“A ROSE FOR EMILY”

1. Faulkner sometimes is a **Southern Gothic** writer. This story is gothic in its decaying mansion, mysterious silent servant, a corpse and necrophilia (an abnormal attraction, especially an erotic attraction to corpses).

2. But unlike the traditional gothic novel which emphasized plot and setting the story has **significant commentary on human existence.** It’s not just a good horror story.

3. **STRESS THE ANALYTICAL PROCESS:** How to get to an understanding:

   **Be one on whom nothing is lost:**
   - repetition
   - emphasis
   - proportion
   - position

4. Why follow the discussion of her death with a **description of her house?**

5. What’s **most notable** about the house

   Decay: "an eyesore among eyesores" (2, 468)
   Dust and shadows (52, 473).
   Dust (5, 468).

6. What has **happened to the town that has not happened to the house?**

7. **Where had the house been?**

   In an area of “august names where they lay in the cedar-bemused cemetery.”
   In the style of the 1870s (2, 468).

8. Why all this fuss about Emily’s house? What’s Faulkner trying to **suggest or symbolize with the house?**

   Miss Emily herself!

   **Define symbol:** Is what it is on a literal level—a house but something more besides.
9. **Proof?**

“Only Miss Emily’s house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and the gasoline pump” (2, 468).

10. **Houses are neither stubborn nor coquettish. Emily is!**

11. “Alive Miss Emily had been a tradition, a duty, and a care: a sort of hereditary obligation upon the town” (3, 468).

12. **What has the past of the Griersons Been?**

They were “the high and mighty Griersons” (16, 469). Miss Emily dead is “a fallen monument” (1,467).

13. **But times change and Emily now is decayed but she refuses to accept any kind of change.**

What **evidence** do you have?

- **of little things**
- **of big things**

**LITTLE THINGS:**

14. She refuses all change. Even refuses to put numbers on her **mailbox** (50, 472).

15. The **taxes**—”I have no taxes in Jefferson” of the sheriff: “Perhaps he considers himself the sheriff….I have no taxes in Jefferson” (469).

16. She tells them to **see Colonel Sartoris** and he’ll explain. Will he?

No. He’s been dead for “almost ten years” (469).

17. **Colonel Sartoris is a symbol.** What had been his role with the taxes?

He made up the story that exempts Emily from paying them. “Only a man of Colonel Sartoris’ generation and thought could have invented it …” (3, 468).

18. **What besides the taxes does the town remember Sartoris for?**

“He who fathered the edict that no Negro woman should appear on the streets without an apron” (3, 468).
19. What then does **Sartoris symbolize?**

   He’s the aristocracy that produced an Emily.

20. He’s a **foil (define)** to the Grierson family. He refuses to force change on Emily.

21. What other evidence do you recall of Emily’s refusal to change?

22. Even the **China painting lessons**, no doubt a result of financial difficulty shows a refusal to change. **Why?**

23. It is an **outdated skill** a dead art.

24. **What happens to the China painting lessons?**

   Change! The “pupils grew up and fell away and did not send their children to her…” (50, 472).