

A rose for emliy



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Faulkner's *A Rose for Emily* is one of the better known works of Faulkner. As a short story, the narrative has been included in many anthologies and collective works of American fiction. The tale of Emily is quite unique due to two different aspects of the story of which the first and most important one is the narrative structure because the story is told to the reader through a narrator who represents the collective voice of the town. Second, the story develops a variety of different symbols and a theme based on the secrets held by Emily that are quite shockingly revealed to the readers at the end.

The first such symbol is the idea of decay in terms of the image of Ms. Emily, her family and her house. Once the best house in the most important part of the city, it became an eyesore as times and tastes changed. The character of Emily also presents a symbol of decay as the townspeople give her respect but it is only due to her old family name and her somewhat aristocratic family ties. As such she becomes a link to the traditional values that have all but gone from the town.

As the story progresses, we get continual hints how Emily might have had difficulties in letting go of relationships and at the very end of the tale we are shown that Emily not only killed her lover when he wanted to leave her but she also kept his rotting body in the house. Even worse, she slept next to it for many years until she herself died and her secret was eventually revealed. The voice of the town, i. e. the society formed by the town shares the blame for making her this way. Additionally, her father also shares the blame since it was he who thought of her to be socially higher than anyone else to the point that he rejected the men who wanted to marry her. Sad as it may be, the dead body for Emily could have been a symbol for love and human

emotion which she could never have in her real life due to social pressures. Amongst these pressures, the voice of the town i. e. the demands of society mixed with the voice of her father to put her in constant conflict. She fought against the will of her father while she was trying to be a good daughter. She fought to keep the man she loved from going away and could only do so by killing him. She engaged in a battle with the whole town to keep them outside her head and outside her house so that her secret could not be revealed. With her life, she won all those battles simply because she outlived her father, did not let go of her lover and kept the city outside her house. At the same time, she lost all those battles as her father kept her from marrying, the man she loved did not live and the gruesome secret she had was revealed to the town at the end.

In conclusion, while it is easy to react with horror at the story, there is also an element of pity when we see that Emily always lived at the will of others rather than herself. The voice of the town as the narrator is also responsible for revealing her secret to the reader and that itself could be seen as a betrayal of her hope of keeping her secrets. Emily can be seen as both a murderer and a psychopath but she can also be seen as a victim of society where the voices that tell us what is wrong and right determine our choices.

Word Count: 618

Works Cited

Faulkner, W. 1995, *Collected Stories of William Faulkner*, Vintage.