**Dr. S. CHOUCHANE**

**3rd Year Literature Module**

**Academic Year: 2024/2025**

**Lesson 4**

**A Rose for Emily 1**

The narrator recalls the time of Emily Grierson’s death and how the entire town attended the funeral in her large, once-grand home, which no stranger had entered for more than ten years. Colonel Sartoris, the town’s previous mayor, had suspended Emily’s tax responsibilities to the town after her father’s death, justifying the action by claiming that Mr. Grierson had once lent the community a significant sum. As new town leaders took over, they made unsuccessful attempts to get Emily to resume payments. When confronted by town officials, Emily refused and told the men to talk to Colonel Sartoris, who at this point has been dead almost ten years.

The narrator describes a time thirty years earlier when Emily resisted another official inquiry, when the townspeople detected a powerful odor emanating from her property. Her father had just died, and Emily had been abandoned by the man whom the townsfolk believed Emily was to marry. As complaints mount, Judge Stevens, the mayor at the time, decided to have lime sprinkled along the foundation of the Grierson home in the middle of the night. Within a couple of weeks, the odor subsided, but the townspeople began to pity the increasingly reclusive Emily.

The day after Mr. Grierson’s death, the women of the town called on Emily to offer their condolences. Meeting them at the door, Emily stated that her father was not dead, a charade that she kept up for three days. She finally turned her father’s body over for burial.

The narrator describes a long illness that Emily suffered after this incident. A construction company arrived in town to pave the sidewalks, under the direction of northerner Homer Barron. Homer soon became a popular figure in town and was seen taking Emily on buggy rides on Sunday afternoons, which caused a scandal; The town felt she was forgetting her family pride, becoming involved with a man beneath her station.

One day, she went to the drug store to purchase arsenic, a powerful poison. She was required by law to reveal how she would use the arsenic. She offered no explanation, and the package arrived at her house labeled “For rats.”

The narrator describes the fear that some of the townspeople had that Emily would use the poison to kill herself. Her potential marriage to Homer seemed increasingly unlikely, despite their continued Sunday ritual. A Baptist minister talked to with Emily, but after his visit, he never spoke of what happened and swore that he’d never go back. The minister’s wife wrote to Emily’s two cousins in Alabama, who arrived for an extended stay. Because Emily ordered a silver toilet set monogrammed with Homer’s initials, talk of the couple’s marriage resumed.

After the cousins’ departure, Homer entered the Grierson home one evening and was never seen again. Holed up in the house, Emily grew plump and gray. In what became an annual ritual, Emily refused to acknowledge the tax bill. Nothing was heard from her until her death at age seventy-four. Only the servant Tobe was seen going in and out of the house.

After her death, Emily’s body was laid out in the parlor, and the women, town elders, and two cousins attended the service. After some time passed, the door to a sealed upstairs room was broken down by the townspeople. The room was frozen in time, with the items for an upcoming wedding and a man’s suit laid out. Homer Barron’s body was stretched on the bed as well, in an advanced state of decay. The onlookers then noticed the indentation of a head in the pillow beside Homer’s body and a long strand of Emily’s gray hair on the pillow.