

A rose for emily- see
notes



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Discuss the ways in which Emily is shown as outside the norms of the town and of the time in "A Rose for Emily." How do these prepare us for the end of the story? Do these examples also serve to indict the townsfolk themselves? If so, how? The story "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner tells us of a particular case of obsession and possessiveness, which leads Emily, the center character of the play to kill Homer, the man she loved, as she feared he might leave her. She wanted to make sure that he would be with her always and never disposed of the body. The story begins with the funeral of Emily and the town people reveal the story of the girl who is referred to as "poor Emily". The character is a mystery to the people and this is revealed in the lines "the men through a sort of respectful affection for a fallen monument, the women mostly out of curiosity to see the inside of her house, which no one save an old man-servant--a combined gardener and cook--had seen in at least ten years." (Faulkner) The term "rose" has been used to denote the dangerous passion that Emily nurtured for Homer Barron who initially left her only to come back after his work but the girl killed him in order to gain a strange kind of security that is possible only in cases of mental disorderliness. The depth of passion, obsession and unrequited love in the central character Emily, portray her as an 'outsider' who has carried out her vengeance successfully. Miss Emily's mindset was apparently diseased by circumstances. She was previously known in the town as "a tradition, a duty, and a care; a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town" (Faulkner). Her character draws interest due to more than one factor. Firstly, she has shown strength of character by loving one man despite all odds and sticking to her love at all costs. Secondly, she has also demonstrated her enigma, which lay in the contrasting aspects of her weakness and insecurity

on one hand and her tremendous power on the other. She killed her love silently without letting anybody know and she also chased away the city's authorities who came to check on her tax records. Such actions clearly portray her tendency towards a behavior that is unique and abnormal to the society's eye. When the people from tax department came, people saw her after a long gap and she looked far different than before, with her bloated body and gray hair. This again draws an air of mystery about what had happened in the meanwhile, over the years and also raises a question about her love Homer. The body of Homer was preserved after his death and the corpse emerged from the House of Miss Emily after her death, which resulted from an illness. Different views may come forth regarding this kind of behavior on her behalf. This transformation has not happened in a day. Emily's strange behavior becomes obvious after her father's death when she did not let the municipal people to carry away the corpse of her father. Even her father's treatment towards her could be partially responsible for her transformation. In the words of Yehoshua and Cummings, her denial to pay the taxes could be " a revenge on her father for his injustice toward her" (Yehoshua and Cummings, 93) It has stained her life and changed it for worse. It was some kind of a revenge she had taken out on Homer because of his sex and also out of her insecurity and fear of losing him. It may also be the case that Emily decided to control Homer in this fashion since she understood that she could not control him otherwise. The fact that she had preserved the body of her love for so many years after killing him often raises a question about her as a patient of necrophilia (obsession with corpses) due to which she could not accept deaths. Well, while the blind facts might say so, a deeper analysis will show that the actual reason was far

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different from the problem of suffering from necrophilia. While Miss Emily was a character who has managed to hold everyone's enigma, she is also someone who would draw the reader's sympathy in the end. In some way or the other the townspeople who remained a silent spectator to her life never tried to inquire or be friendly with her. Also, she could not be engaged with a man from the town since, " it would mean breaking the important distance between herself and the society in which she lives" (Yehoshua and Cummings, 95). Miss Emily perhaps justifies her actions of vengeance on Homer who was by nature similar to her father and did not consider her emotions important, on these grounds. This also explains her death from a heart disease by the end of the story. They rather had immense expectations from a woman of her status and therefore spent time telling stories about her life. References Faulkner, William, ' A Rose For Emily", 1970, April 30 2011 from: http://www.ariyam.com/docs/lit/wf_rose.html Yehoshua, Abraham. B. & Ora Cummings, The terrible power of a minor guilt, Syracuse University Press, 2000.