

Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*

Spring 2021 – Ten Sessions

Stephen Senturia

Assignment for Session 4

Reading:

> Chapter 3 of *Absalom, Absalom!*, pp. 46-69.

Selection of Passages:

Starting with this Session, YOU, the Study Group participants, will have a strong voice in setting the agenda of the discussion.

As you read, I ask you to identify at least one passage that strikes YOU of deserving attention in class:

Significant plot elements

Character-revealing (especially for this Session 4)

Language rich enough to enjoy reading aloud

Unresolved or unexplained puzzles in the text

You should note page, line number, the first few words of the section, and where it ends.

Email your selections to me at sds@mit.edu. I will assemble them into an agenda for the day of the session.

Discussion Topics for This Session:

> Recapitulate the choice of narrative devices and the story and plot elements through Chapter 3, so we are all on the same page.

> The characters, as we know them so far (You may wish to review Chs 1 and 2 as well):

Quentin

Rosa

Mr. Compson

Sutpen

General Compson

Ellen

Judith and Henry

Bon

Rosa

Mr. Coldfield

Clytie

Wash Jones

> Unresolved issues:

We are less than one-quarter of the way through the book, yet a good bit of the story is already in front of us. There are, however, unresolved questions that arise as we read. Faulkner often tosses in little bits, either phrases that are hard to comprehend, or bits that feel like throw-aways or even puzzles that can remain unresolved for many pages.

What have you encountered that still mystifies or troubles you? (It might be a lot!) I encourage you to identify the unanswered questions as we move through this complex text and include them in your email to me to be scheduled for discussion.

Example of an unresolved (unresolvable at this point) issue:

p. 23, 5th line, “Mr. Compson’s letter.”