

# Foreshadowing in "a rose for emily" by william faulkner essay sample

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## **Foreshadowing in “ A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner Essay Sample**

William Faulkner is the author of the Nobel prize winning short story, “ A Rose for Emily.” The story takes place in the nineteenth century in Jefferson, Mississippi, and the theme of the underlying American story is resistance to change. It is a challenge to the readers to understand that this story portrays to be a horror, yet it leaves the readers with a vague feeling of what anyone person would feel during the loss of a loved one. In this story, William Faulkner uses instances of foreshadowing with Miss Emily’s insanity in her refusal to pay taxes or to put up her mailbox numbers, in not accepting the death of her father, and in buying the poison and toiletries for Mr. Homer

In the beginning the first instance of foreshadowing takes place ten years before Miss Emily’s death. This is whenever there is a new government that is taking place in Jefferson. The new government and the town’s mayor attempt to collect her taxes. Considering that the last mayor, Colonel Sartoris, never makes her repay after her father’s death. “ Colonel Sartoris invented an involved tale to the effect that Miss Emily’s father had loaned money to the town, which the town, as a matter of business, preferred this way of repaying (Faulkner 250”). This arrangement creates very dissatisfaction among the board members.

After their attempt, the mayor personally tries to contact her “ A week later the mayor wrote her himself, offering to call or to send his car for her, and received in reply a note on paper of an archaic shape, in a thin, flowing calligraphy in faded ink, to the effect that she no longer went out at all. The

tax notice was also enclosed, without comment (Faulkner 250"). The mayor, along with the rest of the town are irritated with her actions, they have confrontation with her at her own home. During her confrontation, she expels the men from her home. " So she vanquished them, horse and foot" is the last phrase of that section, and it is " Referring to a medieval army, indicates the dimensions of her victory over the townspeople, having nothing more than bare will power with which to repel their crude invasions (Standberg").

The next instance of insanity is Miss Emily's refusal in accepting her father's death. Once her father had passes away, the house was all that he left her. " At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being left alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized. Now she too would know the old thrill and the old despair of a penny more or less" (Faulkner 252"). The day after her father's death, the ladies of the town want to show their condolences to her and arrive to her house. " Miss Emily met them at the door, dressed as usual and with no trace of grief on her face. She told them that her father was not dead (Faulkner 252"). She was unable to accept the fact that her father was no longer alive. " The citizens of Jefferson certainly interfere by taking it upon themselves to send ministers and asking relatives to stay (Rocky Mountain 3-13"). Right before law was to be enforced, she broke down and quickly buried him. " We remembered all the young men her father had driven away, and we knew that with nothing left, she would have to cling to that which had robbed her, as people will (Faulkner 252").

Another instance of foreshadowing can be recognized whenever there are contractors that are in town and are working on the streets of Jefferson. One of the laborers, Homer Barron, suddenly grasps Miss Emily' attention. She was now holding her head up high and wanting his attention now more than ever. The town's people were just so curious, too curious to even stop themselves from being nosy and the whispering began. " Do you suppose it's really so?" they said to one another. " Of course it is. What else could . . . (Faulkner 253"). As pride grew among the town, the puzzlement of happiness for her then drifted to pity once more. As she went into town and visits the drugstore, she orders arsenic and on the box is labeled rats. As what only the townspeople saw was her buying things for a wedding and toiletries items for Mr. Barron, they assume that Homer Barron and Miss Emily Grierson were soon to be wed. Some had come to the conclusion that she would commit suicide with the poison. Once the town noticed that the streets were finished, they soon realize that they have not seen any sign of Homer Barron.

They began to question the thought of what happened to him and remained so very curious. Having pity, they assume Homer has up and left and is not to return. As six or seven years had passed by, she had cut off all communication with any of the town, except that of her servant Tobe. " As the narrator returns to his recollection of Emily's funeral at the beginning, after Tobe leaves the men rush upstairs to open it at once" (Akers, Overview"). As they get to the upstairs bedroom they see Homer Barron's just lying there. Noticing that someone had been sleeping next to him, was

an indentation of a head. " One of us lifted something from it, and leaning forward, that faint and invisible dust dry and arid in the nostrils, we saw a long strand of iron-gray hair (Faulkner 256").

It was not until the townspeople could enter Miss Emily's home that they could then understand her acceptance of denial. The extent that proves that she loved Homer so much that she was going to make sure he had never left her side. As crazy as Miss Emily is she does not rely on her mere fantasy to fulfill her need for the status of a wife and lover (Standberg.) It is difficult to understand the outcome and the personality of Miss Emily because of the fact that Faulkner uses random fragments throughout the story. The strand of hair represents the perverse things that a person will do when they truly love someone. The readers are left to think of " A Rose for Emily" as a gothic horror, or a tragic love story.