

BASIC PLOT SUMMARY OF TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD:

The book begins by saying that Jem broke his arm and with a description of Maycomb. Jem and Scout meet Dill, a boy who visits for the summer from Mississippi staying at his Aunt Rachel's house in Maycomb. The three of them "spy" on the Radley house to see if the rumors about Boo are true. Dill continually tries to get Boo Radley out of hiding before he returns home for the rest of the year. When Dill returns, Scout begins first grade. Her teacher, Miss Caroline reprimands her for already knowing how to read (Atticus taught her). The children find Boo's first gift to them, 2 pieces of gum in the tree. Later that year, they find a box with 2 polished pennies. Jem and Scout are curious, so they try to look in the Radley house window, but almost get shot by Mr. Radley. As Jem and Scout escape, Jem's pants get caught on the fence. Boo Radley fixes the pants and puts them back on the fence. Boo's next gift is two soap carvings – one of a boy, and one of a girl, and then a spelling metal. The final gifts before the tree hole is filled are a pocket watch, chain, and knife.

That winter, it snows in Maycomb and the next day, Miss Maudie's house burns down. Since it is incredibly cold (for Maycomb), Boo puts a blanket around Scout's shoulders. At Christmas, Atticus chooses to defend Tom Robinson who was accused of raping Mayella Ewell (Bob Ewell's daughter).

In the spring, Aunt Alexandra moves in. Before Tom's trial, there is a mob in front of the Jail preparing to lynch (hang) Tom Robinson. Scout successfully halts the mob by talking to Mr. Cunningham. During the trial, the children sit in the colored balcony. Atticus's arguments outweigh the Ewells' arguments, but the jury still finds Tom guilty. The next day, Atticus receives gifts of food on his porch. Later, Tom is shot 17 times while trying to escape from prison. Helen Robinson faints when she hears this news.

Meanwhile, a drunk (as usual) Bob Ewell is angry that Atticus made him look like a fool during the court case and continually threatens Atticus. Additionally, Mr. Ewell lost a job at the WPA for being lazy, harassed Helen Robinson, and attempted to hurt Judge Taylor and/or his property.

The adults of Maycomb plan a Halloween pageant. On Jem and Scout's walk back home after the event, Bob Ewell attacks them. Jem breaks his arm from the attack. Later, Heck Tate discovers a knife stabbed into Bob Ewell's chest (he died) and knows that Boo Radley stabbed him to protect Jem and Scout. However, he says that Mr. Ewell fell on his knife in order to spare Boo Radley. Heck Tate believes that "the dead bury the dead".

To conclude the novel, Scout walks Boo home and finally realizes that she can never repay Boo for his gifts to her and Jem because she knows that she will never see Boo again.