

# **Sanctuary Study Guide**

## **Sanctuary by William Faulkner**

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# Plot Summary

"Sanctuary" by William Faulkner is the tale of the kidnapping of a young Mississippi debutante named Temple Drake. The story follows various threads to connect the characters and to explore the culture in rural Mississippi and Tennessee during prohibition.

Chapter 1 begins with Popeye meeting Benbow at a stream somewhere in rural Mississippi. It is May. Popeye stands on one side of the stream staring at Benbow, who at this point is a stranger. The men spend the next two hours staring at each other with little conversation. Eventually the men approach Old Frenchman Place, a plantation. There are three men on the porch, along with a dog. The group eyes Benbow suspiciously. Popeye introduces Benbow as "Professor." It is clear from the beginning that Lee Goodwin, owner of the plantation, is a no-nonsense bootlegger.

Benbow meets Ruby Lamar, a twenty-something woman who serves as the cook. Ruby is considered to be Goodwin's wife although it is not a legal arrangement.

Not long after Benbow leaves, Temple Drake and Gowan Stevens arrive on the scene. Stevens is drunk and wrecks his car on the way to the Old Frenchman Place to buy more whiskey. Temple's ordeal begins at this point.

Temple meets Ruby, who immediately sees that the young girl does not belong at the plantation or anywhere in her world. Ruby tries to convince Temple to leave the plantation before dark or there will be trouble. Temple cannot convince Stevens to leave.

Temple spends the night and is attacked on several occasions. The girl is traumatized to the point of being catatonic. Ruby does her best to protect Temple even though it is clear that Ruby has nothing but disdain for a debutante who obviously looks down upon Ruby and her kind.

Stevens leaves the Old Frenchman Place in the morning, with the intention of getting a car. Stevens does not wait for Temple and leaves her behind.

Eventually, Temple also leaves the plantation with Popeye. Instead of taking Temple home or back to school, Popeye drives to Memphis where he holds Temple captive. Temple has not tried to get away up to this point because she is covered in blood and is terrified that someone will see her.

Miss Reba is a woman of the world and knows exactly how to take care of Temple. Temple will remain at Miss Reba's for weeks, under the order of Popeye. All the women think Popeye is a great catch, completely ignoring Temple's predicament. All the while, Temple's family thinks she is still at school.



Horace Benbow takes an interest in Temple's case and tries to find her. It takes a while to track Temple down but Benbow is able to do so by paying for information. Benbow is also tied to the Old Frenchman Place when he agrees to represent Goodwin on a murder charge.

Faulkner manages to create a plausible story out of many strange happenings. Benbow, who had been seeking sanctuary in a mid-life crisis, seems to find himself again. Temple is brutally introduced to the real world. Benbow's sister, Narcissa, continues to be vain and self absorbed but seems to manage to help her brother. Both Popeye and Goodwin are convicted on murder charges and die.

At the end, Temple is returned home to her family and Benbow returns to Kinston to be with Belle.



# Chapters 1-6

## Chapters 1-6 Summary

Chapter 1 begins with Popeye meeting Benbow at a stream somewhere in rural Mississippi. It is May. Popeye stands on one side of the stream staring at Benbow, who at this point is a stranger. Benbow drinks from the spring. Neither man says anything. The men spend the next two hours staring at each other with little conversation. Eventually the men begin to speak. Benbow introduces himself as a lawyer from Kinston. Benbow's only goal is to get to Jefferson by dark. Benbow tells Popeye that he cannot keep him by the spring with no way out as he is not a criminal. Benbow says perhaps he will make a break for it and run. Popeye advises against it.

Popeye is curious about the book Benbow carries in his pocket.

As the men walk, they hear invisible cars drive by and the song of an unseen bird. Benbow challenges Popeye to name the bird, knowing that he cannot.

The men approach Old Frenchman Place, a plantation. There are three men on the porch, along with a dog. The group eyes Benbow suspiciously. Popeye introduces Benbow as "Professor."

Popeye and Benbow go inside the house. Benbow meets Ruby Lamar, a twenty-something woman who serves as the cook. Popeye fills Ruby in on information about Benbow.

Ruby becomes angry with Benbow, repeatedly calling him a bastard.

Chapter 2: Ruby cooks for the men. Goodwin enters the room with a very old man. Ruby cleans up after the men. After dinner, Ruby eavesdrops and hears Benbow saying that he needs to leave. Ruby comments that Benbow needs to be on his way where his own womenfolk can take care of him.

Benbow talks about how nature must be feminine. "From my window I could see the grape arbor, and in the winter I could see the hammock, too. But in the winter it was just the hammock. That's why we know nature is a she; because of that conspiracy between female flesh and female season," (Chapter 2, p. 13).

Benbow tells a bizarre story about leaving his wife, Belle. The initial reason for Benbow's sudden departure is that Belle likes to eat shrimp but the shrimp package leaks everywhere.

It turns out that Benbow and Belle have an argument about her wanting to care for the entire world, no matter how inappropriate it is for her to do so. Benbow confesses that the real reason he left Belle was because he found a rag covered in rouge stuck behind the dresser. Belle had been wearing make up against Benbow's wishes.



Benbow questions Ruby's role at Old Frenchman Place and wonders why the young woman does not return to Memphis, even if she has to turn tricks. Ruby reveals a small son to Benbow, one that must be kept in a box to avoid being attacked by rats.

Tommy takes Benbow to a truck where he can get a ride to Jefferson. Tommy and Benbow talk about Popeye. Tommy says he has never seen anyone so afraid of his own shadow. Tommy's dog is shot.

Popeye has blocked off the road 1 mile from Lee Goodwin's whiskey operation. Tommy says that it makes no sense. No one really bothers Goodwin as the majority of his clients are in Memphis and other areas. Goodwin only makes quarts and other small quantities for locals and friends. In Goodwin's eyes, the big runs equal big money, which is all he is interested in getting for his efforts.

Tommy and Benbow part ways.

Chapter 3 begins the next day. Benbow is visiting his widowed sister, Narcissa. Narcissa has a ten year old son and seems to split her time between the child, taking care of Miss Jenny, her great aunt by marriage, and searching out young men to pursue. On this day, Narcissa is with Gowan Stevens, a young man who attends university in Virginia. While Narcissa and Gowan stroll through the gardens, Miss Jenny and Benbow discuss Narcissa's various relationships. Miss Jenny comments on Narcissa's inappropriate behavior.

Narcissa gets upset with Benbow when she learns that he has left Belle. According to Miss Jenny, Narcissa is one of those women who will hate the woman you marry, will count the days until the marriage ends, but will be angry when you leave her.

Gowan refuses to stay for dinner as he has a date with a university girl. The family adjourns for dinner.

Chapter 4 introduces Temple, a university student at Oxford. Temple races from the girl's dorm, also known as the "Coop," to meet with Gowan Stevens. Only "town boys" have cars and the guys at school are jealous. The college boys make many snide remarks and try to decide at how to get back at Stevens for trying to steal away Temple.

Temple and Stevens go to a dance. After Stevens drops Temple off at the Coop, he offers a ride to the three college boys. The boys are hostile. Stevens asks where he might be able to get some good liquor because he has run out. The boys say that they will take him to a place. As a stranger in the town, Stevens is grateful.

Stevens constantly compares his school to the one at Oxford, claiming that in Virginia he learned how to drink like a gentleman. Stevens also mentions his connection to Goodwin.

Stevens gets the liquor, drinks to excess and gets violently ill. All the while, Stevens babbles about school and Temple.



The next morning, Stevens wakes up under a canopy. Stevens is filthy and sick. On top of that, he has just missed the train he was supposed to catch. Stevens speeds toward Taylor where he meets up with Temple. Temple is completely disgusted with Stevens' appearance and manner. Temple wants to go back to Oxford but Stevens convinces her to go along to Goodwin's to fetch some whiskey. Along the way, Stevens ridicules and insults Temple. Stevens is speeding and does not pay attention to the road. Stevens hits a tree head on at twenty miles per hour. Two men, one carrying a shotgun, approach the accident.

Chapter 5 begins with Tommy and one of the other men from the Old Frenchman Place guiding Stevens and Temple to the plantation. Temple is upset and wants to get back to Jefferson as soon as possible. Stevens says he will be able to get a car at the plantation. Upon the couple's arrival, they are informed that Goodwin is not at home. Temple wants to get a car from anyone who is willing to drive them but Stevens wants to wait for Goodwin. While Stevens goes to the barn to get drunk, Temple wanders around the house and grounds.

In chapter six, Popeye confronts one of his men about leaving the road. Popeye and Stevens chat. The men recognize Stevens from previous trips. Temple becomes even more upset when she meets old Pap, who is blind and deaf. The surroundings scare Temple. Temple is angry with Stevens for being drunk yet again. Noises scare the young woman who takes refuge in the house. Temple finds the baby. As Temple wanders around the house while the men are in the barn, Goodwin appears and asks why Temple is inside his house.

## **Chapters 1-6 Analysis**

Faulkner begins the story with a silent confrontation between Popeye and Benbow. Popeye, although smaller than Benbow, is painted as being menacing and not one to be challenged. Faulkner never states exactly how Popeye prevents Benbow from leaving the spring but the reader will surmise that Popeye is blocking the path or road.

It is clear that Popeye is intimidated by Benbow's refined air and education. Benbow is somewhat arrogant and proceeds to flaunt his knowledge of birds over Popeye who is doubtless uneducated.

Subconsciously, Popeye tries to assert himself in another way by showing the dollar in his pocket. While Popeye may not be successful, he is prosperous.

Although Benbow is anxious to get to Jefferson, he accompanies Popeye to Old Frenchman Place. The men at the plantation are wary of newcomers but seem to tolerate Benbow's presence because of Popeye. The exchange between Benbow and Ruby is peculiar yet classic Faulkner. Benbow grills Ruby about her choice to stay at the plantation instead of returning to Memphis. Benbow comments how Ruby is going to get fat and if she returns to Memphis she will probably end up hustling again. Ruby surprises Benbow by showing him the baby, giving a reason why she stays at the



plantation to cook for the men. Ruby becomes angry with Benbow, in part because she knows that she deserves a better life.

In chapter 2, Benbow confronts Ruby about her choices. In Benbow's eyes, Ruby is making the wrong choice by staying on the plantation. Benbow backs off a little when he discovers the baby. This shows Benbow's arrogance and Ruby's well honed defense mechanisms.

For being a stranger, Benbow inserts himself easily into the situation.

The fact that the road has been blocked off due to potential trespassers or members of law enforcement foreshadows an upcoming event regarding Goodwin's operation.

Chapter 3 introduces Narcissa, Gowan Stevens, and Miss Jenny. The author gives the impression that Miss Jenny will be a recurring character. The woman is sharp for a 90 year old, opinionated, and wise. Miss Jenny is exactly the type of person people overlook instead of paying attention to her sound advice. Miss Jenny is also extremely perceptive.

Narcissa is trying to recapture her youth by dating younger men. Being a widow is something like a badge of honor, giving Narcissa more freedom than if she had been divorced.

Benbow says little about his decision to leave Belle. Narcissa is angry about it, which confuses Benbow.

In chapter 4, Stevens meets up with Temple, a girl from Oxford. It is not clear how the couple knows each other. Temple snubs her classmates and friends at the college by dating a "town boy," presumably because Stevens has a car. The couple seems to have a decent night. All the while, the college boys are grouching about the town boys and trying to think of ways to get back at them for stealing one of their own. The rage comes from a place of insecurity and self-loathing. One of the boys repeats over and over that he is just as good and that his father is a judge. The boys end up punishing Stevens by getting him to drink a large quantity of what was most likely hair oil.

It is surprising that Stevens makes such an effort to get along with the college boys considering how hostile they are toward the stranger.

Stevens pays the price for drinking the next morning when he wakes up sick with a vicious hangover. Stevens is also angry with himself for ruining his dinner jacket and passing out underneath a canopy.

Temple is angry with Stevens for being late and for looking like a filthy pig. The couple argues. Stevens convinces Temple to go along to Goodwin's place. Goodwin becomes verbally abusive with Temple, basically calling her a whore. Stevens is trying to turn blame away from himself by targeting Temple. The car accident is a foregone conclusion.





Chapter 5 shows once again the suspicious manner of the men at the plantation. Stevens demonstrates once again how little he cares about Temple as he would rather drink with strangers.

The atmosphere is very strange and unsettling for Temple. The girl goes into near hysterics at every little thing.

Popeye asserts himself in chapter 6. Popeye always feels that it is necessary to make his presence and power known. This comes from a place of insecurity. Still, the men listen to Popeye; maybe not because of what Popeye says, but because of Popeye's influence with Goodwin.

Temple hides out in the house just like she hides from many things in life.



# Chapters 7-10

## Chapters 7-10 Summary

In chapter 7, Temple spends time with Ruby in the kitchen. Ruby continuously berates and ridicules Temple, wanting to know why she did not get away while she could. Ruby warns Temple to leave the plantation before nightfall. Temple tries to prove to Ruby that she is not one who treks about with drunks. In fact, Temple's father is a judge. Temple's three brothers have prestigious positions as well and her youngest brother is in school at Yale. Ruby is offended by Temple's diatribe, taking it to mean that Temple is better than she. Ruby calls Temple a putty faced whore, among other things. Ruby also ridicules Temple for thinking that Goodwin would attack her. Ruby assures Temple that Goodwin would not sink as low as to bed a slut.

Ruby also dresses down Temple for being one of those people who shun the commoners and anyone they feel is beneath them until there is some form of trouble. Then the snobs go running to the commoners for help.

Temple laments that Stevens is drunk again. It has been the third time since they left Taylor for the baseball game that Stevens has become drunk.

In chapter 8, Temple realizes the gravity of Ruby's warning when the men become obnoxious toward her and intend to rape her. One of the men manhandles Temple. Goodwin tells the man to stop. Tommy steps in and takes Temple away. Van hits on Temple. Goodwin and Tommy ignore it until things begin to get out of hand. Tommy repeats over and over that he wished the men would just leave Temple alone. Goodwin tells Tommy to mind his own business.

Temple ends up in a single room, alone. There is no lock on the door, so Temple wedges a chair underneath the door knob. Temple is terrified of what might happen and has no intention of going to sleep even though that is what she desperately needs. Temple undresses and lays her dress out to prevent wrinkles. Temple dresses in two coats that were left in the room.

Goodwin calls on Tommy to break up a fight between Popeye, Van, and Stevens. Tommy is surprisingly quick and strong and soon the fight is over, each man looking a bit worse for wear. Stevens is in bad shape by this time. The men carry Stevens to Temple's room. Temple is trying to protect herself as best she can in the room as the men enter. Van tries to paw at her, defying Goodwin's orders.

Tommy laments the behavior of the men. The reader is led to believe that even Goodwin might fall and attempt to attack Temple.

Chapter 9: Stevens finally passes out and snores. Temple realizes what a complete mess Stevens is and is disgusted by it. Men go in and out of the room throughout the



night. Temple is frightened and attempts to hide. Goodwin takes away Temple's raincoat.

Eventually, Ruby fetches Temple and takes her to a safe place to sleep.

Chapter 10: Stevens wakes up and suffers from the after-effects of the fight. Stevens has a fat lip, blood all over, and one of his eyes is swollen shut. Ruby tells Stevens that she sat with Temple until dawn to make sure the girl was safe.

Stevens does not want to wait any longer for a car and decides to walk the two miles into town. Along the way, Stevens berates himself for his behavior. Since Stevens and Temple left Taylor, he has been drunk four times. Stevens is angry and disgusted with himself, particularly since he actually passed out at the end of the night.

## Chapters 7-10 Analysis

In chapter 7, the reader is introduced to Ruby's prejudice toward people of an upper class. It is clear that Ruby does not like anyone who treats her as a commoner, particularly when she is shunned until she is needed in a time of crisis. Ruby ridicules Temple mercilessly for being so naïve and stupid. Ruby's insults are far beyond reasonable however, as proven by the terms "whore" and "putty faced."

Temple's attempt to prove that she is not as she seems only makes matters worse. Temple also realizes how Stevens' behavior is being reflected onto her.

In chapter 8, Temple learns that she should have heeded Ruby's advice and left the plantation before dark. Temple blames the delay on Stevens who did not want to go until the next morning. It is not long before Temple realizes the gravity of the situation and how it is very likely she could be raped.

Tommy is highly protective of Temple. Tommy may be slow witted but is certainly the most compassionate of the group.

Chapter 9: Temple is too afraid to stay and too afraid to go. Hiding in the dark of the small bedroom seems to be the only recourse. Faulkner never says why the men keep walking in and out of the room without making much effort to find Temple.

Ruby betrays her own sense of disgust when she fetches Temple and takes her to sleep in a safe place until morning.

Chapter 10: Stevens continues to show little to no regard for Temple. Once again, Stevens proves his immaturity and stubbornness by insisting that he go into town immediately for a car, despite Ruby's protests. Along the way, Stevens berates himself for his behaviors. While it is clear that the behavior is not new, the blackouts seem to be. Stevens has proven that he cannot drink like a gentleman as he had claimed all along.



# Chapters 11-17

## Chapters 11-17 Summary

Chapter 11: Temple wakes up in a strange place and is disoriented. The girl realizes that she is in a crib filled with cottonseed hulls. Temple goes into the kitchen to talk with Ruby. Temple realizes that the plantation has no bathroom and that she must go out to the barn. Temple does that but notices that a man is watching her the entire time. Temple runs back to the house to tell Ruby. Ruby tries to spirit Temple away again to a safe place. Temple comes face to face with a rat, which only ratchets up the girl's terror.

Chapter 12: There is a confrontation in the kitchen between Goodwin and Ruby. Ruby takes the baby and goes down to the stream where she sits to think. Popeye talks to Ruby about the trouble and then tells the cook that it is time for him to clear out. Popeye's only reason is that it is time to move on.

Tommy sits in the barn, watching everything that goes on around him.

Chapter 13: Temple is back in the crib hiding. Tommy promises to keep her safe and that he will be sure that no one can get to her. Popeye goes to the crib and pushes Tommy aside. Temple begins to become agitated and screams that something is happening to her.

Chapter 14: Ruby returns to the house after sitting at the spring for another hour. Popeye and Temple pass by Ruby in Popeye's car but neither gives a sign that they have seen or know Ruby. Once Ruby is back at the house, she talks with Goodwin who is preparing to visit a family two miles away. Ruby is told to call the sheriff's office and report finding a dead man.

Chapter 15: Benbow arrives at Narcissa's house in the middle of the afternoon to find that no one is home. The author discusses the house in Jefferson and the relationship of the brother and sister to it. Both own the house where they grew up. After Benbow gets married and moves to Kinston, Narcissa wants to sell the house but Benbow refuses even though it means that he will have to borrow money to buy a house in Kinston.

Benbow decides to move into the old family home, despite the objections of Miss Jenny and Narcissa, both of whom believe that Benbow needs to go home. Benbow refuses and begins to resurrect the old house.

Chapter 16 begins with the sheriff taking Goodwin into custody. Goodwin is suspected of murder. Everyone knows that Goodwin did not do it yet the man refuses to tell what he knows about the case. Goodwin has called Benbow to defend him yet there seems to be nothing to defend if Goodwin refuses to talk.



Ruby and the baby are at the jail also. Benbow cannot stand to see the woman and child in the jail and takes them back to the family home. When Benbow visits Narcissa and Miss Jenny later that day, Narcissa demands that Benbow remove Ruby and the baby from the home. Although Benbow rails against the injustice of it all, he agrees to send Ruby to a hotel. Narcissa and Miss Jenny warn Benbow about becoming too involved in the case and thereby jeopardizing his career.

Benbow takes Ruby to a hotel. Ruby attempts to approach the hotel alone on foot so that Benbow will not be seen with her. Benbow refuses and takes Ruby to the hotel. The driver tells Benbow that Narcissa instructed him to take Benbow to Narcissa's house. Benbow refuses.

Chapter 17: The Negro murderer continues to sing spirituals and speak of his own death, which is eminent. Goodwin still refuses to talk, saying that he will hang before he tells what happened. Benbow is frustrated.

Benbow tells Narcissa and Miss Jenny more about the case. Goodwin's operation is defunct. The authorities destroyed the still at the Old Frenchman Place and got rid of Goodwin's supplies. Everyone knew about the operation but did not want—or did not dare—to destroy the business as it supplied good whiskey.

Not only is Goodwin being treated as a murderer, but as an adulterer as well. It has been proven that Goodwin and Ruby are not married, casting shame upon them all as well as the baby. Local preachers rail against Goodwin in their sermons. Miss Jenny dismisses the behavior, wanting to know more about the case.

"They're just Baptists," Miss Jenny said. "What about the money?" (Chapter 17, p. 124).

Benbow says that there is no real money, just what Goodwin had buried in the barn. It is clear that Benbow will take the case on pro bono, a fact that shocks Narcissa. Narcissa cannot understand why her brother would choose to align himself with moonshiners and streetwalkers.

Miss Jenny tells Benbow that Stevens has dumped Narcissa and reads the letter Stevens wrote as a goodbye.

Miss Jenny also tells Benbow that if he had any backbone, he would finish or quit the case and go home to Belle.

The Negro murderer is set to be hanged that Saturday. Goodwin still refuses to talk. Narcissa comments that perhaps the men will be hanged together.

Ruby continues to keep silent about the murder. It is clear that Ruby knows what happened but trusts Goodwin enough to keep the facts to herself. One morning, Benbow is summoned to Ruby's room. The baby is quite ill. Ruby has summoned a doctor and while there sees something that convinces her to finally talk to Benbow.



## Chapters 11-17 Analysis

In chapter 11, Temple realizes that she is caught between two worlds—the world of being an adult who is unable to take care of herself and that of a spoiled young debutante. Surprisingly, it is Ruby who comes to Temple's rescue. It is unclear what Ruby's motives are at this point, although concern and pity seem to be a mask for the real reason Ruby helps Temple.

Chapter 12: Goodwin and Ruby have an argument which causes Ruby to storm out of the house. It is clear that the men at the house are abusive toward Ruby and that their behavior is the cause of much of the woman's hostility. After much contemplation, Ruby decides that her life at Old Frenchman Place is better than what she had on the streets of Memphis and returns.

Chapter 13: Tommy continues to watch out for Temple, despite the fact that he is overstepping his bounds. Temple fears and is grateful to Tommy for helping her escape. However, when Popeye arrives, it is clear that Tommy is inferior to the other man and steps aside, potentially sacrificing Temple.

Chapter 14: Popeye takes Temple away from the plantation. As the couple passes Ruby, neither waves or even looks the woman's way, showing that while the snub is unintentional, Ruby is clearly *persona non grata*.

After Ruby returns to the house, she is told to report the discovery of a dead man. No explanation is given.

Chapter 15: Benbow arrives at Narcissa's house. It never ceases to amaze Benbow how disconnected Narcissa can be, how ignorant to things around her. Rather, Narcissa would prefer to give advice and live in her own world.

Narcissa vehemently objects to Benbow moving into the old family home, even though it is sitting empty and has been for a decade. Benbow reminds Narcissa that it is his home, too. Both Narcissa and Miss Jenny try unsuccessfully to convince Benbow to go home to Belle. Belle is no longer at the house in Kinston which seems to matter little to Narcissa and Miss Jenny. The action of returning means that Benbow has chosen to face up to his demons and become responsible for his actions.

Chapter 16: Benbow is baffled by Goodwin's behavior and wonders who the man is trying to protect. As an attorney, Benbow needs as much information as possible to be able to defend Goodwin. Goodwin seems not to care.

Benbow feels bad for Ruby and the baby and takes them to the family home. Unwittingly, Benbow tells Narcissa and Miss Jenny about the hospitality, which is not well received. Narcissa frets over Benbow's involvement in the case and how it will reflect on him as a professional. Benbow finally agrees to take Ruby to a hotel in order to distance himself from the woman and therefore the case.

Chapter 17 details the downfall of Goodwin. The man has been arrested, his source of livelihood gone, and the future of his girlfriend and child uncertain. Goodwin's old customers turn on him, as do the Baptists. Not only is Goodwin being persecuted for a crime he did not commit, Goodwin is also being condemned for being an adulterer.



# Chapters 18-21

## Chapters 18-21 Summary

Chapter 18: Popeye and Temple drive out of Old Frenchman Place. Temple sees Ruby and the baby but neither makes any sign of greeting or recognition. Popeye crashes through the undergrowth to arrive on a heavily rutted road. Temple is jostled to and fro in the car, increasing the pain she already feels from the rape.

Popeye passes the site of Stevens' car accident and keeps going into Dumfries. Along the way, Temple is aware that she is still bleeding and that it is actually getting worse.

The scenery along the road is in full bloom. Faulkner describes its beauty.

Temple screams until Popeye commands her to shut up. Temple wants to stop but cannot get out of the car because of all the blood. The blood has begun to run down her leg, soaking her stockings and has also penetrated through the backside of her coat. Popeye stops and gets food for Temple and insists they continue on to Memphis.

Once in Memphis, Popeye takes Temple to Miss Reba Rivers' place, a whorehouse. Temple is unaware of what is going on at this point. Popeye arranges for Reba to get Temple cleaned up and taken care of in any way possible. Temple is frightened and resists. While Reba is taking care of Temple, she congratulates Temple on being the one to land Popeye. Women have been after Popeye for years and Temple is very lucky to have him. Reba tells Temple that Popeye will treat her well and give her diamonds and nice clothes. Reba goes on to say that Popeye never had time for common whores and was obviously holding out for someone like Temple.

Reba calls for the doctor who refuses to come, saying he does not make house calls on Sundays. Reba convinces the doctor to come and take care of Temple. Afterward, Reba offers Temple food and drink, which Temple refuses at first. Temple realizes that she is in a whorehouse.

Popeye enters the room and begins to advance on Temple, even though the girl tells Popeye the doctor says she must heal.

Chapter 19: Benbow and Ruby discuss Temple. Ruby tells Benbow about Stevens and his behavior at the plantation, from getting drunk to abandoning Temple. Benbow is shocked and outraged. However, Ruby blames Temple for not leaving when she had the chance and for running around in front of the men. Ruby believes that it was made worse by the fact that it was a Saturday night, a night when the boys are drunk and often out of control.

Back at Narcissa's house, Benbow tells Miss Jenny the story about Temple and Stevens. Benbow learns that the reason Stevens refused to stay for dinner that night and returned to Oxford angry was that Narcissa had refused to marry him.





Like Ruby, Miss Jenny believes that all men who make, sell or drink whiskey should be shot.

The reader learns that Temple is a friend of Benbow's step-daughter, Little Belle. Benbow attempts to find Temple, only to learn that the girl has dropped out of school.

On the train back to Jefferson, Benbow meets Senator Clarence Snopes. Snopes is originally from French Bend in Jefferson and insists on treating Benbow to a night out the next time Benbow is in Memphis. Snopes insists on calling Benbow "Judge" although Benbow says the title is a bit premature.

Benbow learns from Snopes that Temple had returned home and was sent to Michigan to live with an aunt. Snopes comments that it was the best way for Judge Drake to deal with his runaway daughter.

Chapter 20: Benbow arranges for Ruby to stay at a hotel after Narcissa forbids Benbow to allow the woman and child to stay at the family home. The next morning when Benbow arrives at the hotel, he learns that a group of Baptists have run Ruby out of the hotel.

Benbow tells the story to Narcissa, who is ice cold about Ruby's predicament. Narcissa says she has to worry about her reputation in the town. People have already begun to gossip about Benbow and Ruby.

Once again, Narcissa tries to convince Benbow to drop the case. Narcissa offers to pay for a better criminal attorney if Benbow will walk away.

On the way downtown, Benbow passes Snopes in the street.

Chapter 21: Virgil Snopes and his traveling companion, Fonzo, arrive in Memphis. The chapter details the men's search for an affordable hotel in the city. The men end up at Miss Reba's, unaware of the type of business that takes place inside. The men pay for a month's lodging. Although people are in and out of the house all night long, the men think that Reba must be having a party. The activities go on every single night. Reba informs the men that she wants to use their rooms during the day for extra guests that will be in town for a convention. It is twelve days before the men realize that Reba is running a whorehouse.

The men try to think of a way to escape. Fonzo is irate over having spent \$3.00 for the month's board and now it will be forfeited.

Clarence Snopes tracks the men down and ridicules them for being idiots.

## Chapters 18-21 Analysis

While Popeye acts as a type of savior early in chapter 18, it is clear that his intentions are not honorable. Popeye has raped Temple with a corncob and has undoubtedly



caused some damage. The crashing through the undergrowth out onto the road can be seen as a metaphor of Temple losing her virginity and innocence. It is clearly a rough ride and not one that Temple was at all prepared for, particularly in light of the circumstances.

Miss Reba is a seasoned madam and a woman of the world. Reba takes the situation with Temple and Popeye in stride, even congratulating Temple on her "catch." Reba seems not to mind the fact that Temple was raped or is being held against her will.

Reba has the goods on many of the townspeople, which is why she is able to get Dr. Quinn to come to the house and tend to Temple. Temple has shut herself down mentally and emotionally to be able to handle what is happening to her.

In chapter 19, Benbow begins to piece together what happened at Old Frenchman Place Saturday night. Snopes' comments are gossip but seem to align with the fact that Temple is no longer at school.

Chapter 20: Southern hospitality quickly falls by the wayside when it is someone like Ruby that needs help. Narcissa claims to be protecting her reputation as well as Benbow's but the decision is clearly governed by prejudice.

Chapter 21: It is clear that Snopes and Fonzo are naive to the ways of city life. The fact that they do not realize they are staying at a whorehouse is comical and the men feel foolish when confronted by Clarence.



# Chapters 22-25

## Chapters 22-25 Summary

Chapter 22: Benbow manages to find another place for Ruby and the baby to stay while Goodwin suffers through his ordeal in jail. Goodwin refuses bail and chooses to get the sentencing over as soon as possible. Goodwin does not mind that he will most likely hang for Tommy's death.

Ruby says she will walk down the street to the new hotel so as not to tarnish Benbow's reputation. Benbow and Ruby argue back and forth about it. Eventually, Ruby gets to the hotel. Benbow complains about having to mind so many women already.

Benbow gets a phone but does not notify Narcissa. Benbow does not see Narcissa until the beginning of the trial.

Snopes calls and offers to sell valuable information to Benbow regarding Temple's whereabouts. Benbow pays for the information and immediately makes plans to go to Memphis to meet Temple.

Snopes and Benbow go to Miss Reba's place in Memphis. Temple does not want to see the men. Benbow finally gets Temple's permission to enter the room but the girl hides under the covers. When Temple emerges, the wear and tear of the rape, incarceration and other circumstances have taken a great toll on the girl. On top of that, Temple demands drink after drink.

Temple is asked about Popeye's whereabouts.

Temple tells her story about the night at the Old Frenchman Place.

Reba wants Benbow to take Temple back home but Temple does not go.

Benbow returns to the house in Jefferson and becomes violently ill.

Chapter 24: Temple's room is filled with luxury items from beautiful clothes to fancy toiletries lining the bureau. Temple shuns them.

Temple continues to drink a large quantity of gin. Miss Reba shuts Temple off and refuses to serve any more alcohol. Minnie tells Temple she should be ashamed.

Chapter 25: Popeye takes Temple to a bar where there is gambling. There is an argument and Temple returns to Miss Reba's house without Popeye. Reba and Minnie complain about men and beer.

Reba learns that Popeye is inviting men up to Temple's room for sex. Reba is furious and tells Minnie she will not allow such behavior under her roof.



## Chapters 22-25 Analysis

Chapter 22: Benbow tries once again to explain that his motives for defending Goodwin are pure, that he is only interested in justice. Narcissa thinks Benbow has gone off the deep end and Ruby offers her body as payment, which Benbow refuses.

Snopes is opportunistic. The Senator knows that Benbow wants to find Temple but is not entirely sure why. Benbow agrees to pay Snopes and prepares to go to Memphis.

Chapter 23:

Temple does not want to see anyone and it takes some persuasion from Reba to allow the interview with Benbow. Reba stays as a security blanket for Temple. Benbow hears Temple's side of the story. The entire incident makes Benbow ill and he cannot help but compare Temple to his step-daughter Belle, who might have easily been cast into the same predicament.

Chapter 24: Temple begins to drown her sorrows to avoid pain and shock but begins to become addicted to gin.

Chapter 25: It is unclear why Temple returns to Miss Reba's house after leaving Popeye at the bar. Temple believes that Popeye can find her and that perhaps she is better off at Reba's.

Reba becomes indignant and angry with Popeye when she learns the man is using Temple to turn tricks. Even though Reba is a madam, the woman has some standards and plans to tell Popeye to stop or get out of the house.



# Chapters 26-31

## Chapters 26-31 Summary

Chapter 26:

Benbow writes a letter to Belle at her father's house in Kentucky to ask for a divorce. Meanwhile, Narcissa plans to tell Belle that Benbow will return home after the trial. Benbow has already been in Jefferson for four weeks.

Walking down the street in Jefferson, Benbow spots Narcissa. Benbow tries to catch up to Narcissa but she disappears. Benbow checks in all the shops but does not see his sister. The only other possibility is that Narcissa went upstairs to pay a visit to District Attorney Eustace Graham.

Eustace Graham gets his job as the District Attorney in part due to pity over the fact that the man has a club foot. As a child, Graham receives pity from parents and teachers who believe that the boy does not have a fair chance due to his disability. Graham gets into college and law school through the influence of various people. After graduating, Graham rises through the ranks until he is finally elected as the District Attorney for the county.

Narcissa and Benbow go to the town school with Graham and know him. Narcissa uses that fact to pay a visit to Graham to discuss the Goodwin case. Graham says that he cannot discuss the case due to confidentiality but Narcissa persists enough so that Graham says Benbow does not have a chance in court.

Narcissa tells Graham that she needs to do something to save Benbow's career and reputation. Although losing the case would be bad, Narcissa asks if it would lessen the negative actions against Benbow's character if the case is lost quickly. It is determined that the case should not take longer than two or three days.

Narcissa asks Benbow for Belle's address in Kentucky. Benbow wants to know why. Narcissa simply says she wants to write a letter to Belle. Benbow laments that he does not know how to combat a person who will not even stoop to subterfuge.

Snopes goes into a barber shop and spends his time complaining about an accident he has just been in. The accident messes up Snopes' face and only creates an even worse prejudice against Jews. Snopes claims that Jews are worse than Negroes. According to Snopes, the absolute lowest form of life is a Jew lawyer from Memphis. It is the lawyer that causes the accident. Snopes goes on about how the man will have to pay. Snopes is unable to answer when someone asks why he would sell a car to a Jew lawyer anyway.

Chapter 27: About a week before Goodwin's trial, Benbow calls Miss Reba's house to find out if Temple is still in residence. Miss Reba says Temple and Popeye are still



staying there. The day before the trial starts, Benbow learns that Popeye and Temple have checked out of Miss Reba's place. Miss Reba does not know where they have gone, nor does she want to have anything more to do with the couple.

The trial opens. The main piece of evidence is the bullet removed from Tommy's skull.

Ruby is called to the stand. The District Attorney attempts to discredit Ruby as a witness. After court ends, Benbow goes to the jail and spends the night with Ruby and Goodwin, using the time to drill Ruby on the questions she will be asked the next day.

Goodwin is still convinced he will be found guilty and seems to have no remorse. Goodwin makes Benbow promise to get a good job in the newspaper business for the baby when he grows up.

Again, Ruby broaches the subject of money with Benbow. One again, Benbow tries to explain that he wants nothing in return for his services.

The next day, Temple appears in court as a witness.

Chapter 28: Temple appears in court, dressed conservatively. The girl, now 18, has obviously changed dramatically during the experiences at the Old Frenchman Place and at Miss Reba's.

Temple testifies that Goodwin shot Tommy. After Temple's testimony, Judge Drake and his sons take Temple away.

Chapter 29: The jury in the trial of Lee Goodwin takes only eight minutes to reach a verdict. Goodwin has been found guilty.

Narcissa picks up Benbow at the courthouse and takes him home. Benbow cries and shakes over the ordeal. Benbow says that before dinner he wants to go for a walk. Benbow goes back into Jefferson to find that a mob has burned Goodwin alive. The mob also tries to turn on Benbow for defending a murderer.

Men watching the fire comment that not only did Goodwin commit murder, he violated Temple with a corncob. Perhaps Goodwin would have preferred that to the fire.

Chapter 30: After a long wait at the train station, Benbow decides to return to Kinston. The porter tells Benbow that Belle has already arrived. Belle is in her bedroom reading when Benbow arrives. Belle does not seem overly surprised to see Benbow and continually reminds him to lock the door. Benbow, still shaken over the incidents that happened with Temple, insists on calling Little Belle just to say goodnight.

Chapter 31: Chapter 31 is devoted mainly to Popeye's story. It begins by announcing that Popeye is arrested in Birmingham for the murder of a policeman in June. Popeye was also spotted at the roadhouse on the night Red died there.



Popeye is born to a strike breaker father and a mother who worked at a department store. Not long after Popeye is born, the father disappears. Popeye is undersized as a child and is slow to develop. The doctors say that Popeye will never fully develop, physically or mentally.

Popeye's house burns down and the grandmother may have died. The mother becomes an invalid.

Popeye is sent to an institution after he is caught cutting up birds instead of playing with friends at his own birthday party. Later, Popeye is sent to a home for incorrigible boys after cutting up a kitten.

Popeye kills a man early on and is arrested. Faulkner explains that Popeye does not drink since it would be fatally toxic to his system.

Popeye is tried and is found guilty.

The chapter and the book ends with Temple and her father walking through gardens. It is autumn and Temple looks around at the gray day. Faulkner claims that it has been a gray summer and a gray year.

## Chapters 26-31 Analysis

Chapter 26: Narcissa is determined to save Benbow from himself, no matter what it takes. Along with trying to salvage Benbow's lackluster career and marriage, Narcissa also wants to save her own reputation in town.

Snopes proves once again that he is not the most upstanding of men.

Chapter 27: It is unclear why Benbow wants to subpoena Temple if the girl is going to finger Goodwin. The lawyer that accompanies Temple to the trial is a colleague from Memphis, a Jew lawyer.

Benbow still cannot make sense of Goodwin's case and neither Goodwin nor Ruby will talk. This is the first time that the author reveals that the slain man is Tommy.

Chapter 28: Temple has not recovered from her ordeal but is home in the care of her father and brothers. It is not revealed how Temple gets away.

The validity of Temple's story or condition is never challenged, which is surprising. It shows that Benbow is not the best criminal attorney for the job, as Narcissa claims.

Chapter 29: Temple's testimony seals Goodwin's fate. While Goodwin takes the verdict in stride, Benbow takes it very hard and goes into something resembling a state of grief and shock.



The fire that kills Goodwin is shocking to Benbow but is celebrated by the townspeople. It is not clear how Benbow gets away.

Chapter 30: Benbow returns home to Kinston, ready to resume his life. This is surely in part due to Narcissa's interference.

Chapter 31: This chapter gives insight into Popeye's hostile and unusual behavior. It is surprising that it took so long for Popeye to be arrested and convicted considering his actions over the years.

The end of the book is quite odd. Faulkner never comments about the outcome for Stevens or Narcissa. Instead, the author ties up the story using the metaphor of nature.





# Characters

## Popeye

Popeye is one of the main characters in William Faulkner's *Sanctuary*. Popeye is a man that is considered to be "undersize" although no specific details are given as to height and weight, other than the fact that the man is slim. Popeye tends to wear a straw hat along with tight fitting suits. Popeye is a chain smoker who often walks around with a cigarette in his mouth where it will burn down to nothing.

Physically, Popeye sounds as if he suffers from some ailment. Faulkner refers to Popeye as having a dead dark pallor and his face has a queer bloodless color to it. Popeye has small, doll-like hands, eyes like rubber knobs, and an air that suggests the "vicious depthless quality of stamped tin," (Chapter 1, p. 4).

Faulkner paints a vivid picture of Popeye through his various descriptions: "His nose was faintly aquiline, and he had no chin at all. His face just went away, like the face of a wax doll set too near a hot fire and forgotten," (Chapter 1, p. 5).

Popeye is a bootlegger, holing up at the Old Frenchman Place. It is clear that Popeye sees himself as some kind of tough guy or was once in charge of a group of people and therefore he maintains a forceful demeanor that borders on hostility. Popeye is not a well educated man.

## Horace Benbow

Horace Benbow is a tall, slender 43 year old man. Benbow is a lawyer that graduated from Oxford and has an air of refinement about him that intimidates those around him. Benbow is married to a woman named Belle, whom he leaves at the beginning of the story. When Benbow is asked why he left Belle, he remarks that it was not Belle's careless behavior or obvious instability that drove him away; it was the fact that Belle had been wearing make up and attempted to hide that fact from him.

Benbow lives and works in Kinston but is on his way to Jefferson when he meets Popeye at the spring. Benbow lived in Jefferson previously and now makes trips to see his sister, Narcissa.

Benbow is quick with advice and seems not to care when other people comment on his demeanor, giving him monikers like "Doc" and "Professor" when it is discovered that he always carries a book in his pocket.

Benbow seems to be in a sort of mid-life crisis, seeking nothing more than some sanctuary on top of a hill where he can lie down under the sky.



## **Lee Goodwin**

Lee Goodwin is the owner of the Old Frenchman Place. Goodwin is also former military and a bootlegger.

## **Narcissa**

Narcissa is Horace Benbow's widowed sister. Narcissa has a ten year old son and prefers the company of younger men.

## **Gowan Stevens**

Gowan Stevens is the younger beau of Narcissa, Horace's widowed sister.

## **Ruby Lamar Goodwin**

Ruby Lamar Goodwin is a twenty-something woman that cooks at the Old Frenchman Place. Ruby is from Memphis and it is suggested that she was once a prostitute. Ruby has a young son that she keeps in a box.

## **Belle Benbow**

Belle is Horace Benbow's wife.

## **Tommy**

Tommy is a young black man who works at Old Frenchman Place.

## **Miss Jenny**

Miss Jenny is Narcissa's great aunt by marriage. The woman is in her nineties, spry and sassy.

## **Temple Drake**

Temple Drake is a red-haired, pretty college student who gets involved with Stevens. Temple is of the upper class as her father is a judge. Temple is not accustomed to life in places such as Old Frenchman Place.



# Objects/Places

## The Old Frenchman Place

The Old Frenchman Place is a Mississippi plantation owned by Lee Goodwin. Goodwin is former military and a bootlegger. Ruby Lamar Goodwin, Lee's common law wife, also lives on the premises with the couple's small child. Other people live on the premises as well, although it is not always clear if the men are employees, drifters or hangers on. The men include Popeye, Van, Tommy, and Old Pap.

The house stands in the midst of black trees. "The house was a gutted ruin rising gaunt and stark out of a grove of unpruned cedar trees," (Chapter 1, p. 8) .

The Old Frenchman Place was built before the Civil War and is considered to be a landmark. The cotton fields, lawns and gardens had long ago gone to seed and resemble little more than a jungle. Neighbors forage through the jungle for firewood or anything else that might be valuable. Some search for gold that was supposedly buried by the old owner about the time Grant came to the area during the Vicksburg campaign.

The book refers mostly to areas in a run down kitchen, tended to by Ruby. Also mentioned frequently is the large front porch where the men often sit. There is a barn on the property, used for bootlegging instead of animals and operational equipment. The barn is also used as a bathroom since there is no running water or available sanitation facilities on the premises.

## Memphis

Memphis is the city nearest to the Old Frenchman Place. Goodwin makes the majority of his money selling whiskey to various places around Memphis as well as other areas. It is a big business for Goodwin and the people of Memphis are willing to pay for the goods.

The author hints at the fact that Ruby used to "hustle" in Memphis, obviously referring to a former stint as a prostitute.

At the time of the story, Memphis is the largest nearby city as well as being the largest city in Tennessee. Situated on the Mississippi River, Memphis is a boomtown for the cotton and hardwood industries. It is also a prime location for arts and culture and has a great influence on the south.

## Spring

The spring is a common meeting place for the people at Old Frenchman Place. It is the only site for water.



## **Kinston**

Kinston is where Horace Benbow lives and works as an attorney.

## **Jefferson**

Jefferson is a rural town not far from Memphis. It is the former home to Horace Benbow and the current home to Benbow's sister, Narcissa, and Miss Jenny.

## **The Philippines**

The Philippines are where Goodwin served as a sergeant in the Calvary.

## **France**

France is the site of Goodwin's involvement in the infantry.

## **Taylor**

Taylor is the name of the town where Stevens picks up Temple for the baseball game.

## **Virginia**

Gowan Stevens attends school in Virginia, where people are more refined and where Stevens learned to drink like a gentleman.

## **Coop**

The Coop is the name of the girls' dormitory where Temple lives.



# Themes

## Bootlegging

The Old Frenchman Place is a Mississippi plantation owned by Lee Goodwin. Goodwin is former military and a bootlegger. The reader is first introduced to the Old Frenchman Place when Horace Benbow arrives with Popeye. The nature of the operation is well protected and the road is usually barricaded and guarded. This seems to be somewhat extreme, since Goodwin rarely makes whiskey for the people in the area. Instead, Goodwin focuses on much bigger targets, as big runs mean big money.

Memphis is the city nearest to the Old Frenchman Place. Goodwin makes the majority of his money selling whiskey to various places around Memphis as well as other areas. It is big business for Goodwin and the people of Memphis are willing to pay for the goods.

Although there is no date given in the book, it is clear that the timeframe is sometime during prohibition. During prohibition, the sale, manufacture and transport of alcohol were illegal. Although some people were jailed and prosecuted for breaking the law, prohibition had little effect on the alcohol consumption of the public.

Stevens is anxious to get to Goodwin's place after he runs out of booze. Goodwin has the reputation of making good whiskey.

As the result of the nature of the business, the people who work and live at Old Frenchman Place are rough and suspect in their behavior and backgrounds. This is proven repeatedly through various altercations and arguments.

## Class System

The division between the classes is obvious from the beginning of the book when Popeye meets Benbow at the stream. Benbow is quick to represent himself as a successful attorney. Popeye clearly knows that Benbow thinks himself superior yet puts on a show of bravado to make up for the difference. Benbow is on Popeye's turf. Popeye also makes it a point to flash a dollar in front of Benbow to prove his worth.

Some of the best examples of class separation are related to Temple. In the beginning of the story, Temple chooses to date Stevens over other boys because he has a car. Temple is raised in a privileged atmosphere, which makes the trip to the Old Frenchman Place traumatic. Never in a million years would she be exposed to such people and conditions in her every day world. When Temple tries to convince Ruby that she is not a whore or one who goes around with drunks, the diatribe comes off as snobbery. Temple is proud that her father is a judge; her two brothers are lawyers, one brother is a newspaperman, and the other one is studying at Yale. Ruby is immediately offended by



the references and pigeonholes Temple as being one of those people who looks down on the common folk until they need help.

Stevens also shows definite class snobbery when he spends the night drinking with the college boys. Stevens refers repeatedly to his college in Virginia and how it is superior.

## Sanctuary

Sanctuary is not so much a place as it is an idea or ideal for those wishing to remove themselves from their present circumstances. The concept first comes to light when Horace Benbow leaves his wife, Belle, after finding the rag with rouge on it hidden behind the dresser. The reason for Benbow's flight is of no consequence. Originally, Benbow tells people that he left Belle because she insisted on eating shrimp and the package leaked. Then it is the fact that she wanted to care for everyone in the world, no matter how inappropriate. As Benbow makes his way to Jefferson, the man keeps wishing for sanctuary. To Benbow, at least at that point, sanctuary would be lying on top of a hill somewhere. It would be quiet and there would be nothing to look at but the sky.

In some ways the Old Frenchman Place is a sanctuary for Goodwin and the others. It is Goodwin's sanctuary in that it provides him a safe and secluded place to carry out his business. To Ruby, it is sanctuary because it keeps her off the streets and provides a warm and safe place for her and the baby. For the other men, it provides a place to be and to live, if only for a time. It even serves as a sanctuary for Temple and Stevens during a time of need.

# Style

## Point of View

Sanctuary by William Faulkner is written in the third person omniscient point of view. This point of view is crucial to the novel because it offers an overall look at the people and places, of which there are many. Faulkner is a master at using this point of view to give glimpses into the lives of the characters without ever revealing their thoughts and motives. The characters in Faulkner's works tend to be irrational, short tempered, and often quite peculiar. Allowing the reader to see these behaviors from an objective point of view adds some mystery while allowing the reader to draw one's own conclusions about each person and situation. Also, writing from another point of view would take away from the character study as a whole.

For example, Ruby sees things much differently than Goodwin, Tommy, or even Temple. To use Ruby's point of view would take away from the overall context of the story, telling it solely from the point of view of an embittered streetwalker who has attached herself to a bootlegger.

Perhaps the most important reason to use a third person point of view is to allow the reader to experience all classes and the experiences of the characters that live lifestyles that are worlds apart.

## Setting

There are a few settings used in the book, but the main one is The Old Frenchman Place. Memphis is mentioned as a nearby city, as is Jefferson, home to Narcissa and Miss Jenny.

The Old Frenchman Place is a Mississippi plantation owned by Lee Goodwin. Goodwin is former military and a bootlegger. Ruby Lamar Goodwin, Lee's common law wife, also lives on the premises with the couple's small child. Other people live on the premises as well, although it is not always clear if the men are employees, drifters or hangers on. The men include Popeye, Van, Tommy, and Old Pap.

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The book refers mostly to areas in a run down kitchen, tended to by Ruby. Also mentioned frequently is the large front porch where the men often sit. There is a barn on the property, used for bootlegging instead of animals and operational equipment. The barn is also used as a bathroom since there is no running water or available sanitation facilities on the premises.

## Language and Meaning

The language and meaning of the text in "Sanctuary" by William Faulkner is divided into three specific areas. First is the language of Stevens, Temple and the Benbows, which is the language of educated and refined people. The characters' grammar and syntax are not perfect but definitely show their imagined superiority over the rest of the characters in the book. The characters' collective attitude adds to that air.

The language of the bootleggers is a step down. Goodwin seems to have a relatively good handle on language, no doubt due in part to his world travels. Faulkner's use of language for Goodwin is above the language of the other bootleggers but it is similar enough to link the characters. The bootleggers have some education but not much and it shows in their vocabulary and pronunciation. The bootleggers come from blue collar families and many are little more than drifters, using many regionalisms and much slang.

The third example can be seen in the language of the Negros. The best example of this can be seen in Tommy, who speaks phonetically and shows the lack of proper education in language.

Although there is a big difference with the use of language, the characters seem to understand each other well enough, showing the mixture of cultures prevalent in Mississippi during the time period.

## Structure

"Sanctuary" by William Faulkner is a novel. It is three hundred and nine pages in length, broken down into thirty-one chapters. The shortest chapter is comprised of two pages; The longest chapter is comprised of twenty-three pages; the average number of pages per chapter is nine.

The novel begins with the meeting between Horace Benbow and a bootlegger named Popeye. Faulkner likes to start stories in the middle with no background information, choosing to allow the characters to grow throughout the text. For example, the reader does not know in the very beginning that Benbow has left his wife and is on a quest for sanctuary. The story switches from Benbow's experiences at the Old Frenchman Place and at Narcissa's to the story of Temple Drake.

The story of Temple Drake turns out to be perhaps the most important one, as the debutante becomes unwilling introduced into rural Mississippi culture.



From that point, the story follows a chronological progression, giving insight to characters and motives along the way. Faulkner devotes several chapters to one story line before switching to another, meanwhile weaving a thread between the characters.



## Quotes

"In passing, he looked at Popeye with a glance at once secret and alert, as though he were ready to laugh at a joke, waiting for the time to laugh."

(Chapter 1 p. 10)

"Benbow looked back. The ghost ruin of the house rose against the sky, above the massed and matted cedars, lights lit, desolate, and profound."

(Chapter 2, p. 18)

"There would always be three or four of them there when the band played Home, Sweet Home, lounging near the exit, their faces cold, bellicose, the little drawn with sleeplessness, watching the couples emerge in one aftermath of motion and noise."

(Chapter 4, p. 29)

"All at once he began to fight himself to sleep. It seemed to him that it was immediately, yet he was aware of time passing all the while, and that time was a factor in his need to wake; but otherwise he would be sorry."

(Chapter 4, p. 34)

"For an instant she thought that his eyes were closed, and she believed that he had no eyes at all, for between the lids to objects, like dirty yellowish clay marbles were fixed."

(Chapter 5, p. 42)

"His head began to clear with care and motion, but as he began to feel better physically, the blackness of the future increased.

(Chapter 10, p. 83)

"With scarce any movement at all, he flung her aside in a complete revolution that fetched her up against the table, her arm flung back for balance, her body bent enter and fumbling behind her among the soil dishes, watching him across the inert body of the child."

(Chapter 12, p. 93)

"On the day when the sheriff brought Goodwin to town, there was a Negro murderer in the jail, who had killed his wife; slashed her throat with a razor so that, her whole head tossing further and further backward from the bloody regurgitation of her bubbling throat, she ran out the cabin door and for six or seven steps up the quiet moonlit lane."

(Chapter 16, p. 110)



"Nightly the Negro murderer leaned there, his face checkered by the shadow of the grating and the restless intercises of leaves, singing and chorus with those along the fence below."

(Chapter 17, p. 122)

"They could hear the city, evocative and strange, imminent and remote; threat and promise both—a deep, steady sound upon which in visible light glittered and wavered: colored coiling shapes of splendor in which already women were beginning to move in suave attitudes of new delights and strange nostalgic promises."

(Chapter 21, p. 188)

"When the sun rose, Horace had not been to bed, nor even undressed."

(Chapter 26, p. 253)

"The trial opened the next day. On the table lay the sparse objects, which the District Attorney was offering: the bullet from Tommy's skull, a stoneware jug containing corn whiskey."

(Chapter 27, p. 261)

"The jury was out eight minutes."

(Chapter 29, p. 284)

"Well on his way to Pensacola to visit his mother, Popeye was arrested in Birmingham for the murder of a policeman in a small Alabama town on June 17 of that year."

(Chapter 31, p. 294)

## Topics for Discussion

Was Benbow's story about Belle convincing? Do you think Benbow left because of the rouge or was it really because of Belle's craziness? What do you think will happen to the Benbows' marriage?

What is it about Popeye's demeanor that causes other people to do his will? Why do you think Popeye is afraid of his own shadow? Is the forcefulness an attempt to cover up the fear?

Why do the men at Old Frenchman Place have such reverence for Goodwin? What is Goodwin's relationship to the men? What is Goodwin's relationship like with Ruby?

Gowan Stevens behaves like a raging alcoholic on several occasions. Discuss Stevens' behavior in polite society versus his behavior with Temple and at Old Frenchman Place.

Tommy is an interesting character. Discuss Tommy's presence on the plantation. Why is Tommy there? Is he an employee or a drifter like some of the others? What is your opinion on Tommy's mental capacity?

Do you think Ruby was spot on in her assessment of Temple? Do you think Temple is really a snob or was working too hard to prove that she is not a disreputable girl?

Why do you think Ruby is so angry? Why does Ruby attack Temple and others who dare to wander into her kitchen? How does Ruby treat women differently than men?