**Chapters 14–15**

[<<](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/section6.rhtml)

 Page 1

[>](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/section7/page/2/)

[>>](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/section8.rhtml)

**Summary: Chapter 14**

The impending trial of Tom Robinson and [Atticus](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/atticus-finch/)’s role as his defense lawyer make [Jem](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/jem-finch/) and [Scout](http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/mocking/character/scout-finch/) the objects of whispers and glances whenever they go to town. One day, Scout tries to ask Atticus what “rape” is, and the subject of the children’s trip to Calpurnia’s church comes up. Aunt Alexandra tells Scout she cannot go back the next Sunday. Later, she tries to convince Atticus to get rid of Calpurnia, saying that they no longer need her. Atticus refuses. That night, Jem tells Scout not to antagonize Alexandra. Scout gets angry at being lectured and attacks Jem. Atticus breaks up the fight and sends them to bed. Scout discovers something under her bed. She calls Jem in and they discover Dill hiding there.

Dill has run away from home because his mother and new father did not pay enough attention to him. He took a train from Meridian to Maycomb Junction, fourteen miles away, and covered the remaining distance on foot and on the back of a cotton wagon. Jem goes down the hall and tells Atticus. Atticus asks Scout to get more food than a pan of cold corn bread for Dill, before going next door to tell Dill’s aunt, Miss Rachel, of his whereabouts. Dill eats, then gets into Jem’s bed to sleep, but soon climbs over to Scout’s bed to talk things over.

**Summary: Chapter 15**

A week after Dill’s arrival, a group of men led by the sheriff, Heck Tate, come to Atticus’s house in the evening. As his trial is nearing, Tom Robinson is to be moved to the Maycomb jail, and concerns about the possibility of a lynch mob have arisen. Later, Jem tells Scout that Alexandra and Atticus have been arguing about the trial; she nearly accused him of bringing disgrace on the family. The following evening, Atticus takes the car into town. At about ten o’clock, Jem, accompanied by Scout and Dill, sneaks out of the house and follows his father to the town center. From a distance, they see Atticus sitting in front of the Maycomb jail, reading a newspaper. Jem suggests that they not disturb Atticus and return home.

At that moment, four cars drive into Maycomb and park near the jail. A group of men gets out, and one demands that Atticus move away from the jailhouse door. Atticus refuses, and Scout suddenly comes racing out of her hiding place next door, only to realize that this group of men differs from the group that came to their house the previous night. Jem and Dill follow her, and Atticus orders Jem to go home. Jem refuses, and one of the men tells Atticus that he has fifteen seconds to get his children to leave.

Meanwhile, Scout looks around the group and recognizes Mr. Cunningham, the father of her classmate Walter Cunningham. She starts talking to him about his legal entailments and his son, and asks him to tell his son “hey.” All of the men stare at her. Mr. Cunningham, suddenly ashamed, squats down and tells Scout that he will tell his son “hey” for her, and then tells his companions to clear out. They depart, and Mr. Underwood, the owner of the newspaper, speaks from a nearby window where he is positioned with a double-barreled shotgun: “Had you covered all the time, Atticus.” Atticus and Mr. Underwood talk for a while, and then Atticus takes the children home.

**Analysis: Chapters 14–15**

If Aunt Alexandra embodies the rules and customs of the adult world, then the reappearance of Dill at this juncture offers Scout an opportunity to flee, at least for a short time, back into the comforts of childhood. However, Dill’s return also emphasizes the growing gulf in development between Scout and Jem. In the previous section, we saw the twelve-year-old Jem indignantly urging Scout to act more like a girl, indicating his growing awareness of adult social roles and expectations. Here again, Jem proves clearly too old for the childhood solidarity that Dill’s presence recalls. Scout relates that, upon seeing Dill under the bed, Jem “rose and broke the remaining code of our childhood” by telling Atticus. To Scout, this act makes Jem a “traitor,” though it is really an act of responsibility that marks Jem’s maturation toward adulthood.