

Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Spring 2021 – Ten Sessions

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Assignment for Session 2

Reading:

> Chapter 1 of *Sartoris*, on the private course web page, www.stephendsenturia.com/absalom

Topics:

We start with the opening chapter of *Sartoris*, Faulkner's first Yoknapatawpha County novel, for a reason: Before plunging into the complexities of *Absalom, Absalom!*, I want to spend a session just on Faulkner's treatment of time and character and how he uses story-telling to place different time intervals in front of the reader within the space of a few sentences. It is not necessary to dwell on the details of the Civil War stories except to the extent that they reveal the character of John and Bayard Sartoris.

Because I'm hoping you will "stick to the text," I ask that you attempt to sort out the characters without the aid of the genealogy posted on the website, but if you get stuck (as you might), use it as a last resort.

Assignment:

1) **Please practice reading aloud.** We will take turns reading the first part of this chapter aloud in class to get our ears attuned to the Faulkner cadence.

2) Here is a list of some of the characters mentioned in the *Sartoris* excerpt.

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| > Old Man Falls | > John Sartoris |
| > Old Bayard Sartoris | > Simon |
| > Young Bayard Sartoris | > Elnora |
| > Virginia Du Pre (Aunt Jenny) | > The Carolina Bayard Sartoris |

Using specific lines from the text, make notes on what you think you know about these characters:

- > When they lived?
- > How related to each other?
- > Are they part of the book's present time, or only brought in by story-telling?
- > What are salient character traits?

Please come to class prepared to cite specific text passages. It will be your input that determines what happens in our session.