

To Kill a Mockingbird Chapter 4

The rest of the school year passed in a haze of boredom as did the following years of her public education. For Scout, the saving grace of that year was the excitement of finding surprises in the knothole of a Radley oak tree she passed on the way home from school. The first time she noticed the knothole was one day when something shiny caught her eye. She went back to look and found two pieces of gum in shiny wrappers. After sniffing and licking them to make sure they weren't poisoned, she chewed the fat wad until Jem came home and made her spit it out. On the last day of school as they walked by the knothole together, they found a ring box wrapped in the shiny tin of gum wrappers and inside were two scrubbed Indian-head pennies. Jem kept the treasures in a trunk in his room and they were baffled as to who would leave their treasures in the knothole of the oak tree. They had all summer to think about it because school was over and they wouldn't pass by the Radley place anymore until the fall.

Dill came back to Maycomb a few days later. On their first day out in the yard they couldn't decide what to play, so Scout suggested that they roll in an old tire. She rolled herself up inside it and Jem pushed her as hard as he could. When she dizzily popped out of the tire in a heap, Jem was yelling at her and she saw that she was laying in the Radley yard. Realizing where was, she scrambled back to the front porch of her house. Scout was so frightened that Jem accused her of turning into a girl, but her reason to be afraid was she heard laughing inside the house. She did not tell Jem what she heard.

After that Jem suggested a new game, the Boo Radley game. They were assigned parts in the stories that they'd heard about Boo Radley, and although Scout was afraid to play it at first, she was pressured into it. They'd act out each part of the story that they knew, and when it was time for Boo to stab his father, Jem would sneak in the house and steal the sewing scissors while Cal's back was turned. They would stop their game whenever any of the neighbors were looking, but one day Atticus caught them and took the scissors away. He suggested that if their game had anything to do with the Radleys, they'd better quit playing it. Jem denied that it did and assured Dill that they could keep playing. When Scout hesitated, Jem told her she was being a girl, but Atticus was only the second reason she didn't want to play. The first was that when she'd rolled into the Radley yard, amid all Jem's shouts and her nausea, she'd heard someone inside the house laughing and she was sure it was Boo.