

THE MULHERN STORY LIBRARY — SALON READING GUIDE

A Rose for Emily

William Faulkner · Southern Gothic / Modernism · first published 1930

AUTHOR	William Faulkner
PUBLISHED	1930
ERA	Southern Gothic / Modernism
THEMES	Decay, Isolation, The Past
READER PATHWAY	Advanced adult / college seminar

INTRODUCTION FOR THOUGHTFUL READERS

The townspeople of Jefferson narrate the life of the reclusive Emily Grierson, whose refusal to accept change and loss culminates in a macabre discovery after her death.

HISTORICAL & LITERARY CONTEXT

First published in *The Forum* in 1930, Faulkner's first nationally published story introduces his fictional Yoknapatawpha County. Its non-chronological structure and communal 'we' narrator are hallmarks of Southern Gothic modernism.

DISCUSSION FOCUS

Non-linear chronology, communal first-person-plural narration, symbolism of the house and the rose, and Southern Gothic atmosphere. Strong for analyzing memory, social surveillance, race, gender, and inherited decline.

SALON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What does the communal narrator reveal about the town's curiosity, guilt, cruelty, and nostalgia?
- How does Faulkner's disrupted chronology imitate the persistence of the past?

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READ & RESEARCH

1. Encyclopedic overview at Wikipedia — https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Rose_for_Emily
2. Author profile at the Poetry Foundation — <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/william-faulkner>