

APPENDICES

Synopsis of Light in August by William Faulkner

A pregnant young girl, named Lena Grove, comes to Jefferson, Mississippi. She looks for Lucas Burch, the father of her child. When she comes there a tragedy happens in Jefferson. Joanna Burden's house, the heiress of an Abolitionist family, burns. And Miss Burden is found dead. Her nephew offers a thousand-dollar reward for the killer. A man named Joe Brown claims the award as he declares that Joe Christmas, a half-negro mill-worker who used to work with him, was Miss Burden's lover and he has killed her. People then start to search for Joe Christmas.

The story then goes back to two days before the fire and the murder. It tells that Joe Christmas is lying on his bed in the old Negro cabin in the estate of the spinster, Joanna Burden. Joe Brown comes, in his drunken condition and laughs at Christmas about his negro blood. Christmas holds him and hits him. Christmas then goes outside. He remembers his childhood. He was born of the mixed racial parents: his mother is white, his father is black. His grandfather didn't like him and sent him to an orphanage. He finally had to go out from the institution as they knew he had negro blood. Christmas had a relationship with a prostitute named Bobbie Allen, who worked at a restaurant. His relationship ended because the owners of the restaurant didn't want him to have a relationship with their prostitute as he had 'negro blood' in him. The next fifteen years was a continuous travel for Joe, drinking, making love to prostitutes, and challenging men into fights over his racial makeup. He went to Oklahoma, Mexico, Missouri, Chicago, Detroit. He at last came to

Jefferson, Mississippi where he sneaked into Miss Burden's kitchen window to get food for himself. As he ate, she came into the room and told him that if all he wanted was food, he would find it in her house.

Joe Christmas became Miss Burden's lover. Their relationship continued over many months. Miss Burden began to leave notes for Christmas. One day, she sent a note to him, so he came. She asked him to return to God and to kneel with her. He refused, but she opened her shawl and aimed a revolver at him. She pulled the trigger. It failed to fire when Miss Burden shot him. There were two bullets, Joe realized that Miss Burden intended to kill him, then kill herself.

It is now Tuesday, three days after the fire, Joe Christmas walks through the country as he is searched by all men concerning their accusation of Miss Burden's murder. Time goes on and he finally meets a Negro and asks him where he is going and the Negro says Mottstown. He takes a ride on the wagon and when he reaches Mottstown, he has a feeling that he is again on a long, circular road that has held him for thirty years and which he has never managed to escape from. He is finally captured in Mottstown. His grandfather, Uncle Doc Hines, happens to live in Mottstown. He wants to kill Christmas or have him lynched. Shortly, Joe Christmas is moved to Jefferson. In Jefferson he manages to run away but at last he is shot by Percy Grimm, a racist army captain.

Synopsis of Native Son by Richard Wright

One morning, Bigger Thomas, a young black man wakes up in his one-room apartment, which he shares with his mother, his sister and his brother. His mother

blames him for their poverty. She says that he only cares about his own pleasures. She warns him if he doesn't stop running with his 'gang' and does the right things, he will regret it some day. She then asks Bigger about a job he has been offered with a man named Mr. Dalton. She tells him if he gets the job, they can live in a bigger and more comfortable apartment and if he does not, the family will starve. Bigger hates his family because of their poverty and suffering and there is nothing he can do to help them. He feels angry and goes out.

After thinking that he can rob the house, Bigger finally accepts the idea of getting a job in the Daltons. He is hired as a chauffeur. His first task is to drive Mary, Mr. Dalton's daughter to the university. Actually, Mary is not going to the university. She wants to meet Jan Erlone, her lover, a communist. She asks him to keep it secret from his parents. From the way she speaks and acts, Bigger feels Mary is different from other white women he has met. She responds to him and treats him as human being, living in the same world with her. Bigger is introduced to Jan. Jan shakes his hand and tells Bigger to call him by the first name. Bigger thinks Mary and Jan are making fun of him. They make him aware of his black skin. What they do make him feel naked and ashamed; he feels ' a dumb, cold, and inarticulate hate toward them'. Mary and Jan force him to take them to a negro restaurant. They order drinks then all of them get drunk. When at home, Mary is too drunk to get to her bedroom by herself. So, Bigger helps her upstairs to her bedroom. But then in a drunken condition, Bigger begins to kiss Mary. Mary's mother, Mrs. Dalton, suddenly enters the room though he knows that Mrs. Dalton is blind, her presence terrifies him. Bigger fears that Mary in her drunk condition will say something in response to her

mother's calling and then it will reveal his presence there. He covers her face with a pillow and accidentally kills her. He then burns Mary's body in the Daltons' furnace to hide his crime. He makes a scenario that points Jan for Mary's disappearance as Dalton has prejudice against communism. It doesn't succeed. He is captured and is in a trial.

Bigger is led to a courtroom and he is accused of murder and rape. Max, a lawyer from the communist society who is willing to defend Bigger free of charge, visits Bigger in his cell. Without hope Bigger tells Max that there is no use helping him. Max tries to make Bigger trust him. When Bigger starts to trust Max, he is asked about his motives in killing Mary. Bigger says that he didn't rape her and he tells about his feeling that Mary's behavior frightened and shamed him. Bigger explains to Max that there has always been a line drawn in the world separating him from the people on the other side of the line who do not care about his poverty and shame. He says that whites do not let blacks do what they want.

Shortly, at the end of the court, although Bigger is sentenced to death, Max can open a communication as an individual with Bigger and states in his last speech that Bigger's killing is not an act against an individual, but a defense against the world in which Bigger has lived. Max says that there are millions more like Bigger and if the condition does not change, it will lead to another civil war.

Biography of William Faulkner

William Faulkner (1897-1962), born in an old southern family, grew up in Oxford, Mississippi. He joined the Canadian, and later the British, Royal Air Force

during the First World War. He studied for a while at the University of Mississippi, and temporarily worked for a New York bookstore and a New Orleans newspaper. Besides going on trips to Europe and Asia, and a few brief stays in Hollywood as a scriptwriter, he worked on his novels and short stories on a farm in Oxford.

Faulkner has invented a host of characters typical of the historical development and the following decadence of the South. The human drama in Faulkner's novels is then built on the model of the actual, historical drama extending over almost a century and a half. Each story and each novel contributes to the construction of a whole, which is the imaginary Yoknapatawpha County and its inhabitants. His masterpieces are: The Sound and the Fury (1929), the downfall of the Compson family seen through the minds of several characters, Light in August (1932), in which prejudice is shown to be most destructive when it is internalized, as in Joe Christmas, who believes, although it has never been proved, that one of his parents was a Negro. The theme of racial prejudice is brought up again in Absalom, Absalom! (1936), in which a young man is rejected by his father and brother because of his mixed blood. William Faulkner died on July 6, 1962

Biography of Richard Wright

Richard Wright was born on September 4, 1908, on a plantation near Natchez, Mississippi. The family's extreme poverty forced them to move to Memphis when Richard was six years old. Soon after, his father left the family for another woman and his mother was forced to work as a cook in order to support the family. Richard

briefly stayed in an orphanage during this period as well. His mother became ill while living in Memphis, so the family moved to Jackson, Mississippi.

After moving to New York in 1937, he joined the Communist Party. In 1938, he received a Guggenheim Fellowship, which allowed him to complete his first novel, Native Son (1940). In 1944 he broke with the Communist Party but continued to follow liberal ideologies. In his last years, he was plagued by illness (aerobic dysentery) and financial difficulty. Many of Wright's works failed to satisfy the rigid standards of the New Criticism, but his evolution as a writer has interested readers throughout the world. The importance of his works comes not from his technique and style, but from the impact his ideas and attitudes have had on American life. Wright is seen as a determining figure in the black revolution that followed his earliest novels. Bigger Thomas, the central figure of Native Son, is a murderer, but his situation encouraged the thought of black leaders toward the desire to confront the world and help shape the future of their race.