'd rather not have taken the case, but once it was offered to him he couldn't refuse it in good conscience.
* Atticus hopes he can get his kids through the case without their "catching Maycomb's usual disease"—going "stark raving mad when anything involving a Negro comes up" (9.187)—and that they will come to him if they have questions.
* Atticus then tells Scout, still lurking around the corner eavesdropping, to go to bed. Years later, an older Scout realizes that her father meant her to overhear the conversation.

Chapter 10

* Jem and Scout think their father super uncool, not to mention old. He can't even play football, like the other kids' fathers do.
* Plus, kids at school are giving them grief about the Tom Robinson case, and Scout can't even fight now that she's promised her dad not to.
* *And* Atticus refuses to teach Scout and Jem how to shoot their shiny new air rifles. Luckily, Uncle Jack steps up.
* Atticus tells Jem that "it's a sin to kill a mockingbird" (10.7). Although apparently bluejays are okay.
* Scout grumps about how their neighborhood is all old people, and Miss Maudie acknowledges that there aren't any 20- or 30-somethings around to be role models.
* Miss Maudie tries to defend Atticus (he's a checkers grand master! he can play the Jew's Harp!), but Scout is not impressed.
* Then Jem is all depressed when his father refuses to join in on the town's Methodists vs. Baptists football game. Seriously, worst dad ever. Right?
* One day Jem and Scout go off to find local wildlife to kill when they see a dog acting kind of strange.
* Calpurnia dashes for the phone to tell Atticus that there's a mad dog (i.e., [rabid](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmedhealth/PMH0002310/)) on the loose.
* Then she talks to Miss Eula May, the town telephone operator, to tell her to let everyone else on the street know that they should stay out of the way of the rabid animal.
* The Radleys don't have a phone, so Calpurnia runs over to their place, bangs on their front door, and shouts, "Mad dog's comin'!" (10.72).
* Everyone hunkers down inside to watch the dog.
* The dog finally gets within range of Heck Tate's rifle, but he wants Atticus to make the shot. See, if he misses, the bullet will hit the Radley Place. And Mr. Tate knows he can't shoot that well.
* Atticus reluctantly takes the weapon, walks to the middle of the street, aims, fires, and kills the dog.
* Jem is flabbergasted. This is apparently like all of a sudden seeing your dad make a perfect three-point jump shot or make it through the Expert level of a Guitar Hero song you've been failing.
* Miss Maudie tells Jem and Scout that Atticus "was the deadest shot in Maycomb County in his time" and his nickname was "Ol' One-Shot" (10.137).
* So why have Scout and Jem never heard their dad talk about it?
* Well, Atticus feels that his marksmanship is a God-given talent that gives him an unfair advantage over other living creatures, and that he shouldn't use it unless he has to.
* Scout wants to brag to everyone at school about her father's shooting skill, but Jem tells her not to, because he thinks Atticus wouldn't want her to, since he's never mentioned it before.
* Jem says that he wouldn't care if Atticus couldn't do anything, because, as he says, "Atticus is a gentleman, just like me!" (10.152).
* Sounds like someone (Jem) has learned a valuable lesson.

Chapter 11

* Now that Scout's a grown-up second-grader, tormenting Boo Radley seems like little kid stuff. She's setting her sights beyond the neighborhood to the metropolis of downtown Maycomb.
* Getting downtown, however, requires getting past the house of Mrs. Henry Lafayette Dubose.
* The old woman hurls insults at them every time they pass her house, no matter how nice they are to her.
* But Atticus makes polite conversation with Mrs. Dubose, so Scout think he's incredibly brave.
* The day after Jem turns twelve, he's got a load of birthday cash to spend. They head down to town for him to lighten his pockets.
* On the list of purchases: a toy steam engine for Jem and a baton for Scout.
* As they pass Mrs. Dubose, she accuses them of playing hooky, even though it's Saturday.
* Jem and Scout can put up with that, but when she attacks their father for defending Tom Robinson, Scout has to drag Jem away.
* They make their purchases and head home, passing by Mrs. Dubose's house again.
* She's not on the front porch, and Jem snaps. He grabs Scout's new baton, and uses it to destroy Mrs. Dubose's [camellias](http://www.huntington.org/huntingtonlibrary.aspx?id=484), finally breaking the baton over his knee.
* Atticus comes home, and he's not happy.
* He tells his son that no matter what she said, those poor flowers never did anyone any harm, and Jem needs to go apologize—right now.
* Meanwhile, Scout finally speaks her mind. No, her dad says, it's not fair. But things are only going to get worse as the Tom Robinson case gets closer.
* When they're older, they'll understand why he's doing what he's doing.
* But isn't Atticus wrong, because most of the townspeople think he is?
* Nope, Atticus says. Personal conscience isn't a democracy.
* Finally, Jem's back. He cleaned up the yard and apologized (even though he didn't mean it), and now Mrs. Dubose wants him to come over every day except Sunday to read to her.
* Atticus says he has to do it. There's no point in apologizing unless it's sincere. As a sick old lady Mrs. Dubose can't be held responsible for her actions.
* Atticus is a lot more forgiving then we are.
* Anyway, Jem heads over to Mrs. Dubose's house for his first round of reading. Scout goes with him.
* They find her in bed, and she gets in a few sharp words before Jem starts reading.
* Her face is disgusting—wrinkled, spotty, toothless, and drooling—so Scout tries to find something else to look at.
* After a while, the kids notice that Mrs. Dubose's frequent corrections of his mistakes had dropped off, and she doesn't even notice when he stops mid-sentence.
* Huh. She appears to be in some sort of fit. The kids ask if she's all right, but she doesn't answer.
* Then an alarm clock goes off, and Mrs. Dubose's servant Jessie shoos them out of the house, saying it's time for Mrs. Dubose's medicine.
* Reading to Mrs. Dubose becomes part of their daily schedule.
* One evening Scout asks Atticus what exactly a "n-lover" (11.100) is, since that's what Mrs. Dubose frequently calls him, and it's also what Francis said.
* Is that why she jumped Francis? Yes.
* Atticus asks why Scout's asking for a definition if she understood it well enough to make it the reason for a fight, and Scout says that it was the way Francis said it that got on her nerves.
* Atticus tells her that the term doesn't mean anything, but it's something "ignorant, trashy people use […] when they think somebody's favoring Negroes over and above themselves" (11.107), and that even higher-class people use it sometimes when they want to put someone down.
* It's not actually an insult; it just shows you how "poor" (11.109) the person using it is.
* One afternoon while Jem is plugging away at reading aloud to Mrs. Dubose, Atticus surprises them by coming in.
* It turns out he's just left work—Mrs. Dubose has been setting the alarm clock later and later each day, so Jem and Scout have been staying longer and longer without realizing it.
* Mrs. Dubose says that Jem has to come for a week longer, even though the original month is up, and Atticus says he has to do it.
* Finally the last day of reading is over. Hooray! Now Jem can turn to more important things, like college football.
* One evening, Mrs. Dubose dies. Atticus comes home with a box and an explanation: Mrs. Dubose was a [morphine](http://www.drugs.com/morphine.html) addict and wanted to kick the habit before she died as a matter of personal pride.
* Her fits were caused by withdrawal, and the reading helped keep her mind off the cravings till the alarm clock went off and she could have a dose (which also explains why the reading periods got longer and longer).
* By the end of the reading afternoons, she was free of the drug habit.
* The box Atticus brought home is for Jem. When he opens it he finds a camellia.
* Jem is angry at this needling from beyond the grave, but Atticus tells him that he thinks it's a message that everything's all right.
* If Jem hadn't gone on an anti-camellia rampage, Atticus might have made his son go read to Mrs. Dubose anyway, in order "to see what real courage is" (11.153)—not using a gun, but fighting for a cause you believe in even if you know you probably won't win.