

## READING

### William Faulkner

William Faulkner (originally Falkner) is one of the best-known American novelists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was born in Albany, Mississippi, on September 25, 1897. He was named after his great-grandfather, William Clark Falkner, who was a very adventurous man: he fought during the Civil War, built a local railway and wrote a popular romantic novel called *The White Rose of Memphis*.

As a teenager, Faulkner liked drawing and he also enjoyed reading and writing poetry. He never finished high school. In July 1918, he joined the British Royal Air Force as a pilot under training in Canada but the war ended before he could travel to Europe. After his return to the United States, he started studying at the University of Mississippi, but he dropped out after three semesters.

In 1925, Faulkner published his first novel, *Soldiers' Pay*. After that, he spent some time in Paris. Back in the USA, an older American writer called Sherwood Anderson gave Faulkner some advice. He told the young author to write about his native region of Mississippi. Faulkner took the advice and began writing about the places and people of his childhood. In 1929, he published his probably most famous novel, *The Sound and the Fury*. In the same year, he married Estelle Oldham. A daughter, Jill, was born to the couple in 1933.

In the 1930s and 1940s, Faulkner continued writing books about the South and became successful and famous. He also travelled to Hollywood and wrote screenplays for several movies. With the money from his books and from Hollywood, Faulkner bought an airplane and took up flying as a hobby. Later, he gave the plane to his youngest brother, Dean. In 1935, Dean crashed and died in the plane.

In 1946, Malcolm Cowley published an anthology of Faulkner's writing called *The Portable Faulkner*. It was successful and many people became interested in William Faulkner and his work. Two years later, he published *Intruder in the Dust*, the story of a black man falsely accused of murder. He sold the film rights to this book for 50,000 dollars. In 1950, William Faulkner won the Nobel Prize in Literature.

William Faulkner died of a heart attack on July 6, 1962.

#### 1 Read the text and answer the following questions.

- 1 What activities did William Faulkner enjoy as a teenager? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 Where did William Faulkner train to become a pilot? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 What advice did Faulkner get from Sherwood Anderson? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 What two things happened to Faulkner in 1929? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 What did Faulkner buy with the money he earned in the 1930s? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 Who published the anthology called *The Portable Faulkner*? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 How much money did William Faulkner get for the film rights to the *Intruder in the Dust*? \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2 Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)?

- 1 William Faulkner's great-grandfather was also a writer. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 William Faulkner didn't finish his studies. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 William Faulkner fought in World War One as a pilot. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 William Faulkner spent some time in France. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 In 1935, William Faulkner had a plane crash. \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 *Intruder in the Dust* is about a black man who kills somebody. \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 In 1950, William Faulkner got the Nobel Peace Prize. \_\_\_\_\_

### Literary Focus

**Directions:** Answer the following questions about the following literary terms.

1. What is *mood*? How does William Faulkner use *diction*, specific word choice, to set the *mood* of the story?

---

---

2. What is the *setting* of the story? How does Faulkner use the *setting* to make a statement about the historical period?

---

---

3. What hints or clues *foreshadow* the gruesome ending of the story?

---

---

### Critical Thinking

**Directions:** Historical details in this story reveal much about the setting. Based on how Faulkner develops the setting and characters in *A Rose for Emily*, how do you think he felt about the Deep South? Do you think that Faulkner was criticizing the time period? Consider which characters Faulkner seems to ridicule and which ones he seems to sympathize with. Use concrete examples to support your answer.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---