Rose For Emily Essay, Research Paper

Analysis of ?A Rose for Emily?

In William Faulkner?s short story, ?A Rose for Emily,? obsession plays a key role

in the developing personality of the protagonist, Emily Grierson. Because Emily was

never allowed to be independent and self-sufficient growing up, she goes to great lengths

to preserve companionship and deter her loneliness later on in life. Faulkner illustrates

Emily?s desire for company by focusing on her obsessive and psychotic tendencies.

At the death of her father, Emily is thrown into a state of denial. She refuses to

release his body to be buried because, in her own mind, she believes that he is actually not

deceased. The day after her father?s death, the ladies of the neighborhood come to the

Grierson home to console Emily. She, however, ?[meets] them at the door, dressed as

usual and with no trace of grief on her face? (29). Emily?s father has always been there

for her, even when she does not want him to be. Therefore, she can not accept the fact

that he is now gone and she is alone.

After recovering from her father?s death, Emily still does not let go of him

completely. Even after his passing, she keeps a ?crayon portrait? of him to watch over her

through the years. This portrait is referred to during significant events in the story. It is

present when the Board of Aldermen come to see Emily concerning her unpaid taxes. The

portrait is also present when Homer Barron first enters the Grierson home.

Another example of Emily?s unhealthy obsession is observed in her relationship

with Homer Barron. Since he is the only boyfriend Emily has ever known, she falls for

him quickly and wishes for them to be married. Homer, on the other hand, feels

differently about the situation. Homer remarks that he ?[is] not a marrying man? (30).

When Homer refuses to marry her, Emily decides to keep him with her the only way she

knows how. She poisons Homer Barron with arsenic and stows his body away in an

upstairs bedroom. It is evident in the details of the story that, after Homer?s death, Emily

continues to share a bed with him for some time. The pillow beside Homer Barron?s

corpse has the ?indention of a head? and on top of it is a ?long strand of iron gray hair?

(33).

Emily Grierson?s neglect and lack of freedom during childhood eventually leads to

a murderous obsession for company. She lives her life, longing for love and a sense of

belonging, which her father has never given her. Therefore, she takes it upon herself to

keep the people closest to her heart by her side forever, using whatever means necessary.