

The Robbing of Emily's Love

The story "A Rose for Emily" was William Faulkner's first published in 1930. This story could be called a horror story and even physiological short story (281). The story is about Emily Grierson, a woman whose life is by a narrator that is unknown, it could possibly be someone whom knew Emily; this narrator represents the attitudes, ideas, and the gossip of the community. Emily became deeply depressed by the death of her father. It wasn't until she met a Northerner by the name of Homer Barron. When she is faced with no love from Homer, she murdered him by arsenic poison, possibly after she found out that he liked men, and she was used by him so the townsman would not know of his sexuality, more or less so the townsmen wouldn't know he was gay. It was discovered after Emily's death and the upstairs bedroom was forced open that Homer's corpse was found in an embrace from forty years before and a strand of gray hair lying on the pillow beside him. Remembering the relationship of Emily with her father, her place in the community and her problem with reality, the present and the past, the character is told about Miss Emily in the story.

The Grierson family had a streak of insanity and insane pride. Miss Emily's father was a selfish and dominating man. None of the young men who came courting her were good enough for their name. Emily's father discouraged men and drove them away. When he finally died, his daughter was still unmarried and was left nothing but the house (284). In a way, the narrator says, "People were glad. At last they could pity Miss Emily. Being alone, and a pauper, she had become humanized now she would know like other people, what it felt like to count pennies" (281-289).

The townsmen thought that Homer, Emily's boyfriend, with his strong masculine appearance and his skills possibly reminded Emily's of her dominant father. In the South at the turn of the century Northerners and Southerners were not to be together. The townsman's and family members see Emily's crime as a second attempt to keep a father figure from leaving her. The tragedy in the story was shown in Emily's inability to escape the influence of her father (281-289).

Miss Emily's relation to the small community is very significant in the story. The Grierson's held their heads high, some of the townspeople felt they held their heads too high. The feelings of the community towards Miss Emily are very complex. (281-289).

Miss Emily was denied the involvement in the community because she represents aristocracy of a higher social class than most people. The situation, which was created by her father, is known by the community, which denies Miss Emily a life. The town prefers that she remain unharmed within her old house. She had become part of the history of the town. She was kind of a monument, a landmark. Jefferson is smugly pleased at possessing a symbol of a long gone, but honorable time; when Miss Emily dies; she becomes their "fallen monument" (281-289).

The narrator in the story plays an important role also. He is clearly the speaker for the community and his story is about what Miss Emily's life and death meant to the community (281-282). The nameless narrator uses phrases such as "We believed", "We knew", and so forth, he was speaking about the community, ideas, and the gossip they were thinking.

The narrator moves smoothly from the mention of Miss Emily's funeral at the beginning of the story to 1894; Colonel Sartoris had used a simple made up reason to remit her taxes on her house and property. Then, he moves to the "new generation" of aldermen and mayors expecting Miss Emily to pay her taxes like everyone else, and then he jumps back thirty years to when the awful smell came strongly from Miss Emily's house and Judge Stevens who wouldn't tell her to her face that she smelled bad so he arranged a private clean-up done at night with men throwing lime at the cellar openings of her house. The smell gives the narrator an opportunity to tell the readers that it was about this time that "people had begun to feel really sorry for her." (285)

When Miss Emily purchased the arsenic at the drugstore, the news spread rapidly throughout the town. The townspeople believed that she meant to commit suicide after the disappearance of her boyfriend Homer, for an aristocratic lady would prefer death to dishonor. She does not kill herself, clearly Homer Barron had not married her, and it seemed like he had left town for good (286-287).

Miss Emily's disobedience of what people thought about her and her claim to meeting life solely on her own terms, ignoring tradition and law, ended in a horrifying twist of her own mind. The community learns how horrifying after her funeral and when they going through her things in the upper rooms of the house.

The narrator is notes that Miss Emily was decently in the ground before they opened the room, discovered what was left of her lover from over forty years before. They recognized she had earned privacy (288). Emily is a source of mystery for the community due to the strangeness of her behavior made by her loneliness and struggle to change. As a member of one of the oldest families in Jefferson, Emily a symbol for the community, the vision of the "lady" as included in the myths and the reality of the South. The community respects her position while it also delights in her strange ways and her fall from grace. Her bizarre behavior suggests the dangers of holding on to the past and refusing to accept change. The story is between past and present time. The past is represented in Emily herself, Colonel Sartoris, the old Negro servant, Tobe, and in the Board of Aldermen who accepted the Colonel's attitude toward Emily and not making her pay taxes. The present is found though the narrator, the new Board of Aldermen, and in Homer Barron.

Emily was forced to become disobedience of time and reality. She refused to live in the real world, ignoring the tax office, the post office, the law, and even death itself. When her father died she refused to admit he was dead. After three days and a lot of persuasion, she finally allowed the body to be taken out of the house and buried. (282,285)

When the new Board of Aldermen came to explain that she had to pay taxes on her property just like everyone else; Emily refused to pay. She denied the authority of the tax notice sent to her and she told the men to see Colonel Sartoris. "I have no taxes in Jefferson", says Emily (282-283). Colonel Sartoris had been dead for nearly ten years. "Had Miss Emily lived alone for so long that she had not heard that he was dead? It was the past against the present – the past with its social interpretations, the present with everything set down in by book. Emily lived in the past, always a world of unreality to the people in the present.

Miss Emily's large Southern house and her battle to change gradually came.

Emily was living behind barricaded doors, protecting herself from a world that was too much for her. She must come to terms with the past and the present. Emily's place in regard to the specific problem of time is shown in the scene where the old soldiers appear at her funeral

. There we are told two different views of time. The first problem or conflict being the world of the present in which time is viewed but the townspeople saw her living in the past.

In conclusion, Miss Emily Grierson is a victim of her own pride. Her bizarre ways is a sign of her pride, her independence, and her will. She insisted on choosing a lover in spite of the talk of the town. She led useless life. She did acts to stimulate the love and fulfillment and have her father figure. This was due to the aggravation and the isolation that her father put her through.