

Collected Stories of William Faulkner Study Guide

**Collected Stories of William Faulkner by William
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The Country Stories

The Country Stories Summary

The story "Barn Burning" opens with Abner Snopes's trial for burning a neighbor's barn. Snopes and his family are told to leave the area and not return. The family reports to the home of de Spain where Abner will work as a sharecropper. Abner purposefully ruins a carpet in the de Spain's home. Abner is ordered to pay twenty bushels of corn to replace the expensive rug. Abner retaliates by burning de Spain's barn. His son, Sarty, realizes what is about to happen and warns de Spain about the coming tragedy. Sarty is not quick enough to avert the tragedy. As Sarty watches the barn burn, he hears gunshots and believes his father has been killed. He walks into the woods away from his family and does not look back.

In "Shingles for the Lord" Res Grier is up before dawn to borrow his neighbor's froe and maul to cut shingles for the church's new roof. Because his neighbor is out foxhunting, Grier is two hours late arriving at the church to begin work. The other two workers have waited for Grier to begin labor, and complain about the lost time. Grier finally strikes a bargain with the two men. He'll give them his interest in a sought-after hound dog if they will finish the work the next day without him. They must, however, get a bill of sale from Tull, the man who owns the other half of the dog. They agree.

That evening after work is finished for the day and everyone has gone home Grier and his son go back to the church. Grier has promised Tull he would work Tull's day in exchange for full rights to the dog. Not only will the men not be able to get a bill of sale for the dog, Grier also plans to complete the work during the night so he will be owing to no one. Grier and his son climb to the roof where they begin stripping off shingles. As they work, a lantern they have hung from the rafters falls into the church building and catches the building on fire.

Grier runs for a water barrel to put out the blaze but trips on the steps and knocks himself out. By this time, the fire has caught the attention of several villagers including the preacher. They stand and watch their church burn, unable to do anything. The preacher calls Grier an arsonist. Despite this rough treatment, Grier vows that he will help rebuild the church despite public opinion of him and his actions.

In the story "The Tall Men" Mr. Pearson, an investigator with the draft board in Jackson, rides with the area marshal to a home where two boys who are not registered with selective service live. Pearson has a warrant to arrest these two boys. The marshal tells Pearson the doctor has been called because of some sort of sickness and that the marshal must see what is wrong. As Pearson follows the marshal he thinks about the low life people, whom he believes lives in this house. The marshal and investigator enter the sick room to find it full of relatives. Although they are not big people, there is a sense of largeness about them. One man lies on the bed with a mangled leg. He is the father of the two boys who are to be arrested. He calls the boys to him and tells them



now is the time to go and register. Although the investigator tries to intervene and say this can't be done, the marshal basically tells him to hush.

The father's leg has been badly damaged and must be amputated. He talks about how he was wounded in the war and the length of time he suffered before he could get medical attention. The father has been drinking whiskey to numb the pain and says the alcohol is all that he needs in the way of anesthesia. As the surgery is being completed, the marshal talks to the investigator about the eccentricities of these people. They refused to sign up for government cotton programs and were unable to sell their cotton for two years straight. After that, they began raising cattle. Although the government tried to measure their pastureland with the promise of paying them for the work they were doing, they refused this assistance also. The boys' father and his father before him had both served in wars. The marshal also points out that when the boys' father told them to go and register, they did not argue, they simply followed his command. After the surgery is complete, the marshal and investigator bury the amputated leg in the family's cemetery. The marshal stresses the family's sense of loyalty and pride to the investigator. When the marshal is finished digging the grave and burying the leg, he comments they are now ready to go back to town.

Ratliff begins his narration of the story "A Bear Hunt" by giving some background information about characters and places. First, Lucius Provine, one of the story's major characters, was mean spirited as a youth. In one instance, he was part of a group of young men who held a group of black men at gunpoint and burned the collars off the men's shirts. Second, there is an Indian burial ground located in the area which most people, especially children, believe is haunted.

While accompanying a group of men on a bear hunt Provine develops a bad case of the hiccups, which he cannot get to go away. Not only does Provine's hiccupping disturb the hunting men, they are also unable to sleep at night. Provine claims he has done all he can to cure his hiccups with no avail. Ratliff suggests Provine go visit the Indians to see if they know of any cures. His intention is to get Provine out of camp for a while and give the men's ears a rest. When Provine returns from his visit to the Indians, however, the first thing he does is to beat Ratliff.

It turns out the one of the colored men working in the camp had snuck off to the Indian camp before Provine. He encourages the Indians to rough Provine up a bit and pretend like they are going to burn him in an Indian ritual. Provine escapes, which was the plan to start with, and goes back to camp where he takes out his fear and anger on Ratliff. Once Provine is calmed down, Ratliff discovers that the colored man is the one who set up the Indian "attack." This man was one of the colored men who Provine had held at gunpoint and burned the collar off his shirt nearly twenty years before. This prank was the colored man's way of getting his revenge on Provine.

In "Two Soldiers" Pete Grier and his eight-year-old brother learn about the war by listening to their neighbor's radio broadcasts. Pete decides to enlist in the army. Despite his parents' discouragement, Pete feels strongly about the war effort. He travels to Memphis to enlist. His younger brother also wants to join the Army along with his



brother. Although Pete tells him he is too young to enlist, the boy believes he can cut wood and carry water for the troops. After Pete leaves the family home to enlist his brother follows him to Memphis. His fierce love for his brother causes him to attack one bus depot worker and an Army lieutenant with a knife. Army personal locate Pete and he persuades his brother to go back home.

The story "Shall Not Perish" is a sequel to the story "Two Soldiers." The Grier family learns by post Pete has been killed in combat. Because they are in the height of planting season the family is able to allow themselves only one day to grieve. One day, another young man from their community is killed in battle. This man is the son of the richest man in their area. To honor him the entire family bathes, dresses in their Sunday best and travels by bus to visit the grieving father. The family is admitted into the fine house by the uppity servant who does not even show them to the room where the father is. They find their way and the mother tries in her simple way to comfort the grieving father. Her simplicity touches the rich man and he offers the family a ride home in his car. The young boy who narrates the story muses on the way the grief of the war has brought the country together.

The Country Stories Analysis

"Barn Burning" deals with the strength of love versus the strength of truth. Although Sarty loves his father and believes he is a good person, he knows the things his father does are not right. Through the course of the story, Sarty grows from the boy hiding in the first court hearing to a boy who stands up to his father and attempts to warn de Spain that his barn will be burnt.

In "Shingles for the Lord", Grier attempts to outsmart a couple of men who harass him because of his lateness. Ironically, his attempt to clear himself ends with the tragic burning of the church. This destruction causes Grier to be even further ostracized than he was before. Note Faulkner's reference to the WPA. It is clear by his comment that some farmers of this area and time period were suspicious of this government work program.

"The Tall Men" depicts how badly a person can misunderstand another's motives. In the beginning, the investigator believes he will be dealing with a couple of boys who intentionally did not sign up for selective service in an attempt to keep from being drafted. Instead, he finds a family full of love, honor and pride that simply don't trust the government. Despite the investigator's initial impression the family has taken no hand outs from the government. Two generations have already fought in separate wars. This story touches on race relations in that it deals with the difference between the rich and the poor. The investigator learns that not all poor people are lacking in pride or honor. Note that in this story, as in "Shingles for the Lord" the government work programs appear to be thought badly of by this particular family. They appear not the trust the government giving away money and help for free.



In "A Bear Hunt" Provine's past comes back to haunt him. Although it has been years since Provine tormented the black men, one remembers the loss of his prized collar and holds a grudge for more than twenty years. Unfortunately, Ratliff is blamed for and receives the brunt of Provine's frustration for the scare he gets at the Indian camp. Race relations figure into this story as the Negro servant gets his revenge on the white man who belittled and humiliated him years before. Also, note the preconceived notions the characters in the story hold of the Indians. This story is written in an interesting format as the first part is told from the third person point of view and is in proper English. The remainder of the story, the part told by Ratliff, is told from the first person point of view. The story is also written in colloquial language, as the country raised Ratliff might have actually used when telling his story.

In the story "Two Soldiers" two brothers feel called to participate in the war effort. The younger brother's love for his older brother causes him to follow Pete to Memphis for a last try at joining the Army. He cries on the way home, grief over losing his brother to a war he doesn't understand. The title, "Two Soldiers" is interesting as although only one brother is able to enlist in the war, the younger is a soldier in his own right. He fights to defend his right to stay with his brother, whom he loves deeply.

"Shall Not Perish" is a sequel to Faulkner's story "Two Soldiers." The Grier family learns by post that Pete has been killed in battle. Rich man Major de Spain's son is also killed in combat. Faulkner plays on the contrast between the grieving process of the poor and the rich. There is a moving scene where the poor mother stands in Major de Spain's glamorous house and tells him the only thing he can do is to weep the loss of his son. This grief unites the entire country.



The Village stories

The Village stories Summary

In "A Rose for Emily" Miss Emily Grierson, a legend in Jefferson dies and the entire town attends her funeral. Emily has been an obligation to the town since her father died. At his death, Emily's father leaves to Emily only the house. At this point townspeople begin to feel sorry for Emily. She denies for several days that her father is dead. Emily is sick for a long time after her father's death. When she reappears, she is seen courting a northern man by the name of Homer Barron. People around town pity the woman even more now that she has stooped to the low level of dating a northerner. Emily shocks the local druggist one day by asking for arsenic.

When Emily dies at the age of seventy-four, she is still single and her hair has turned iron gray. The women who come to prepare for the funeral are let in the front door by Emily's servant who walks out the back door and is never seen again. After the funeral, the people of the town gather in Emily's house to break down the door of a locked room no one has been inside for nearly forty years. This room has been outfitted as a bridal room. The remains of Homer lie in the bed. An indentation in the second pillow, as well as a gray hair found on this pillow, show that Emily had been sleeping with this corpse of her lover.

In "Hair" Hawkshaw, a new barber in town, is able to convince a shy, scared little orphan girl to have her first haircut. Other barbers at the shop and townsfolk notice Hawkshaw seems to show an unusual interest in this little girl. He watches out for her and gives her Christmas presents each year. In the meantime, Hawkshaw disappears for two weeks each April on a mysterious trip. Locals discover he is tending to the home in which his former fiancée lived. This girl, who had the same unusual color hair as Susan, died from a fever the year the two were to get married. Hawkshaw pays the mortgage on the house in which she lived with her parents. When Hawkshaw pays off the mortgage, he marries Susan and takes her to live with him in the house.

Flem Snopes, the main character of the story "Centaur in Brass," is known for his not always honest business deals. One day he questions Tom-Tom, a Negro working in the power plant about the brass whistle on the boiler. The brass safety valves then disappear from the plant. Snopes is also seen hunting through scrap metal for spare brass to steal. One day he confronts Tom-Tom about Turl, the man who works the night shift. Snopes tries to get the two men at odds with each other so they will cover up his misdoings. In the end of the story this misfires on him as the two black men reconcile to each other then dispose of Snopes' stolen brass in the power plant's water tank.

In "Dry September", a rumor spreads about town that Miss Minnie Cooper has been attacked by a black man. Although there is no hard evidence to convict him, a group of locals decides to take matters into their own hands, and kidnap and kill a man named Will Mayes. On the first day Minnie attempts to go out into public after the incident, she



is aware of people staring at her. She breaks down into a fit of hysteria and must be carried home. The story ends with McLendon, the leader of the mob who attacked Will, arriving home where he abuses his wife for staying up too late.

In "Death Drag", a trio of fraudulent airmen arrives in town to put on an air show for the people. One of the men is acquainted with Captain Warren, a pilot from the Royal Flying Corps, who lives in town. As the other two men prepare for their show, Captain Warren spends some time with his old friend. Warren relates the story later at the barbershop. The plane and its occupants had no licenses at all. They flew from town to town trying to make money by performing a potentially deadly stunt. The man who performed the stunt jump wants more money than small towns are willing to pay to see the stunt. It has caused this first man, the pilot, to develop a nervous condition that has made his hair turn prematurely white and causes his digestive distress. During this particular stunt, the man refuses to jump until he has been told how much money he has made. When the other men refuse to tell him how much they have made, he refuses to jump, but falls instead. Luckily, he lands on a barn with a rotting roof and is not hurt. In his fear, the man would be hurt; the pilot lands the plane and beats the stunt man. Warren commands his friend to stop the beating and then asks him to stay with him rather than continue his stressful life. The pilot instead remains with his trio of stunt people.

Elly is a young woman who finds herself involved with a variety of men despite the harsh, cold, disapproval she receives from her grandmother. Elly falls in love with Paul de Montigny, a man rumored to be biracial. The grandmother, raised in the Deep South, recognizes the family name and the stigma associated with the name. She openly objects to Elly's relationship with this man. Her objection causes Elly to pursue the boy even more fervently even though he tells her plainly from the beginning he will not marry her. Elly plans a scheme to kill her grandmother and herself. As they are driving along a road which borders a high precipice, Elly asks Paul one more time if he will marry her. He says no and she grabs the wheel so the car crashes down the embankment. Despite her plans, however, it is Paul and the grandmother who are killed while Elly is left alive.

In "Uncle Willy", a group of Christians try to intervene in the life of a drug addicted townsperson known by others as Uncle Willy. Their help leaves him in worse condition than he started. He begins drinking and marries a whore he meets in Memphis. The Christians then have Uncle Willy committed but he escapes his asylum to live out his life on his own terms. He dies trying to fly an airplane away from those who want to send him back to the asylum.

A group of mules running loose in Mannie Hait's yard sets into action a series of tragic events in the story "Mule in the Yard." As Mannie goes outside to chase the mules away, she takes with her a pan of live ashes, which she sets outside the cellar door. Snopes, owner of the mules, opens the cellar door to get rope and the ashes are accidentally knocked into the cellar, setting the house on fire. Mannie uses these circumstances to get revenge on Snopes. Apparently Mannie's husband was working for Snopes when he was killed leading a group of mules across a train track. Mannie is never paid the money her husband would have earned from this fraudulent "accident" with the mules.



She gets her revenge by taking Snopes' best mule and shooting it. She gives Snopes a ten-dollar bill as change.

In the story "That Will Be Fine" Georgie, the young boy who narrates the story, tells of his family's Christmas preparations and excitement of the holiday. He assumes his mother and Aunt Louisa are crying because they are unable to get a gift for his grandfather. Georgie hears the adults talking about Uncle Rodney and remembers the times he "worked" with Uncle Rodney. He looks forward to working with Uncle Rodney again. The family arrives at the grandfather's house and finds Uncle Rodney is not there but is hiding in the cook's house. Georgie watches as his father secures the cook's house from the outside. Georgie then talks to Uncle Rodney who persuades the boy to set him free. They go out again to do business. This time Georgie hears noises he believes are firecrackers coming from behind the house where Uncle Rodney is located. The adults try to hide Rodney's murder from Georgie. He believes the excitement he sees around him is only caused by a present for his grandfather.

In "That Evening Sun", Quentin recalls an event concerning a Negro washer woman that occurred fifteen years prior. Nancy's husband has been ordered to stay away from the white people's house, even when his wife comes to cook for them. Nancy is arrested and two terrible secrets are given away. First, at least one white man in the town, a deacon in the Baptist Church, has been sleeping with Nancy. While in jail, Nancy unsuccessfully tries to hang herself twice. The second time jailers notice her expanded abdomen. Nancy soon reveals she fears the child she is carrying is the child of a white man. Her husband runs away and the townspeople believe he is gone for good. Nancy, however, fears that he is going to come back to kill her. Her fear increases through the end of the story where she convinces the white children to spend the evening with her. Their father comes to get them and she leaves her sitting alone in the house with the door open.

The Village stories Analysis

The chilling story of "A Rose for Emily" alludes to Gothic novels with its setting of the decaying mansion, the death or murder of Emily's lover and the questionable state of Emily's mental status. One of the aspects of this story that is most interesting is Faulkner's experimentation with the time frame of the events of the action. Instead of telling the story on a strict past to present continuum, he bounces back and forth between the past and the present, leaving the reader in suspense about how the story will actually end.

Hair, or more specifically hair color, is the unifying idea of the story "Hair." Both Hawkshaw's former fiancée and his new wife share the same color hair. This distinct hair color is the aspect that drew Hawkshaw to Susan when she was just a little girl. Although Susan becomes bad, dressing provocatively and quitting school, Hawkshaw continues to carry out his plan for her to become his wife. Note also that Hawkshaw is steadfast in his plan to pay for his former fiancée's home before he marries Susan. It is



almost as if he is symbolically paying off a debt to the former fiancée before he feels free to marry another.

Central to the plot of "Centaur in Brass" is Snopes plan to put his two firers at the power plant at odds with each other. However, his plan backfires and the two firers join forces in duping Snopes. Note Faulkner begins this story by telling how the events will end, then rewinding to explain how the action plays out.

Race relations are a big factor in "Dry September." It seems obvious that it is more important to McLendon that it was a black man who attacked a white woman, than that a woman was attacked. This is shown by the way he treats his wife on his arrival home. The story also shows how quickly tempers can get short on the extremely hot, dry days of a long summer.

Ginsfarb, the stunt man in "Death Drag," is afflicted by a great case of greed. The pilot, on the other hand, is affected by Ginsfarb's greediness. The pilot realizes what a precarious position Ginsfarb puts himself into each time he performs the stunt. He has already seen the man get badly hurt once before. This stress has caused the pilot to suffer with a nervous condition that affects his eating. Ginsfarb, however, appears to be concerned only with the money he is, or isn't, making. He refuses to jump and risks injuring himself because of his greed.

"Elly" symbolizes the struggle of the young against the old. Elly feels trapped by her grandmother's old-fashioned values and ideals. The pressure is so strong Elly feels she has no choice but to kill herself and take the chance on injuring her sweetheart. Ironically, it is Elly that is left alive, injured and unassisted, at the end of the story. As is common in Faulkner's stories race is a major issue. Elly's suitor is rumored to be biracial and the grandmother cannot stand the idea of her granddaughter seeing a man with black blood in his veins.

"Uncle Willy" illustrates the problems that come along with meddling in other people's lives as well as the value of friendship. Uncle Willy was hurting no one but himself with his chosen lifestyle. He was a friend to the children and an accepted part of society. It is when efforts are begun to redeem Uncle Willy that he becomes a problem. Ultimately, the young narrator of the story is honored for the opportunity to know Willy and to help him escape from those who want to send him back to the asylum.

Revenge is the main theme of "Mule in the Yard." Snopes feels he has been shorted because he did not get any of Hait's insurance money. Mannie feels she is shorted because she did not get her husband's fair share of what he should have collected from the mules. When Snopes' actions of letting his mules run loose and leaving the cellar door open contribute to her house being burned, Mannie decides to get even. She shoots Snopes' best mule to get repayment. One of the aspects that Faulkner is best at is treating these tragic stories and circumstances with a flair of humor. This touch makes Faulkner's stories so readable and enjoyable.



"That Will be Fine" is narrated by a young boy so caught up in the excitement of Christmas that he doesn't realize the tragedy that is unfolding around him. Faulkner writes brilliantly, giving a child's perspective yet at the same time sharing enough information about what has really transpired so that the story is completely understood.

Death is a theme in "That Evening Sun." Nancy, a black washerwoman and cook, is afraid she is pregnant by a white man. She has a debilitating fear that her husband will kill her. Although the end of the story does not show Nancy dying or being murdered, it is indicated by Quentin's innocent question to his father about who will wash their clothes now that the characters of the story are sure that Nancy will be killed. The title of the story also indicates the death of Nancy. The end of the day, hence the evening sun, is often associated with the end of a person's life.



The Wilderness stories

The Wilderness stories Summary

In "Red Leaves", two Indians search the slave quarters of their plantation looking for the man who was the servant of the now deceased Indian chief Issetibbeha. As expected, the servant has run and hidden from the Indians in an attempt to keep from being buried with his chief. The ritualistic burial must be postponed until the Negro can be located. Finally, the slave is bitten by a cottonmouth snake and is located by his pursuers.

In "A Justice" Sam Fathers, a half Indian and half Negro, tells the story of his origin to a twelve-year-old boy. Fathers' father grew up with Doom. Doom is disliked by those in his tribe and not missed when he goes to live in New Orleans. After seven years, he returns with a group of black people, one of whom is a woman. Fathers' father, referred to in the story as Pappy, asks to be given the black woman, a request that Doom indicates he would grant if her were chief. Doom then shows them a New Orleans salt that kills a puppy. Later the current Indian chief and his successors mysteriously die, a situation that leaves Doom in charge. Doom continues to torment Pappy with the black woman, not letting him have her. Pappy later finds that the woman is married to a black man. Doom arranges cockfights between the two men. Pappy's cock mysteriously dies. Doom then arranges a fence building challenge. It is around this time the black woman gives birth to a yellow colored child. The black man asks Doom for justice but Doom states justice won't make the baby black. Doom instead names the baby, which is Sam Fathers, Had-Two-Fathers, insinuating that it was Pappy and not the man by whom the baby will be raised that is the baby's true father.

In "A Courtship" Indian Ikkemotubbe and white steamboat pilot David Hogganbeck both fall in love with the beautiful but lazy sister of Herman Basket. They engage each other in a variety of competitions to determine which one should marry the girl. While the two are away on their final competition in which Hogganbeck nearly loses his life when a cave collapses on him, the girl is married to another Indian, Log-in-the-Creek. While Ikkemotubbe and Hogganbeck were competing with each other for rights to the girl, the girl had been making her own plans.

The story "Lo!" opens with the President of the United States using a mirror to spy on two Indians crouched outside his quarters. He sneaks out to the Secretary's quarter's to discuss the situation they face. Indians have converged on the Capitol wishing the government to conduct a hearing for the nephew of the chief. They believe this boy is responsible for the death of a white man and want him properly punished. The President and Secretary hold a fake "trial" to humor the Indians and remove them from their city. Although this trial does rid the President of the embarrassment of the Indians, the nephew is again involved in a situation where a white man dies. The chief writes the President a letter saying they will return to the Capitol for another trial. The President commands the Indians be stopped at any cost, including killing the people.



The Wilderness stories Analysis

"Red Leaves" gives an interesting look at slavery from the Indian point of view. While they recognize the slaves as valuable because they can trade the men for horses, these slaves give the Indians trouble because the Indians do not feel slavery is the good way to do things. These slaves also complicate the burial process of the deceased Indian chiefs. Also addressed in this story is the will to live. Although the black slave is considered by his people to be a dead man at the time the Indian chief passed away, the slave still runs from his pursuers because of his will to live. He does not understand or honor the Indian burial customs. It is this lack of understanding between the two cultures that causes much of the conflict in the story.

"A Justice" contains elements of dishonesty, adultery, murder and racism. It actually combines two story lines, the story of Doom dishonestly becoming the Indian chief and the story of Pappy having a child with a black woman into one story. The title "A Justice" is almost ironic since all the characters in the story have cheated or been dishonest to each other in one way or another. For one to claim they had a right to justice against the other is almost ludicrous.

Faulkner gives "A Courtship" an ironic title since there is really no courtship at all. Ikkemotubbe and Hogganbeck are merely bent on proving themselves instead of courting the Indian maiden. Log-in-the-Creek, however, sits with her and plays his harmonica. It is also important to note the friendly nature of the competition between the two men. They decide against engaging in one competition simply because they are not out to kill one another. In their final competition, the two actually help each other survive and come back from what could have been a deadly experience alive.

"Lo!" paints a distinct difference between the life of the Indian and that of the white man. The President is embarrassed by the dress and manners of the Indians. He is also irritated by the number of complaints coming in to his office about the Indians causing problems with livestock and slaves. The Indians, on the other hand, are baffled by the traditions of the white man.



The Wasteland Stories

The Wasteland Stories Summary

"Ad Astra" records the discussion and interactions between four soldiers of Caucasian descent and one of Indian descent on the day of Armistice of World War I. A more developed plot line can be found in the story "Victory." A man visits France seeming to be an English aristocrat when indeed he is only a poor former soldier, although a decorated soldier. Alec Gray receives his commendations, however, after he kills a sergeant-major who sent him to spend time in a penal battalion for not shaving. During his time in the war, Gray also distances himself from his family. After the war is over Gray takes an office job in London and saves his money to make a return trip to France. When he returns from his trip, however, he finds he has lost his job. He is finally reduced to bathing in the river and ironing his clothes using rocks. A former friend from the service runs into Gray one day on the street and is sickened by the person that Gray has become.

In "Crevasse", a group of soldiers separated from their comrades seek to get past the enemy barrage and rejoin their group. As they travel, they fall into a sinkhole or crevice in the earth where twelve of the group are lost in the ensuing avalanche. They manage to dig themselves out of the cavern in which they find themselves. The final picture in the story is of the fourteen survivors kneeling in prayer and reading from the Bible as a wounded man babbles meaninglessly in the background.

In "Turnabout", a cocky American Captain named Borgard, finds a young drunken member of the English Army drunk in the streets and takes the boy back to the American base. Once the boy is sober, he is taken with Borgard on a bombing mission during which the young man is impressed by the American's flying ability. In exchange, the young soldier takes Borgard along on one of the English torpedo boats during a mission. After his experience on the torpedo boat, Borgard has a new sense of respect for the young English military man.

Faulkner writes "All the Dead Pilots" to detail a battle of more personal nature against the backdrop of World War I. Spoomer betrays Satoris by stealing his girl. At first Satoris merely irritates Spoomer by setting free a dog that has a habit of following Spoomer when he goes off base. When Satoris learns what is going on between his girl and Spoomer he takes revenge on them by traveling to the home where they are meeting, stealing Spoomer's clothes, then returning to his home base. On his return Satoris crashes a plane as he tries to hit the innocent dog. Because of his revenge mission Satoris is punished by being sent to a Camel squadron where he must fly planes at night. He is killed in active duty while serving in this squadron.



The Wasteland Stories Analysis

Although tagged as a war story this tale is more about race relations than war. The Indian soldier is portrayed by Faulkner as exceeding the other soldiers in knowledge and ability however, he is belittled and not allowed to serve to his full potential because of his color. In "Victory" Faulkner makes a statement more specifically about war in this story. He comments not only to the effects war has on a country but also to the effects wars can have on the people who fight in them. Gray built his whole existence on becoming a respected member of the military even though he had to kill an officer to do so. In the end of the story, this military respect and prestige does him no good, as he becomes an empty, wasted shell of a person.

The story "Crevasse" makes a comment on the complete destruction brought about by war. Even though these men were not actually involved in active warfare, twelve of them still lost their lives while trying to find their way back to their assigned company. Note the men's sympathetic care of the wounded man. Even though he is at times unruly, they continue to care for him.

"Turnabout" is a fitting title for this story in which an American and an English soldier spend a day in each other's shoes. They each gain a new respect for each other through this experience. Prejudice is a major factor in this story as the American Captain views the English boy as not being a real military person. Borgard is surprised to find the boy faces danger much worse than what he faces in his day-to-day military life. In "All the Dead Pilots", Faulkner again uses his humor to make a very serious subject and serious circumstances more readable. It is easy to bring to mind the picture of the American pilot dressed in women's clothes as he rides back to the base.



The Middle Ground stories

The Middle Ground stories Summary

Wash, a man who would be considered poor white trash at the time of the Civil War, does not go to war when the master of the plantation on which he lives leaves for war. When Colonel Sutpen returns from the Civil War, he begins a relationship with Wash's granddaughter, a relationship that Wash does not end because he believes Sutpen will do right by the granddaughter. The granddaughter becomes pregnant and gives birth to a baby girl. Wash is overjoyed at the birth of his great granddaughter. Wash's joy is short lived when he overhears Sutpen belittle the girl then speak of a horse with greater respect. In his anger, Wash kills Sutpen. He then sits and waits for the officers to come and arrest him. When they arrive, he slits his granddaughter's throat then sets the cabin on fire. It is assumed Wash is shot and killed when he runs toward the officers with a raised scythe.

In "Honor", a war pilot relates a time when he had an affair with a married woman. The woman even goes so far as to tell her husband about the affair and ask for a divorce so she can marry her lover. This lover actually works with the husband as a wing walker. The husband approves the divorce and is willing to let her remarry. The next day the husband and lover are scheduled to work together. The lover is afraid the husband will seek revenge by causing him to fall from the wing of the plane. The husband not only does not try to harm the lover but also actually saves his life when he puts himself into a dangerous situation. In the end of the story, the lover leaves on a train without the wife. The couple remains married and even has a child.

In the story "Dr. Martino" Hubert Jarrod meets and falls in love with Louise King at a Christmas party in St. Louis. They leave the party, and she goes to a house to meet a person whom Jarrod suspects is another lover. Jarrod meets Louise's mother who likes him. They attend the spring prom together. Mrs. King agrees with Jarrod the two ought to be married right away. He gives Louise a ring. In mid-June, Jarrod receives a letter insisting he come to them at once. He meets them at a resort in Mississippi where he learns Louise's other love is an old doctor named Dr. Martino. The owner of the resort tells Jarrod the story of when the old doctor encouraged Louise to overcome her fear of the water by swimming in a snake-infested river. Louise claims she swam because she was afraid. Dr. Martino had told her the only way to feel alive was to do things she was afraid to do. The doctor had given her a rabbit charm on a string that she could wear around her neck to prove to herself she was not afraid. Louise explains that when she feels afraid again, she will give the charm back to the doctor. The owner claims Louise's mother made her sick with worrying the next summer and they didn't come to the resort until August.

Jarrod tries to talk Louise out of riding a horse responsible for the death of one man who tried to ride it. He learns Louise has not told Dr. Martino of her plans to marry Jarrod. Jarrod tries to tell the doctor of their plans but he asks for a sign from Louise. Louise's



mother sends back the rabbit charm. She then arranges for the two of them to travel to a nearby town where they will be married. Louise cries over the loss of her charm and Jarrod realizes they have both been tricked by Mrs. King. They go through with the marriage. Later that day, Dr. Martino is found dead.

The story of Harrison Blair's foxhunt is told by a group of common men as well as Blair's chauffeur and servant. Blair has been chasing this particular fox for three years and intends to catch it by himself. His way of chasing the fox annoys the common men who believe it would be just as easy to shoot the animal. These men discuss Blair's mean nature and express pity for anything that belongs to him. Meanwhile the chauffeur and servant discuss the background of Blair and his wife. It appears the woman never wanted to be married to Blair. There is also another man vying for her attention, however, she does not like him and will not even let him in the house. The story closes with the sound of the trumpet indicating the fox has been killed. The common men ride past Blair's wife and lover, in a situation where it appears she has given into the man's desires. She is crying.

In "Pennsylvania Station", an old man tells the story of his sister's death and his troublesome nephew while hanging out at Pennsylvania Station. The sister saves diligently for her funeral, each year upgrading to a better quality casket. Her son, Danny, tricks both his mother and uncle by letting them think he is going to live in Florida with the uncle. Instead, he steals the money his mother has been putting toward her funeral and lives on his own where he gets into trouble with the law. The sister dies after learning her son took her funeral money. It is then disclosed that the uncle is now a homeless man moving from train station to train station to find a place to spend the night.

In "Artist at Home" writer Roger Howes publishes a novel then moves his family to Virginia away from New York. Occasionally aspiring writers from New York visit Howes at his home. One in particular is a poet who comes to visit. Although Howes' wife Anne is frustrated with this new, unannounced guest as she is with all the guests, she appears to feel pity and eventually affection for this poet. As Howes watches this affair develop between his wife and the poet, he uses the drama as material for his new novel. The poet leaves and mails Anne a menu card with a poem written on it. Howes has this poem published but the poet dies before he can reap the benefits. Howes sells his novel about his wife's affair and buys his wife a fur coat that she gives away to a neighbor because she feels she doesn't deserve it.

Out of spite for his old, sick mother, Howard Boyd marries Amy, a girl whom his mother does not like in the story "The Brooch." Because of his position, Boyd and his new wife live with the mother in her house, which puts all parties in an awkward position. Amy is aware her mother-in-law hates her and begs her husband to let them move but he refuses. After the death of their first child, Amy takes to going out to parties alone to escape her mother-in-law. Boyd does his best to keep his mother from finding out about the situation but one night Amy loses the brooch given to her by her mother-in-law and a friend calls to tell Amy, who is not at home, the brooch has been found. The ringing phone wakes Boyd's mother who realizes what is going on and demands Amy leave her



house. Amy does so. After she leaves, Boyd locks himself in an upstairs bathroom and kills himself.

"My Grandmother Millard and General Bedford and the Battle of Harrykin Creek" opens with Grandmother Millard leading the family in timed practice drills of hiding the family's silver and other valuables from the Yankees. When the Yankees come, it is too late for them to hide their valuables as planned and they instead hide them in the outhouse. Although there is a female, Cousin Melissandre, in this outhouse with the valuables, the Yankees storm the outhouse and take the goods. One Confederate soldier, Phillip St-Just Backhouse, attempts to protect the women from the Yankees but he is unsuccessful. However, he does see Melissandre with whom he is quite smitten. Grandmother writes Nathan Bedford Forest to send Backhouse back to them so that he can be married to Melissandre. Forest does so.

Ira Ewing wakes and has to force himself out of bed in the story "Golden Land." He ran away from home at the age of fourteen to escape his parent's strict, impoverished lives. At his father's death, he brings his mother from Nebraska to live in California. She is provided with a house and all that she needs for a comfortable life. Ewing has a successful business in real estate. He hopes to provide a better life for his children than the one he feels like he had. However, a newspaper in his room reports on a scandal involving his daughter. His son is a cross dresser and Ewing and his wife are estranged. Ewing has had a series of affairs. His mother calls him to her house where she requests money from her son, a request he will not grant. She has been saving for years without his knowledge to catch a train back to Nebraska. Her son snubs the idea telling her she will die during the first Nebraska winter. She remembers her years in California, how she became alienated from her daughter-in-law when she tried to confront the woman about one of the children stealing from their mother's purse. The mother also tries to talk to her son about the children's bad and dishonest behavior but again is not taken seriously. She feels distanced from her family but feels that since Ewing will not allow her the money for train fare, she will stay in California and live forever.

The Story "There Was a Queen" is set firmly in the Old South. An old plantation house is occupied only by old Virginia Du Pre, one of the last in the bloodline of the Sartoris family, her niece by marriage, Narcissa, and her son Bory. Virginia, also referred to as Miss Jenny, came to the plantation in the sixties when her family was killed and their home destroyed by the Yankees. Narcissa has just made a secretive journey to Memphis, which no one knows the details of but Elnora feels is not good news. She views Narcissa as trash while Miss Jenny is a person of quality. Upon her arrival, Narcissa takes her son to sit with her in the creek. Next, Narcissa reports to Miss Jenny in the library where she explains her trip. Narcissa had received several obscene letters from a secret lover before she and her husband were married. Although Miss Jenny had urged her to make the one letter, she knew that Narcissa had refused and instead kept the letter and continued to accept further correspondence. On the night of a bank robbery, these letters were stolen from Narcissa's house.

One night Narcissa had a male guest for supper. Miss Jenny had believed this man who was a Jew and a Yankee was a suitor and was deeply troubled by the visit. Instead,



Narcissa tells her the man was a federal officer trying to solve the bank robbery. The police had found Narcissa's letters and thought maybe she could help them locate the robber. Although Narcissa did not know the crook's whereabouts, she made a deal with the agent to get the letters back. Her trip to Memphis had been to have a rendezvous with this officer. After telling Miss Jenny of these goings on, Miss Jenny is found dead in her room by Elnora.

In "Mountain Victory", a Confederate soldier and his Negro servant ask permission to stay at the home of an Appalachian family. The oldest son wants to kill the men at once but his father stops him. They allow the men to stay. They believe the soldier, who is actually an Indian, is black and treat him badly. The father and son try to keep the daughter who is unmarried and seems to take an interest in the man away from him. She sees the man anyway and is struck by the compassion he shows to his servant, so much so that he has cut the lining out of his cloak for the servant to wear as shoes. The soldier's only desire is to get home. The father realizes his daughter has developed some feeling for the man and insists they leave right away. The Negro servant, however, has gotten hold of a jug of alcohol and is drunk so he cannot ride. Despite their insistence, the soldier and the Negro stay the night with plans to leave at dawn. During the night, the soldier is accosted by the youngest son who begs him to take the youngest son and daughter with them. The youngest son shows them what he believes to be a safe way home but the father and older son lie in wait and shoot the soldier and the youngest son. As they realize what has happened, they find the Negro servant still alive and shoot him.

The Middle Ground stories Analysis

Race relations between the blacks, the upper class whites and the lower class whites are a large part of the basis for the story "Wash." Wash thinks himself equal with Sutpen until he realizes the truth of how low Sutpen believes him to be. Even the black slaves in the story seem to believe they are raised in social stature about the poor whites. The effect of war on a society is also a theme that is touched on. According to Wash, this war brings out the true nature of the southern "gentleman."

The main story in "Honor" is framed with a story about the main character quitting his job as a car salesman. The story portrays a man of honor, one willing to do whatever it will take to make his wife happy, even if it means giving her to another man. This man of honor also refuses to take revenge on the person in a position to take his wife away from him even though he has opportunity to do so. The story "Dr. Martino" is interesting in its dealings with interpersonal relationships. The friendship bond between Louise and Dr. Martino is threatened by both Jarrod and Louise's mother although both for different reasons. Finally, by trickery the mother succeeds in getting her daughter married.

The story "Fox Hunt" seems to be about power and the misuse of power. Blair is powerful and mean with his power. He chooses to hunt down defenseless creatures. In the same way, the lover holds power over Blair's wife and uses this power to convince her to sleep with him. "Pennsylvania Station," on the other hand, illustrates how quickly



a fortune can disappear. In this case, it is the mother's funeral money that is embezzled by a dishonest son. As a result of the trouble the son has caused, the uncle has also, it is assumed, gone bankrupt and is now homeless. It is interesting how the uncle continues to comment on the nice wreath the son sent for his mother's funeral. This is ironic since the wreath was probably bought with the money he stole from his mother's coffin fund.

At the cost of his relationship with his wife, a husband uses her affair with a poet as material for his newest novel, "Artist at Home." In addition, the faltering poet with whom the wife has the affair finds his muse to finally write a poem that sells. The story "The Brooch" is also about interpersonal relationships. Boyd puts himself into an uncomfortable position between his wife and his mother. As a result of the choices he has made, he can make neither of them happy, so he chooses the option which he believes will keep him from having to choose between his mother and his wife.

In "My Grandmother Millard" Faulkner uses a humorous and ironic twist as Backhouse meets his love, Melissandre, as she sits on a hamper full of silver in the backhouse, or outhouse, in an attempt to hide it from the Yankees. This unfortunate last name almost derails the young people's love affair, but the grandmother and Forest step in to unite the two lovers.

Generational differences are explored in the story "Golden Land." Ewing attempts to make a better life for his children but instead produces soft, undisciplined adults. Ewing's mother, who was a disciplinarian and believes the children should have been taken in hand long ago, feels as if she is disconnected from her family. While Ewing struggles with the fear of public embarrassment over his daughter's scandal, his mother simply wants to return home to what she saw as a better life. The entire basis of the story is the struggle for a better life. Ewing attempts to provide this better life for his entire family but instead puts them in an even worse situation that his harsh upbringing did him.

The queen in the story "There Was a Queen" refers to the old Aunt Virginia in the wheelchair, the last one of the Sartoris line whom Elonora believes has quality. Note when Faulkner refers to this older lady with the personal pronoun, the pronoun is capitalized as if referring to a deity. Also note Faulkner's reference to Narcissa and her son sitting in the creek as if the girl had been to the river Jordan to cleanse her sins. "Mountain Victory" is a story of confused racism. Although the Appalachian family was apparently in support of the Union soldiers who fought to free the black slaves, they are biased toward the man whom they believe to be black. In fact, they harbor so much hate toward this man they kill him as he tries to leave their home simply because the daughter saw him and was struck by his compassion for his servant. The mountain people seem to be portrayed in a very crass sort of way.



Beyond stories

Beyond stories Summary

In "Beyond" Faulkner documents the experiences of a man who dies and goes to heaven before returning to earth in time for his own funeral. At first, the Judge does not seem to understand what has happened to him but as he talks with the people he meets, he eventually learns that he is truly dead and is experiencing the afterlife. Though people tell the Judge to stay and wait to see his son, who died before his father, the Judge chooses to go back to earth where his funeral is being conducted.

In "Black Music" Wilfred Midgleston flees to Rincon from the United States after he is tricked into taking part in an attack on a woman in the process of destroying a vineyard. Midgleston disappears and is believed to have been killed by the man that attacked the woman. After his "death", he lives simply in Rincon. In the next story, "The Leg, Davy begins his tale with a recollection of a boating episode that George, Corinthia, Simon and he shared as young people. His attention then turns to the war where he has been wounded, a leg apparently shot off. Davy begs George to go back to the battlegrounds and find the leg, to be sure that it is dead. Davy begins to have dreams that George leaves him, something to do with a girl in a boat. Davy then writes that Corinthia's brother is on trial for trying to kill Davy. The only thing that saved Davy's life was the wooden leg that the man tripped over during his attack. Davy discovers this murder attempt was spurred on by a picture of himself sent to Corinthia signed with an inappropriate phrase. He associates the death of the Corinthia with his request given to George to find and kill his missing leg.

In the tale "Mistral", two Americans visit a town during a funeral. The man being buried is the fiancé of the adopted daughter of the parish priest. According to town rumor, the girl has been dating a man other than her fiancé in secret. Although never plainly said, it is suspected the fiancé was killed by either the priest or the priest's daughter. "Divorce in Naples" is the story of George and Carl, a pair of homosexual lovers. Carl has a brief affair with an Italian woman, a situation that strains their relationship just as it would a heterosexual relationship. Despite the beliefs of the men who work on the same ship with the lovers, the two are reconciled to each other in the end. In "Carcassonne," the final story, the skeleton, or body, and spirit of a dead person confer with each other about the reality of death. While the skeleton believes death is stillness, the spirit continues to move. It is described as riding a galloping buckskin horse toward a destination that is never reached.

Beyond stories Analysis

One of the most interesting aspects of "Beyond," an overall odd story is the baby. While in heaven, the Judge encounters a baby with scars on its feet and hands. Obviously, this baby represents Jesus, the Christian savior. The explanation the mother gives for



the baby's scars is also interesting and mirrors the events of Jesus' crucifixion as told in the Christian Bible. The mother explains other children wounded the baby during play. She attests they didn't know what they were doing, a statement that echoes Jesus' last words from the cross.

The story "Black Music" features a twist of fortune in which a man is forced to participate in an attack on a woman separates him from his life and reality. It is interesting how Faulkner describes the Grecian project in terms that it seems unnecessary and frivolous. "The Leg," the next story in this collection is undeniably Faulkner with the reader left to infer much of the action of the plot on his or her own. It is assumed that George is the man who was visiting Corinthia in secret, based on the dreams that Davy had about himself, a girl and a boat. Faulkner may use the missing leg as a phallic or sexual symbol. George, who is known to be a lover of literature, may have taken George's request to kill his leg symbolically instead of literally. Instead of the leg, George sought out and killed Corinthia, the object of Davy's affection.

Like in "The Leg," "The Mistral" also leaves much of the story to the reader's imagination. One can deduce from the cold, windy atmosphere and the attitudes of the characters that something tragic and mysterious has happened. However, it is never clearly written what exactly happened, if the fiancé was indeed murdered and if the priest or the daughter committed the crime. In "Divorce in Naples", Faulkner gives a twist to the traditional jilted love story by making the couple homosexual. It is interesting how the break and then the make up between the two lovers occurs much as it would in a heterosexual couple. Note that Faulkner chooses for Carl to have an affair with a female instead of another male. This story is deeply allegorical and the images it presents represent aspects of the body and soul. For instance, the skeleton in its tarpaper covered bed is the body in a casket while the figure on the galloping horse is the soul, the part of the body that never dies. Faulkner, however, indicates this soul never reaches a destination where it can find rest, it continues to gallop along, never reaching its home.



Characters

Colonel Sartoris Snopes appears in Barn Burning

This boy, often called Sarty, is the main character from the story "Barn Burning." This young boy is caught between his fidelity for his father and his knowledge of the truth. Sarty has traveled with his family from home to home after they have been forced to leave because of his father's anger and need for vengeance. After he witnesses his father's actions at de Spain's home, Sarty realizes what is happening. He turns against his father and informs de Spain his barn will be burned. Sarty hears shots and believes his father has been shot. Sarty leaves his family that night and does not look back.

Res Grier appears in Shingles for the Lord

Grier is the main character from the story "Shingles for the Lord." Grier is portrayed as a poor farmer who cannot even afford to own his own tools. He is forced to borrow them from neighbors. It appears the most valuable thing Grier owns is a hound dog, and he only has half interest in the dog. In his attempt to get the better of the two men who are working on the church with Grier, he accidentally burns the church to the ground. As a result, the preacher labels Grier as an arsonist. Grier indicates, however, he plans to help rebuild the church despite the preacher's harsh labeling.

Mr. Pearson appears in The Tall Men

Mr. Pearson is an investigator with the war draft board in Jackson. He has been sent to arrest boys Anse and Lucius for not signing up for selective service. Mr. Pearson begins with the idea that the boys are trying to avoid the draft and might even run away to avoid being arrested. After he learns the story of the boys' family and listens to the marshal talk about their family values Mr. Pearson begins to understand the boy's weren't avoiding the draft at all. Although this man is referred to by his given name once in the story, he is most often simply called the investigator.

Ratliff appears in A Bear Hunt

Ratliff is the main character from the story "A Bear Hunt." He is employed as a sewing machine salesman who apparently joins a group of men on the hunt for a bear. Ratliff's claim to fame is his suggestion to Provine that he go to an old Indian mound to cure his hiccups. A man who once had property burned by Provine overhears Ratliff's suggestion and decides to take Provine's Indian mound experience to the extent. Ratliff gets a beating for his innocent suggestion.



Major de Spain appears in Shall Not Perish

Major de Spain is a minor character in many of Faulkner's short stories. One of the ones in which he stands out in is "Shall Not Perish." It is in this story he depicts the grief of an entire country as he mourns the death of his son. He is the richest man in Jefferson. Although he is called "major" he is not actually in the Army. He makes his living as a banker. He is also a powerful politician. He carries the nickname major because his father was a major in the Confederate War.

Emily Grierson appears in A Rose for Emily

Emily Grierson is a peculiar lady who lives in an old Victorian style house in Jefferson. As she ages Emily leaves her house less and less yet she is well-known to all who live in Jefferson. One of the last times she was seen, she had become an overweight elderly lady who walked with the aid of a cane. As a young woman, she is described as being attractive but haughty like the rest of her family. There is also a history of mental illness in Emily's family. She never marries although members of town had high hopes she would marry the northern paver who courted her.

Henry Stribling/Hawkshaw appears in Hair

Hawkshaw is a man living in a dream world to fulfill a promise. On her deathbed Hawkshaw's fiancée asks him to take care of the mortgage on her parent's house, a request which he honors. It seems that once this mortgage is paid off he feels free to pursue his own desires. Since his fiancée's death he has been traveling around until he decided to stay in a little town where he has an unusual interest in a little girl with hair the same color as his fiancée's. After the mortgage is taken care of, Hawkshaw marries this girl.

Ginsfarb appears in Death Drag

Ginsfarb is the stunt jumper who plays a role in the story "Death Drag." He is described as a short man who walks with a limp and talks with unusual diction. Ginsfarb's greed causes his stunt pilot to suffer with a nervous condition. Ginsfarb refuses to smoke cigarettes because he sees the act of smoking as burning money. He also scolds the pilot when he "wastes" gas in order to save Ginsfarb's life during one jump that goes bad.

Uncle Willy appears in Uncle Willy

Once addicted to morphine this druggist is known for filling few prescriptions. He is well-known by the children in town for his odd tasting ice cream and dirty windows. A few Christians take it upon themselves to help Uncle Willy kick his morphine habit. He turns



from morphine to alcohol and marries a whore he meets in Memphis. The most outstanding aspect of Uncle Willy's life is his ability to have fun. This ability impresses the young narrator of the story who runs away with Uncle Willy in order to get to know him better. Ultimately, Uncle Willy dies when he crashes the airplane he was trying to fly.

Uncle Rodney appears in That Will Be Fine

Uncle Rodney is Georgie's uncle from the story "That Will Be Fine." The adults believe Rodney is a lazy man who bums off his father. Georgie, on the other hand, has inside information on the real business that Rodney does although he doesn't understand this business. Rodney seems generous, giving gifts he can't afford as well as money to his nephew. Instead of being a lazy bum, Rodney is actually a scam artist. In the instance recorded in this short story, Rodney takes bonds from his work place then "pays" for them with a stolen and forged check. It is assumed Rodney is killed because of his fraudulent business.

Wash appears in Wash

Wash is the Grandfather of Milly in the story "Wash." Wash is probably what would be considered poor white trash in the culture of the old south. He does not go to war with the owner of the plantation on which he lives. He instead stays behind and looks after the place. The slaves of the plantation make fun of him and at one point, the house servant will not even let him in the house because of his social standing. Wash believes Sutpen, the master of the house thinks more highly of him. He does not learn until he hears the way Sutpen refers to Wash's granddaughter how low Sutpen's opinion of Wash and his family actually is. In retaliation, Wash kills Sutpen, whom he believed would take care of the mother of his baby. He then kills his granddaughter and the baby and allows himself to be killed, knowing that his family will be viewed as the ones who killed the southern war hero and not treated well.

Virginia Du Pre appears in There Was a Queen

Also known as Aunt Jenny, Virginia Du Pre lived in Carolina during the Civil War. When Yankees attacked her hometown, she saw her home burned and her parents killed. It was at this point she left Carolina to refugee to her brother's plantation in Mississippi. As an old woman she still lives there with her great niece by marriage and a few remaining Negro servants. Aunt Jenny is portrayed as being a person of character. Her personality is contrasted with her niece who is described as trash.



Objects/Places

Yoknapatawpha County appears in Various stories

This imaginary county is the setting for several stories including "Shingles for the Lord," "A Rose for Emily" and "Shall Not Perish."

WPA appears in Shingles for the Lord

This government work program is referred to in both "Shingles for the Lord" and "The Tall Men." The WPA was created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the time of the Great Depression in order to give people jobs and a source of income.

Jefferson appears in A Rose for Emily

Jefferson is the county seat of Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha County. Several stories, including "A Rose for Emily" are set in this fictional city.

Frenchman's Bend appears in Shall Not Perish

Frenchman's Bend is the area of Yoknapatawpha County where the Grier family lives. This is a poor and largely agrarian portion of the county.

Slippers with Red Heels appears in Red Leaves

These slippers are given to Mocketubbe by his father. It is only when Mocketubbe becomes chief of his Indian tribe he is able to wear them. However, because Mocketubbe is so fat, he can wear them only short periods of time. Faulkner seems to use these slippers as a symbol of the power of the Indian chief.

The Steamboat appears in Red Leaves

This steamboat is bought by Indian Chief Doom to be his house. It is transported by the Negro slaves from a sand bar on which is wrecked to Doom's plantation.

A Scythe appears in Wash

Wash borrows this sharp instrument from Sutpen in order to clear the weeds from around his cabin. Instead, the instrument is used to kill Sutpen.



The Brooch appears in The Brooch

This brooch is an old and ugly but valuable piece of jewelry given to Amy by her new mother-in-law in the story "The Brooch." It is when this brooch is lost in the end of the story that the mother-in-law becomes aware of Amy's habit of going out and partying without her husband.

The Baby appears in Beyond

This baby with scars on its hands and feet is a character in "Beyond." The baby represents Jesus with His scars from the crucifixion.

A Buckskin Pony appears in Carcassonne

This pony is ridden by the spirit to an unknown destination

Themes

Racism and Prejudice

Racism and prejudice are two ideas that are often addressed in Faulkner's short stories. Slavery is one instance in which the idea of racism comes into play. The story "Red Leaves" gives an interesting view of slavery as it is told from the viewpoint of the Indians. Unlike the white men, the Indians find their Negro slaves troublesome. They often trade them with the white men for horses. Racism is also seen in an interesting view in the story "Mountain Victory." The Tennessean family supports the Northern forces in the Civil War. It is generally recognized that these Northern forces were fighting to set the black slaves free. When faced with a black slave and a southern man whom they believe to be black, they treat them with great hate and disrespect. These actions are highly unexpected from people in support of giving the slaves their freedom.

Prejudice is another theme Faulkner visits often in his stories. One of the more outstanding examples of this theme is found in the story "There Once Was a Queen." In this story, a black female slave points out the differences between the older Aunt Jenny and the younger Narcissa. The slave makes the point that quality is not determined by who a person is but instead by how they actually live their life. The elder Aunt Jenny is seen as a person of quality while Narcissa is viewed by the black slave as trash. The story "Wash" also gives an interesting view of prejudice and racism. In the story Wash, who is considered poor white trash by the black slaves, believes he is on the same level as the man who owns the plantation on which he lives. It is not until Wash hears how disrespectfully this man speaks to Wash's daughter that he realizes how poorly the man thinks of Wash and his family.

Character Growth

One theme that Faulkner often addresses in his short stories is the idea of the growth of a character. In these stories, one character, usually the main one, experiences an epiphany that allows them to take their life in a different direction. One prime example of the use of this theme occurs in the story "Barn Burning." The boy in this story realizes that although he loves his father, his father's actions are not proper. As a result, the boy separates himself from his family and his father's bad example. Another example of the use of this theme occurs in the story "Red Leaves." It is not until the slave in this story is bitten by the copperhead snake that he realizes he is not yet ready to die. However, it is at this same point that his death is assured. The young boy in the story "Uncle Willy" also experiences this character growth when he chooses to run away with Uncle Willy. It is during this experience that the boy learns the true value of friendship.



War

Many of Faulkner's stories address the idea of war in some form or fashion. Many stories, particularly those set in the southern United States, deal with the Civil War. These stories include "Mountain Victory" which is the one most specifically about the Civil War tells how a Rebel soldier and his black slave are killed while on their way home from war because the soldier is believed to be black. Other stories, such as "There Once Was a Queen" and "Wash" are not specifically about the Civil War but are set in Civil War times.

Included in Faulkner's collection of short stories is an entire section of stories dedicated to World War I. These stories are generally set overseas in France and often deal with topics such as the affect of war on the people and the land as well as the goings on of soldiers during war times. Perhaps the most thought provoking of these stories is the tale "Turnabout" where an English soldier and an American soldier join each other on their respective missions. These soldiers gain a new respect for each during their shared experiences.

Style

Point of View

One of the aspects of writing that Faulkner liked to experiment with was point of view. Almost all of his stories are told with a unique twist on the narrator's point of view. For instance, in "That Will Be Just Fine" the tragic story of a murder is told from the first person point of view of a child. This child interprets the action going on around him in terms of the coming Christmas celebration. Faulkner, however, is able to include enough information in the story that the reader understands what is really happening. Other stories, such as "Barn Burning," are told in the third person point of view but from the child's viewpoint. In other stories, such as "Golden Land," Faulkner actually switches points of view from one character to another during the course of the tale. For instance, the beginning of this story is told from the third person point of view from the viewpoint of the young Ira Ewing. The story ends, however, with an account of actions through the eyes of Ewing's mother. In the story "A Bear Hunt" the story is opened by a third person narrator who is not involved in the action of the story, but sets up valuable information for the story so the reader will understand what is going on. After this narrator finishes, the story is actually told from the first person point of view by a man involved in the action of the tale.

Setting

While Faulkner's stories encompass a wide variety of settings, most of them are set in the fictional county of Yoknapatawpha in the actual state of Mississippi. The city of Jefferson, which is included in several stories such as "A Rose for Emily" and "Death Drag," is the capitol of this fictional town. In addition to Yoknapatawpha County Faulkner also has stories set in actual places such as Beverley Hills, California; the Appalachian mountains of East Tennessee; Memphis, Tennessee; Washington D.C. and heaven. These stories are separated into sections, which allows the reader to easily determine where the stories take place. For example, the stories in The Wilderness section are generally set in the agricultural areas of Faulkner's fictional Yoknapatawpha County, the stories in The Village section take place in the city of Jefferson while those included in The Wasteland section generally take place in France.

Language and Meaning

Faulkner is very precise about the words he chooses when writing his short stories as well as the way in which he words his sentences and paragraphs. His goal seems to be to give the reader the exact image he wants them to have about the particular subject about which he is writing. The style in which Faulkner tells his stories also matches the subjects about which he writes. Faulkner varies his style of writing to encompass the proper grammar of a Southern gentleman to the country drawl of a hick from the



mountains of Tennessee to the speech patterns of a Negro slave. Faulkner attempts in each instance to capture the accents and peculiar speech patterns of each individual group of people.

Structure

This book is divided into forty-two short stories. Each story is about twenty-five pages in length. These stories are also subdivided into one of six different categories based on their content. For instance, the group of stories in the section entitled "The Country" all have to do with country people and things that happen in the country. "The Wilderness" stories, however, deal with Indians, mostly those living in the Deep South.

When writing his stories, Faulkner rarely uses a straightforward past to present time continuum. He often begins his stories at the end of the action, and then rewinds to fill the reader in why what happened was unusual or noteworthy. Also, Faulkner often includes multiple plots in his short stories. For instance in the story "Centaur in Bronze" Faulkner deals with an extramarital affair on the part of one character while another character is involved in another plot that involves stealing bronze from a power plant. Eventually Faulkner interweaves these two plots to the demise of the one stealing the bronze.



Quotes

"They are supper by lamplight, then, sitting on the doorstep, the boy watched the night fully accomplish, listening to the whippoorwills and the frogs, when he heard his mother's voice: "Abner! No! No! Oh, God. Oh, God. Abner!" and he rose, whirled, and saw the altered light through the door where a candle stub now burned in a bottle neck on the table and his father, still in the hat and coat, at once formal and burlesque as though dressed carefully for some shabby and ceremonial violence, emptying the reservoir of the lamp back into the five-gallon kerosene can from which it had been filled, while the mother tugged at his arm until he shifted the lamp to the other hand and flung her back, not savagely or viciously, just hard, into the wall, her hands flung out against the wall for balance, her mouth open and in her face the same quality of hopeless despair as had been in her voice." "Barn Burning," pg. 21.

"I be dog if hit don't look like sometimes that when a fellow sets out to play a joke, hit ain't another fellow he's playing that joke on; hit's a kind of big power laying still somewhere in the dark that he sets out to prank with without knowing hit, and hit all depends on whether that ere power is in the notion to take a joke or not, whether or not hit blows up right in his face like this one did mine." "A Bear Hunt," pg. 70.

"And that was all. One day there was Pearl Harbor. And the next week Pete went to Memphis, to join the army and go there and help them; and one morning Mother stood at the field fence with a little scrap of paper not even big enough to start a fire with, that didn't even need a stamp on the envelope, saying, A ship was. Now it is not. Your son was one of them. And we allowed ourselves one day to grieve, and that was all." "Shall Not Perish," pg. 102.

"I guess maybe a talking man hasn't got the time to ever learn much about anything except words." "Hair," pg. 133.

"Resting there, empty and dead, patched and shabby and painted awkwardly with a single thin coat of dead black, it gave again that illusion of ghostliness, as though it might have flown there and made that loop and landed by itself." "Death Drag," pg. 185.

"In utter idleness the majority of them led lives transported whole out of African jungles, save on the occasions when, entertaining guests, Doom coursed them with dogs." "Red Leaves," pg. 318.

"Yet I obeyed Grandfather's voice, not that I was tired of Sam Father's talking, but with the immediacy of children with which they flee temporarily something which they do not quite understand; that, and the instinctive promptness with which we all obeyed Grandfather, not from concern of impatience or reprimand, but because we all believed that he did fine things, that his waking life passed from one fine (if faintly grandiose) picture to another." "A Justice," pg. 360.



"White man's honor. You don't understand white people. They are like children: you have to handle them careful because you never know what they are going to do next." "Lo!," pg. 383.

"It seemed to him that now he saw for the first time, after five years, how it was that Yankees or any other living armies had managed to whip them: the gallant, the proud, the brave; the acknowledged and chosen best among them all to carry courage and honor and pride." "Wash," pg. 547.

"Roger Howes was a fatish, mild, nondescript man of forty, who came to New York from the Mississippi Valley somewhere as an advertisement writer and married and turned novelist and sold a book and bought a house in the Valley of Virginia and never went back to New York again, even on a visit." "The Artist at Home," pg. 627.

"And there they are: the bald husband with next week's flour and meat actually in sight, and the homewrecker that needs a haircut, in one of those light blue jackets that ladies used to wear with lace boudoir caps when they would be sick and eat in bed." "Artist at Home," pg. 637.



Topics for Discussion

Consider the significance of the titles Faulkner gives to each group of short stories. For instance, the Wasteland stories all have to do with World War I. Using the title of each group, identify how each story fits into its group and explain why the grouping title is significant.

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Explore the clashing cultures that Faulkner presents in his Wilderness stories. Take one story and compare and contrast the cultures of either the Indians and the white man, or the Indians and black people as presented in the story.

Explore the symbolism of death and heaven in the story "Beyond."

Compare and contrast the persons of Aunt Jenny and Narcissa in the story "There Was a Queen."

Choose one short story and discuss the literary motifs Faulkner uses to develop his story. These motifs can include stream of consciousness writing, mimicking of speech patterns, experimentation with time and sequence of event, humor or irony.

Faulkner often uses characters by the same name in a variety of his stories. Some of these include the Aunt Jennys in both "All the Dead Pilots" and "There Once Was a Queen" as well as Abner Snopes in both "Barn Burning" and "My Grandmother Millard." Are these the same characters in each story? Give reasons for your answers.