

Homer barron's  
remains that lay on  
the bed



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

It was Homer Barron's remains that lay on the bed in one of the rooms of the old Grierson house, found there forty years after his disappearance. The circumstances and events cited by the author of the short story "A Rose for Emily" point out to this inevitable conclusion.

Only a person with an abnormal state of mind would suffer a dead man to lie unburied for years, mouldering right inside a room in her house. When some of the neighbours complained of the foul smell, Miss Emily acted as if nothing was wrong: the men who had surreptitiously entered her lawn to spread lime over the ground saw her sitting inside one of the rooms. Unknown to them at that time, she was perhaps keeping vigil or visiting her lover's corpse.

That she would lie down with him night after night - evidenced by the "long strand of iron-gray hair" found in the indentation in the pillow beside him - bespeaks of her utter loss of sanity, which was not so visible at first. That Miss Emily suffered from emotional instability - a streak of madness in her - becomes apparent as the story unfolds.

Cloistered in the ancient Grierson mansion, Miss Emily is seen as someone above the average citizen: her supposed lineage kept people at bay. She ignored tax notices sent after her father died; either she did not comprehend, or she had naively believed the old tale that the townspeople were indebted to her family. She is impervious and cold, seemingly devoid of any emotion, as if lost in a world only she knows about.

We find the first strong evidence of her unnatural state of mind when her father dies: she refuses for three days to have him buried, telling the mourners he was not dead. "We did not say she was crazy then," narrates the author. The people saw her grief as evidence of a despairing

helplessness, feeling herself so alone, still unmarried, her father having driven away those young men who had earlier proposed to her.

We are told that Miss Emily “ had some kin in Alabama; but years ago her father had fallen out with them over the estate of old lady Wyatt, the crazy woman . . . ” Here is yet another hint that madness ran in the family.

When she and Homer Barron are seen together, causing a scandal among the townsfolk, the Baptist minister is sent to talk to her. The minister does not say what transpired during their interview but he refuses to go back (and talk to her) again.

Perhaps the minister was taken aback by Miss Emily's haughty demeanor as that she displayed when she vanquished the town officials who had demanded from her payment of taxes. Or maybe the minister saw something frightful in Emily's eyes that he refused to talk to her again.