

Tragic love story in "a rose for emily"

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



The short story "A Rose for Emily" by William Faulkner tells about the story of a young woman who murders her lover and keeps him inside her house for years. Emily Grierson has lived her entire life locked up in her own house because her father had kept her there, refusing to let her live as an ordinary woman. When the chance of love and life finally comes to Emily, she desperately holds on to it even if it meant killing the person she loves. Faulkner adds crucial details to this seemingly simple tragic love story. First, the story is set in a town steeped with racial strife.

At one point, the story mentions a certain Colonel Sartoris imposing dress codes for Negroes (Faulkner 457). Second, Emily's father is described to be a tyrant—locking up his daughters and depriving them of a normal life. These two elements point to the theme of racial and gender discrimination which pushed Emily to commit murder. Faulkner disrupts the chronological sequence of the story and begins with the death of the curious old lady named Emily in order to highlight the attitude of the town towards her and the things that had happened in her life.

At the beginning, we see how she was locked by her father who overruled her life and how people around them thought this has turned Emily crazy. Perhaps there is reason to agree that Emily's traumatic situation has made her unstable, but what Faulkner asks in the story is whether she can be blamed for her instability. The townsfolk seem to ignore the fact that Emily is a victimized woman and that there is no reason for them to treat her tragedy as a spectacle. While Emily's tragic past reveals the belittling and oppression of women during that generation, the tragic affair of Emily with Homer Barron reveals the deep racism plaguing the town.

Upon learning that Emily is having an affair with a common, Black construction foreman, people started to pity her, referring to her as “ Poor Emily” because it is not proper for a white woman—one with a “ noblesse oblige”— to have an affair with a Negro (Faulkner 460). Despite the rumors about her, Emily “ carried her head high enough” and proved to everyone her dignity (Faulkner 460). However, the oppressive reality presses the relationship of Emily and Homer. Thus, Emily is left with no choice but to murder her one true love in order to keep him forever.

Her little town has left her with no option but to commit this cruel act. Faulkner ends the story with a testament of Emily’s genuine love for Homer. The strand of gray hair beside the bones of Homer proves that her love goes beyond the grave. The story’s grotesque images, specifically at the end, render the story to be a creepy, disturbing tale at first. However, Faulkner includes in it details grounded in his immediate reality, creating a rich layer of meaning in one simple, tragic love story.