

~~JEM (after short consideration). Ask Cal.~~

~~CALPURNIA (even shorter consideration). I think you
better ask your father. (Going.) We'll be eating soon.~~

~~SCOUT. I'd just like to know~~

(SCOUT stops as DILL is entering.)

START

SCOUT. Hey—

DILL. Hey, yourself. I'm Charles Baker Harris. I can read.

JEM. So what?

DILL. I just thought you'd like to know. Folks call me

Dill. I'm staying with my Aunt Rachel.

SCOUT (*critically*). You're sort of puny.

DILL (*defensively*). I'm little, but I'm old.

SCOUT (*curious*). How old's your father?

DILL. I haven't got one.

SCOUT. Is he dead?

DILL. No.

SCOUT. Then if he's not dead, you've got one, haven't
you? (*DILL is embarrassed.*)

JEM. Never mind her, Dill.

SCOUT (*persisting*). If his father isn't dead, how can he
say he hasn't got one? How... (*SHE is interrupted by
JEM who grabs her arm.*)

JEM. Scout! The Radley Place!

(*SCOUT stops at his tone, and turns to look with him at
the Radley door, which is opening. NATHAN RADLEY,
a pale, thin, leathery man is coming out.*)

SCOUT (*with relief*). Nathan Radley.

JEM (*clearing throat nervously*). Hidy-do, Mr. Nathan.

NATHAN (*preoccupied*). Afternoon. (*Exits.*)

SCOUT (*explaining to DILL. Hushed*). Boo Radley's older brother. (*Ominously*.) Boo Radley's in there—all by himself—an' he hasn't come out in twenty, thirty years.

DILL. Thirty years!

JEM. When old Mr. Radley died, some folks thought Boo'd have to come out, but Nathan moved in and took his father's place.

DILL. Wonder what he does. Looks like he'd stick his head out the door sometime.

JEM. I think he comes out when it's pitch dark. Azaleas wilt 'cause he breathes on them. Nobody touches a pecan that falls off the Radley pecan tree...it'll *kill* you. I've seen his tracks in our backyard many a morning, and one night I heard him scratching on the back screen.

DILL. Wonder what he looks like?

JEM. (*professionally*). Judging from his tracks, he's about six-and-a-half feet tall, he eats raw squirrels and any cats he can catch. What teeth he has are yellow and rotten. His eyes pop and most of the time he drools.

DILL (*with decision*). Let's make him come out.

SCOUT (*shocked*). Make Boo Radley come out?

JEM. If you want to get yourself killed, all you have to do is go up and knock on that door.

DILL (*challenging*). You're scared—too scared to put your big toe in the front yard.

JEM. Ain't scared, just respectful.

DILL. I dare you.

JEM. (*trapped*). You dare me? (*JEM turns to look at the house apprehensively.*)

SCOUT. Don't go near it, Jem. If you get killed—what with Atticus so old—what would become of me? (*JEM does not respond.*)

DILL (*impatiently*). Well?

JEM. Don't hurry me. (*JEM starts slowly toward the house.*)

DILL. Scout and me's right behind you. (*As JEM continues toward the Radley house, SCOUT and DILL follow, SCOUT pausing beside the tree, JEM hesitates. SCOUT notices something in a knothole in the tree and takes it. In a hushed voice.*) Someone's at the window! Look at the curtains! (*The curtains have been pulled slightly to the side, and now they fall back into place.*)

JEM (*horrified*). He was watching! He saw me!

SCOUT (*absently putting a piece of chewing gum in her mouth.*) Don't ever do that.

JEM (*considering her*). Where'd you get the chewing gum?

SCOUT (*as SHE chews, SHE nods toward the tree*). It was sticking in the knothole.

JEM (*shocked*). That tree? Spit it out! Right now!

SCOUT (*obeying, but indignant*). I was just getting the flavour.

JEM (*grimly*). Suppose Boo Radley put it there? Suppose it's poison? You go gargle!

SCOUT (*shaking her head*). It'd take the taste outa my mouth.

DILL (*still concentrating on the Radley house*). Let's throw a pebble against the door—and as soon as he sticks his head out, say we want to buy him an ice cream. (*Logically.*) That'll seem friendly. Maybe he'd feel better.

SCOUT. How do you know he don't feel good now?

DILL (*concerned*). How'd you feel if you'd been shut up for a hundred years with nothing but cats to eat? (*Searching about.*) 'Course if you'd rather I throw the pebble—

JEM (*disgusted*). Better leave it to me. (*JEM apparently picks up a pebble.*)

SCOUT (*worried*). You're not going to throw a stone at the Radley house!

JEM (*to DILL, as HE winds up to throw*). I guess I just have to show you—(*HE is stopped by an authoritative voice from off.*)

ATTICUS (*off*). Jem! (*JEM stops and they ALL look toward the direction of the VOICE off.*)

SCOUT. Atticus!

STOP

(*ATTICUS, carrying an old briefcase and wearing his "office" clothes, comes on. He's tall, quietly impressive, reserved, civilized and nearly fifty. He wears glasses and because of the poor sight in his left eye, looks with his right eye when he wants to see something well.*)

ATTICUS (*trying to take in the situation, curiously*). Just what were you about to do, Jem?

JEM. Nothin', sir.

ATTICUS (*unwilling to be put off*). I don't want any of that. Tell me.

JEM. We were—(*Assuming responsibility.*)—I was going to throw a pebble—to get Boo Radley to come out.

ATTICUS. Why?

DILL. Because—sir. (*As ATTICUS turns to him, DILL clears his throat. Explaining quickly.*) My name's Charles Baker Harris—people call me Dill. I'm here visiting my Aunt Rachel. (*Lamely.*) We thought Mr. Radley might enjoy us...