

APPENDICES

Synopsis of Light in August

There is a tragedy in Jefferson, the home of Joanna Burden, the heiress of a family of Northern abolitionists, is burnt to the ground, and Miss Burden is found dead. A man named Joe Brown claims the thousand-dollar reward for the information of the murderer. He claims that Joe Christmas, a half-negro mill worker who used to be his partner, has been Joanna's lover and committed the murder.

Joe Christmas, who was sent away from his orphanage at a young age and raised by the strict, almost inhuman McEachern, lives in the wilderness, trying to evade capture. He remembers his past, the fighting that followed his killing of McEachern and his separation from his first lover, the prostitute Bobbie Allen. Meanwhile, Joe goes to Mottstown, where he is captured. The townspeople are very angry that Joe, a "nigger," would dare to kill a white woman. Joe can only escape if a local man can collect the reward from transporting him safely to Jefferson. Joe's grandparents, whom he has never seen, happen to live in Mottstown and hear of his capture. His grandfather, the fanatic religionist and

racist Uncle Doc Hines wants to kill him, but his grandmother, Mrs. Hines, protects him.

They follow him to Jefferson, where they meet Byron Bunch. Byron takes them to see Reverend Hightower, and asks Hightower to make a false alibi for Joe that he was with Hightower on the night of the murder but he refused. Joe escapes from his captors in Jefferson and runs to Hightower's house, where Percy Grimm, a racist army captain, kills him. Before Grimm kills Joe, Hightower tries to claim that Joe was with him on the night of the murder but it fails. He dies not long thereafter because of his guilty feeling.

BIOGRAPHY

William Faulkner is recognised as one of America's greatest novelists and short story writers of the 20th century. Faulkner was born in New Albany, Mississippi, on September 25, 1897. His great-grandfather had moved from Tennessee to Mississippi, where he was a plantation owner, colonel in the Confederate army, railroad builder, and author of the popular novel *The White Rose of Memphis*.

Faulkner's family moved from New Albany to Oxford, Mississippi, when Faulkner was five. Oxford, the home of the University of Mississippi, was to be his home for most of his life. In school Faulkner was a mediocre student, and he quit high school in the tenth grade. However, he read widely and wrote poetry. At the outbreak of World War I Faulkner was rejected by the American Air Force because he did not meet the height and weight requirements so Faulkner enlisted in the Canadian Air Force. Although he did not see combat, he was made an honorary second lieutenant in December 1918.

In 1921 Faulkner went to New York City and tried to make contacts in the publishing world but was unsuccessful. On his return to Mississippi, Faulkner was appointed postmaster in Oxford of the university post office in 1922 and continued this job until 1924. In 1924 Faulkner met novelist and short story writer Sherwood Anderson, who impressed him and urged him to take up fiction. In six weeks Faulkner finished his first book *Soldier's Pay*, which was a self-conscious

book about the lost generation. His first successful novel, The Sound and the Fury, was published in 1929. The 1930's were Faulkner's most productive time because he produced As I Lay Dying in 1930, Sanctuary in 1931, Light in August in 1932, Absalom! Absalom! in 1936, The Unvanquished in 1938, and The Hamlet in 1940.

Faulkner did not gain real recognition until he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949. After this award, Faulkner became pretty much of a public figure, eventually even being asked (and accepting) an invitation by the U.S. State Department to go on goodwill tours throughout the world.

After 1949 Faulkner wrote at an increased pace but with diminishing power. His later works include Knight's Gambit (1949), which is a collection of detective stories; Requiem for a Nun (1951), which is a play with commentary; and A Fable (1954), an allegory with a World War I background. He also wrote The Town (1957) and The Mansion (1959) to complete the "Snopes" trilogy. His last novel was The Reivers (1962), a nostalgic comedy of boyhood. Faulkner died of a heart attack in his home called Rowan Oak in Oxford, Mississippi, on July 6, 1962.