



# A ROSE FOR EMILY

*William Faulkner*

RETOLD BY SARA SIMPSON

I.  
When Miss Emily Grierson died, our whole town went to her funeral. The men went because they respected her and the time in history during which she lived. The women went because they were nosy and wanted to see the inside of her house; nobody except her old Negro manservant had been inside for at least ten years.

Miss Emily Grierson's house was big and square. The paint used to be white, but now it was old and gray. There were tall towers, large balconies--the type of fancy house design that had been popular in the 1870s. When the house was built, the street was one of the most expensive in town. But new technology and time came along, and all the people and things that used to be beautiful just looked old. People thought Miss Emily's house was ugly and embarrassing. Miss Emily was the last part of that time left in town, and now she was dead.

When she was alive, Miss Emily was a tradition and a responsibility for everyone in town. Back in 1894, Colonel Sartoris, the mayor, allowed Miss Emily to stop paying her taxes. He didn't want her to feel embarrassed about taking charity, so he made up a story about her father (who had died) loaning money to the county. Since the town owed *her* money, she didn't need to pay taxes. **Only a man** as old-fashioned as Colonel Sartoris **would have made up this lie, and only a woman could have believed it.** Back in those days, men thought that women were too delicate to deal with stressful things; they should leave that up to the men.

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*Describe Miss Emily's house. What does the house tell you about Miss Emily's character?*

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*What is the narrator saying about women's intelligence in the last line of this paragraph?*

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Emily's house. They could see her at the window. The men crept away quietly. After a week or two, the smell went away.

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That was when the people in town started to feel sorry for Miss Emily. Miss Emily was getting old and still wasn't married. People thought she might be like her crazy great-aunt, Miss Wyatt. When Miss Emily was thirty years old and still wasn't married, people in town felt smug. They felt like it served her right for being a snob.

*Why do the people in town feel sorry for Miss Emily?  
How is she different than how a woman would be viewed today?*

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When her father died, everyone in town heard the rumor that the house was the only thing she had worth any money. Her father had died without leaving her any money. People felt sorry for Miss Emily. Now that she was poor and all alone, they could see her as a person and stop hating her for being better than them.

*What was the main reason why the people in town hated Miss Emily for so many years?*

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The day after her father died, the ladies in town went to the house to check on Miss Emily. This is something we do when someone has a death in the family. Miss Emily opened the door. She was dressed in her usual clothing instead of all black like most people do when someone dies. She didn't look sad at all. She told them her father *wasn't* dead. She did that for three days. People kept coming to the house to get her to let them take her father's body away to be buried. They were about to force her to do it when she broke down crying. They had a very quick funeral.

*Explain Miss Emily's strange behavior right after her father died.*

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We did not say she was crazy when it happened. We knew grief could make a person do strange things. We knew her father had driven away any man who wanted to marry her, leaving her with only him for company. It made sense to us that she would have a hard time accepting his death.

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