

Please carefully examine this document! As always, I have provided information on certain questions that seem to be difficult for students, as well as ones where I have additional insights to share with you.

No movie clips this week, for an interesting reason. These chapters are not really represented in the movie, as they are sort of in-between exposition between the trial and the ending of the book. The only thing shown in the movie is the part where Bob Ewell spits in Atticus's face.

CHAPTER 22: Connection Questions

2. How does Miss Maudie define progress in overcoming segregation and discrimination in Maycomb? What do you think of her conclusion? How can we measure progress toward bringing about a more just society? What steps are worth celebrating and what steps are dissatisfying?

Miss Maudie emphasizes how rare it was for the jury to spend so long deliberating over a case where it's a white man's word against a black man's word, and that the town is taking a "baby step" toward justice. She also notes that Judge Taylor probably appointed Atticus on purpose, because court-appointed cases usually go to a different lawyer. She wants the kids to feel a sense of pride that Atticus was seen as the right man to take steps toward justice even if the case was doomed. I agree with the optimism of her conclusion at the time (1934-ish), but it would not be an acceptable conclusion today. It is somewhat comparable to the modern issue of police officers not being convicted for shooting unarmed black citizens at traffic stops- many people protest this injustice instead of just shrugging their shoulders and saying it will get better.

CHAPTER 23: Connection Questions

3. What does Atticus mean when he tells Jem, "With people like us—that's our share of the bill. We generally get the juries we deserve"? What responsibilities does Atticus think people like him should live up to? What factors does he think prevent people from doing their civic duty?

Atticus means that professional people are usually too busy to sit on juries and therefore the responsibility falls to farmers, who are generally more ignorant. Therefore, the professional class must do its civic duty if they care about injustice. Atticus explains that sometimes there is a

conflict of interest with the professional class though. If someone like Mr. Link Deas served on a jury, he might lose the business of whoever loses the case. The kids ask why Miss Maudie can't sit on a jury and learn that women were not allowed to sit on juries at that time. Interestingly, instead of railing against the injustice of this, Atticus makes a slightly sexist comment that women talk too much to come to a verdict in a timely fashion.

CHAPTER 24: Connection Questions

4. What do we learn about the ladies in the missionary circle from their discussion of the Mruna tribe and the African Americans in Maycomb?

The Missionary Society of Maycomb is a group of ladies who meet, supposedly, to discuss Christian missions and how to be charitable, but they really just end up gossiping. This is sort of similar to modern-day book clubs. Unfortunately, they are more concerned with discussing the plight of the Mruna people, a non-Christian group in Africa, than they are with the injustice being shown to black people living in their own community. The ladies show a tremendous amount of hypocrisy and ignorance.

5. To whom is Miss Maudie referring when she asks, "His food doesn't stick going down, does it"? Why does Miss Maudie ask this question? Why is Aunt Alexandra thankful for it?

Maudie is referring to Atticus and speaking to Mrs. Merriweather, who has said racist things throughout this discussion and then implies that Atticus has done something wrong by "stirring up" the black folk in the town. Maudie is calling her out for enjoying Atticus's hospitality while talking ill of him behind his back. Alexandra is thankful that Maudie defended her brother because she was bothered by the comment too and probably wasn't sure what to say, as she is not used to disagreeing with these women. Scout's view of Alexandra changes from observing this, as she says, "I was content to learn that Aunt Alexandra could be pierced sufficiently to feel gratitude for help given."

8. After hearing about Tom Robinson's death, for what does Alexandra criticize the town? How does Miss Maudie answer her frustration? How does Miss Maudie understand her role in helping Maycomb change?

Alexandra criticizes the town for essentially forcing Atticus to do the dirty work of fighting against racism and not backing him up. She worries for his health. She mentions that professional people who own businesses are afraid to lose money by being publicly anti-racist, so they keep their mouths shut. This echoes what Atticus said earlier about why professional people choose not to serve on juries. This also echoes the corporate culture of the current world, in which some huge companies make a point of not taking a stance on controversial social issues in order to avoid alienating anyone and losing business. This is also the case with certain celebrities as well- while many do speak out on social issues, others stay silent in order to not alienate any fans.

Back to Alexandra- Maudie responds to her by saying not to be frustrated, because people are actually showing that they trust Atticus to be a leader, which is a great tribute. She implies that the role of a good, fair-minded citizen in Maycomb is to keep thinking the right way and support people who lead the charge, like Atticus.

9. Scout concludes the chapter by saying, "If Aunty could be a lady at a time like this, so could I." In what sense are Scout and Alexandra behaving like proper Southern ladies? Is this the appropriate response to all they have heard and learned on this particular afternoon? What has Scout learned about becoming an adult and a lady?

In this scene, Scout uses the phrase "be a lady" to imply that one is able to keep their composure in a rough situation. Despite being somewhat traumatized by the conversation and the negativity toward Atticus, Alexandra and Scout both behave politely and don't enter into arguments with the women gathered there. In some ways, this is an appropriate response to the situation, because Atticus has stated previously that Scout needs to learn to control her temper. In other ways, it is inappropriate, because it's dangerous for a whole generation of young women to grow up thinking it is better to let unjust comments and behavior slide instead of standing up for what is right.

CHAPTER 25: Connection Questions

All good here!

CHAPTER 26: Connection Questions

3. How do you explain why the townspeople continue to support Atticus and his children while at the same time seeming to approve of the guilty verdict? What does it suggest about the way the people in Maycomb think about justice?

The townspeople, simply put, are hypocritical. They still respect the status and ancestry of the Finches even if they don't agree with their actions. Status and ancestry trump all in this setting.

4. How does Miss Gates explain why Hitler is able to treat Jews so poorly in Germany? What irony is exposed in her explanation? What is she forgetting or ignoring? Why do you think Harper Lee chose to include this current events lesson in the novel?

Miss Gates explains that Hitler is able to treat the Jews so poorly because he is a dictator, in contrast with America which is a democracy. This is ironic because plenty of people are still treated poorly in America at that time- what about what just happened to Tom Robinson? She is ignoring the issues of racism and supremacy on a smaller basis and just focusing on the government- sanctioned human rights violations in Germany. She obviously does not understand the situation that well because prior to her comments about democracies versus dictatorships, Cecil Jacobs basically says that what Hitler is doing makes sense because Jews are dirty and she doesn't even respond to that. Later on, Cecil changes his tune a bit and says it's not the best idea to persecute Jews because at least "they're white", showing his racism. Lee chose to include this scene because it provides further proof of the hypocrisy of this town, and the common phenomenon of how people can be enraged by a far-away injustice while continuing to ignorantly perpetuate injustices close to home.

6. Why does Jem respond so angrily when Scout brings up the courthouse? How does Atticus explain his behavior?

Jem responds angrily when Scout brings up the courthouse because he is honestly emotionally and morally wrecked by the injustice he witnessed there. Atticus says he is "having a rough time" and trying "hard to forget something", which really means he is trying to get over the fact that the world is so terrible.

7. How is Jem's forgetting similar to Miss Gates's forgetting? How is it different? What role does forgetting play in allowing us to live our daily lives and be "ourselves"? When is forgetting dangerous?

Miss Gates's "forgetting", according to Scout, is not remembering to care about the nearby injustices when it seems she sees the injustice of Hitler. Scout is innocent, so she believes Miss Gates has just forgotten, but really she is hypocritical as explained before. On the other hand, Jem is trying to forget how upsetting injustice can be. Both involve ignorance, but different kinds (the ignorance seems natural on the part of Miss Gates, whereas Jem is trying to force himself to be ignorant so he can be in less pain). They are different because Miss Gates seems unaware of the wrongness of community injustices while Jem is terribly pained by them. While we can't allow ourselves to be emotionally ravaged by every unjust thing that occurs, because then we couldn't get up in the morning, it is dangerous to completely forget. We must remember injustices and atrocities so they don't occur again.