

# **The Sound and the Fury Book Notes**

## **The Sound and the Fury by William Faulkner**

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## Author/Context

Born William Cuthbert Faulkner, the famous Southern author was born September 25, 1897, in New Albany, Mississippi, and raised in Oxford by a well-to-do family, who would have two more sons after William. An intellectually gifted child, school bored him. He never finished high school. After leaving school, he earned money taking a few odd jobs around Oxford. Faulkner wanted to enlist in the English Royal Air Force (RAF), and applied under false pretenses. He told the enlistment officer that his last name was spelled "Faulkner," and that he was in fact from England. He successfully enrolled as a cadet in the Academy one year after he left high school in Mississippi. His classmates in Toronto (where he was assigned to study military aeronautics) recalled his quick wit, and were also under the impression that William had attended Yale.

During this time, he wrote poetry and sketched in his notebook. That same year, 1918, his brother had been badly injured across the ocean in World War One, and was scheduled to return home shortly. In December of 1918, the RAF honorably discharged Faulkner, for he was no longer needed there. He returned home to Oxford, and was later known to wear his uniform, appropriate only for special military ceremonies, casually around the town. At home, he enrolled at the University of Mississippi as a special student, and one year later, 1920, he dropped out. While working in many different fields for a few years, he published his first book, *The Marble Faun*, a collection of poems, in 1924. While he wrote serious fiction until his death in 1962, he made his money by writing screenplays for Hollywood movies, which he did not much enjoy.

Posthumously, Faulkner is known for his novels and short stories about the fictional Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi--probably modeled after his own hometown of Oxford. In the same works, he chronicled the personal and familial histories of residents of this county, particularly, members of the Snopes family. In literary circles, Faulkner is best known for his stream-of-consciousness writing style. His books often contain more than one narrator, whose narration frequently jumps around time and place. Besides *The Sound and the Fury*, some of Faulkner's most important works include (in chronological order): *As I Lay Dying*, *Light in August*, *Absalom, Absalom!*, *A Fable*, and *The Reivers*. He received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949, and received two Pulitzer Prizes, for *A Fable* and *The Reivers*.

### Bibliography

Blotner, Joseph. *Faulkner: A Biography*. Random House: New York, 1984.

Faulkner, William C. *The Sound and the Fury: the corrected text*. Vintage Books: New York, 1987, c. 1984.



# Plot Summary

*The Sound and the Fury* is the story of the fall of the Compson family, a bourgeois Jackson, Mississippi family in the early 1900's. The novel is divided into four sections, each told by a different character. The three Compson sons, Benjy, Quentin, and Jason Compson, and the family's black servant, Dilsey Gibson, each have their own section in which they tell their collective story.

Benjy's section is first. He is severely mentally retarded, thus the narrative is confusing, largely because his memory jumps back and forth in time at a moment's notice. The present date in the book, however, is April Seventh, 1928, his 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. On this day, he recalls memories of his beloved sister, Caddy, who, we find out, is no longer a part of the household. Benjy's father and brother, Mr. Jason Compson and Quentin, have both died. The people left in the family are Benjy's mother, brother, and niece, Mrs. Caroline Compson, Jason, and Quentin, who is actually Caddy's daughter. Dilsey, who has worked for the Compsons for years, is still around, managing the entire household, as Mrs. Compson, a hypochondriac, confines herself to bed and complains endlessly about her life and her family. Dilsey's daughter and grandson are also around, helping out with chores in the house. Benjy's memories reveal that Caddy was the only family member that truly cared for him. While Quentin was always good to him, he was usually lost in thought, or trying to grab Caddy's attention. Jason, as a child, was a cranky tattletale. While Caddy always gave him her sisterly affection, as she grew up she got into lots of trouble with young men in town. She had many boyfriends, and Benjy always used to cry whenever he saw her with them. Her promiscuity ended up producing the illegitimate Quentin, a girl named after her dead brother.

Quentin (the male) tells his story on June Second, 1910, while attending Harvard University. The day of his death (he committed suicide by drowning himself in the Charles River) he walks around Cambridge, running errands and mulling over his thoughts. Quentin is a character filled with anxiety. His obsession with his sister, Caddy, largely contributes to his angst. At first, it appeared as though he were sexually interested in her, but as he recalls conversations he had with his father about it, we find that it is her promiscuity and the accompanying shame and disgrace that troubled him so deeply. He wanted to protect his sister from the harshness and judgment of the world. Ensnared in his neuroses, he kills himself, having not yet completed his first year at Harvard.

Jason Compson narrates the third section, which takes place a day earlier than Benjy's birthday. At the time of his telling he is the breadwinner among the Compsons, working at a general store. He spends his time being bitter about his pathetic family, and is thus cruel to everyone, especially his niece, Quentin, from whom he steals the money that her exiled mother sends her every month. Jason tells us that he plans on sending Benjy to a home for the mentally handicapped once his mother passes away. We also find out that his father drank himself to death, just one year after Quentin killed himself. Before Mr. Compson died, Caddy had her daughter, Quentin. Mrs. Compson insists on raising



her, for she doesn't want her granddaughter living with a disgraced single woman like Caddy. Jason spends his energy tormenting his niece for her truancy and promiscuity.

Their antagonistic relationship surfaces again during Dilsey's section, the fourth and final part of the novel, which takes place on Easter day, one day after Benjy's birthday. Dilsey is an old woman who still does the bulk of the household work for the Compson. She shows love to Benjy, taking him to her black church for Easter services. She is not only the backbone of the family for whom she works, but also she is highly respected among Jefferson's black community. While Dilsey enjoys church, Jason spends his energy chasing after his niece, who ran away with a man from the visiting circus. When she finds the stash of cash her uncle had been accumulating and had kept from her all her life, she immediately skips town. Jason goes after her in a blind rage. He never finds her, but in the process he gets hurt in a fight, and his car breaks down. He must retreat back to the Compson estate empty-handed. The final image of the novel depicts, Benjy and Jason, slouched in a carriage drawn by one of their black servants--Jason is left defeated and pitiful.



## Major Characters

**Benjy Compson :** The first narrator of the novel, Benjy is the Compsons' severely mentally retarded son. Though he is celebrating his 33rd birthday the weekend the book takes place, he can hardly perform any daily task by himself, such as bathing or eating or dressing. His one happiness in life was his sister, Caddy, who is no longer a member of the household. He spends his days being attended to by the family's black servants.

**Caddy Compson:** She is the only daughter of the family. Caddy was one of the few people in the household who treated Benjy well. While she had a close friendship with both Benjy and her older brother, Quentin, she grows into a promiscuous young woman who has an illegitimate child, and is thus thrown out of her husband's house. Because of her loose ways, the family refuses to even speak her name in the house.

**Mrs. Caroline Compson:** Mrs. Compson is the woman of the house. She is melodramatic and a hypochondriac. She spends her time in bed, lamenting the sorry state of her family. At the book's present time, she is a widow.

**Jason Compson:** The third narrator of the novel, he is the youngest son of the Compsons. He became the man of the house after his father died. He earns his money working at a country general store. His limited opportunities add to his bitter, cynical attitude towards life, a tyrant to the people who remain in the house. He is especially cruel to his niece, Quentin, Caddy's daughter.

**Mr. Jason Compson:** He died in 1911 from his alcoholism, one year after his son Quentin committed suicide. He took a very nihilistic approach towards life, which he bestowed onto his son, Quentin.

**Quentin Compson:** A Compson son, he narrates the second portion of the novel. He tells his story while attending Harvard, eighteen years before all the other narrators tell their stories. While he is a sensitive and intelligent character, he is also incredibly neurotic and obsessed with his sister, Caddy. His neuroses lead him to commit suicide, something he plans to do shortly after narrating his portion of the novel.

**Dilsey Gibson:** The fourth section of the novel focuses on Dilsey. She and her family work for the Compson family, but she is the stalwart of the household. A black servant of the Compsons, in addition to raising her own children, she raised all the Compson kids, in their parents' neglect. Even in her weakened state as an old woman, she does the lion's share of the household's work.

**Quentin Compson (female) :** Quentin is the illegitimate child of Caddy. Her father is not known to anyone, not even her mother. Dilsey and her grandmother are now raising her in the Compson house, where she is constantly at odds with her uncle, Jason. At seventeen years old, she has followed in her mother's footsteps with regards to her sexual behavior. However, she is not nearly as kind and gentle as her mother. Instead, she throws tantrums often and does not show respect to any adult in the house.



## Minor Characters

**Luster:** Luster is Dilsey's grandson. His main job consists of tending to Benjy. Being a restless teenager, he gets quickly tired of the all day job, and teases Benjy to entertain himself.

**Versh:** Versh is Dilsey's older son. A few years older than Quentin, Benjy, Caddy, and Jason, his job consisted of making sure the Compson kids did not get into trouble. He also tended especially to Benjy, a job similar to the one his nephew, Luster, has.

**Uncle Maury Bascomb:** Maury is the alcoholic brother of Mrs. Compson. He is dependent on Compson money, which he invests in fruitless schemes.

**T.P. Gibson:** He is Dilsey's son, one year younger than Benjy. He grew up with Quentin, Caddy, Jason, and Benjy, and now his main job is to drive around the Compsons in their carriage.

**Roskus Gibson:** Roskus is Dilsey's husband. Before his death, he tended to the horses in the stable.

**Frony :** Frony is Dilsey's daughter, and Luster's mother. She grew up playing with all the Compson children.

**Damuddy:** Damuddy is the name the children have given to their grandmother, whose funeral day Benjy recounts in his section of the novel. Insensitive Jason, as a child, was especially attached to his grandmother.

**Shreve Mackenzie:** Shreve is Quentin's friendly Canadian roommate at Harvard.

**Gerald Bland:** He is Quentin's acquaintance, and a fellow Southerner at Harvard. He comes from a well to do family, and is an arrogant ladies' man.

**Mrs. Bland:** She is Gerald's overprotective mother. She has traveled from Kentucky to Harvard with him, and dotes on him constantly. She is a proud Southerner who scoffs at Yankees.

**Herbert:** Herbert married Caddy the same year Quentin committed suicide. He also went to Harvard, but was thrown out for cheating. He throws Caddy out of the house for sleeping around.

**Little girl:** Immigrant Italian girl follows around Quentin through Boston's streets. He buys her a cinnamon bun and an ice cream cone. She doesn't speak a word to him. While he looks for her home, he is arrested for kidnapping her. Charges were later dropped.

**Dalton Ames:** Dalton Ames is one of the many young men that Caddy became intimate with. When Caddy became pregnant, he was the main suspect. He appeared to not care at all about Caddy's state or what could be his future baby when Quentin, enraged



at him for disgracing his sister, confronted him and tried to fight him. Dalton greatly overpowered Caddy's little brother. He ended up taking no responsibility for the child, for it was never quite confirmed whether or not he fathered Caddy's daughter.

**Reverend Shogog:** Reverend gave the Easter day sermon at Dilsey's church. A guest preacher from St. Louis, he at first appeared oddly wrinkled and small. By the time he had finished giving his sermon, however, he moved the entire congregation to tears.



## Objects/Places

**Benjy's bellows:** Benjy bellows and moans several times throughout the novel. Though he cries when he is upset, he bellows especially loudly whenever anyone says the name, 'Caddy.'

**Caddy's dirty drawers:** The night of their grandmother's funeral, the children help Caddy climb a tree outside their house to see what was going on inside. From the other children's view, the only things they could see were Caddy's muddy drawers. Dilsey later scolds Caddy thoroughly for dirtying her clothes. When both Benjy and Quentin think back on that night as kids, the image of their sister's muddy drawers stands out clearly in their minds.

**Watch:** Watches and time seem to trouble Quentin through the entire section he narrates. After he destroys the face of his own heirloom watch, he goes to the repair store, and wants to know desperately if any of the watches there tell the correct time. Mr. Compson offers his son a lot of depressing adages about watches and time, which Quentin repeats during his section. Quentin is always concerned with what time it is, and he describes in detail the ringing of the bells at Harvard, signifying the passage of an hour.

**Honeysuckle:** The scent of honeysuckle haunts Quentin, even when in Boston, where hardly any honeysuckle grows. He says he associates the smell with his house, his family, and especially Caddy. Obsessed with his sister, honeysuckle is always present whenever he describes her and her affairs.

**Pasture:** The family used to own a pasture, across from their house, which they sold in order for Quentin to go to Harvard. Benjy now hangs on the outskirts of it, watching people play golf on it. While the Compsons owned it, Benjy used to play in the pasture with Caddy. Both Caddy and Quentin went to the pasture when they needed to be alone and away from other members of the family.



## Quotes

Quote 1: "'You're not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 9

Quote 2: "Father and Quentin can't hurt you," April Seventh, 1928, pg. 11

Quote 3: "'Carry Maury up the hill, Versh.' Versh squatted and I got on his back." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 20

Quote 4: "'They ain't no luck on this place.' Roskus said. 'I seen it at first but when they changed his name I knowed it.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 29

Quote 5: "'They aint no luck going be on no place where one of they own chillen's name aint never spoke.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 31

Quote 6: "We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 39

Quote 7: "shining veil," April Seventh, 1928, pg. 40

Quote 8: "I wont...I wont anymore, ever." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 48

Quote 9: "You got him started on purpose, because you know I'm sick." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 60

Quote 10: "Caddy held me and I could hear us all, and the darkness, and something I could smell. And then I could see the windows, where the trees were buzzing. Then the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been asleep." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 75

Quote 11: "I give it [watch] to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools." June Second, 1910, pg. 76

Quote 12: "That never had a sister." June Second, 1910, pg. 77

Quote 13: "Because if it were just to hell; if that were all of it. Finished. If things just finished themselves. Nobody else there but her and me. If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. *I have committed incest I said Father it was I*" June Second, 1910, pg. 79

Quote 14: "It's not when you realize that nothing can help you--religion, pride, anything--it's when you realize that you don't need any aid." June Second, 1910, pg. 80



Quote 15: "Holding all I used to be sorry about like the new moon holding water." June Second, 1910, pg. 85

Quote 16: "Niggers say a drowned man's shadow was watching for him in the water all the time... What a sinful waste Dilsey would say. Benjy knew it when Damuddy died. He cried. *He smell hit. He smell hit.*" June Second, 1910, pg. 90

Quote 17: "I didn't mean to speak so sharply but women have no respect for each other for themselves" June Second, 1910, pg. 96

Quote 18: "Father and I protect women from one another from themselves our women" June Second, 1910, pg. 96

Quote 19: "have an affinity for evil for supplying whatever the evil lacks in itself... until the evil has served its purpose whether it ever existed or no" June Second, 1910, pg. 97

Quote 20: "There was something terrible in me sometimes at night I could see it grinning at me I could see it through them grinning at me through their faces it's gone now and I'm sick" June Second, 1910, pg. 112

Quote 21: "Purity [specifically, virginity] is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature. It's nature is hurting you not Caddy" June Second, 1910, pg. 116

Quote 22: "And maybe when He says Rise the eyes will come floating up too, out of the deep quiet and the sleep, to look on glory. And after a while the flat irons would come floating up. I hid them [flatirons] under the end of the bridge and went back and leaned on the rail." June Second, 1910, pg. 116

Quote 23: "Only you and me then amid the pointing and the horror walled by the clean flame" June Second, 1910, pg. 117

Quote 24: "dancing sitting down" June Second 1910, pg. 135

Quote 25: "I could not be a virgin, with so many of them walking along in the shadows and whispering with their soft girl voices lingering in the shadowy places and the words coming out and perfume and eyes you could feel not see, but if it was that simple to do it wouldn't be anything and if it wasn't anything, what was I" June Second, 1910, pg. 147

Quote 26: "we did how can you not know it if you'll just wait and I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait" June Second, 1910, pg. 148

Quote 27: "don't cry I'm bad anyway you cant help it" June Second, 1910, pg. 158

Quote 28: "theres a curse on us its not our fault is it our fault" June Second, 1910, pg. 158



Quote 29: "listen no good taking it so hard its not your fault kid it would have been some other fellow" June Second, 1910, pg. 160

Quote 30: "no but theyre all bitches" June Second, 1910, pg. 160

Quote 31: "I hit him I was still trying to hit him long after he was holding my wrists but I still tried then it was like I was looking at him through a piece of colored glass I could hear my blood" June Second, 1910, pg. 161

Quote 32: "the whole thing came to symbolise night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of gray halfnight where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves" June Second, 1910, pg. 170

Quote 33: "the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even them without a ray of light." June Second, 1910, pg. 173

Quote 34: "a fine sound" June Second, 1910, pg. 174

Quote 35: "A fine dead sound we will swap Benjy's pasture for a fine dead sound." June Second, 1910, pg. 174

Quote 36: "it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been" June Second, 1910, pg. 177

Quote 37: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 180

Quote 38: "Ask her [your grandmother] what became of those checks. You saw her burn one of them, as I remember" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 187

Quote 39: "I'm bad and I'm going to hell, and I don't care. I'd rather be in hell than anywhere where you are" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 189

Quote 40: "I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them. Always keep them guessing. If you cant think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw." April Sixth, 1928, pg. 193

Quote 41: "Well, I got to...watching them throwing dirt into it, slapping it on anyway like they were making mortar or something or building a fence, and I began to feel sort of funny and so I decided to walk around for a while" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 202

Quote 42: "if she tried Dilsey again, Mother was going to fire Dilsey and send Ben to Jackson and take Quentin and go away" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 208



Quote 43: "I'm glad I haven't got the sort of conscience I've got to nurse like a sick puppy all the time" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 229

Quote 44: "Whatever I do, it's your fault...If I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me. I wish I was dead. I wish we were all dead" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 260

Quote 45: "Sometimes I think she is the judgment of both of them upon me" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 261

Quote 46: "And just let me have twenty-four hours without any damn New York jew to advise me what it's going to do...I just want an even chance to get my money back. And once I've done that they can bring all Beale street and all bedlam in here and two of them can sleep in my bed and another one can have my place at my table too" April Sixth, 1928, pg. 264

Quote 47: "She had been a big woman once but now her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadding skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 265-56

Quote 48: "It was as different as day and dark from his former tone, with a sad, timbrous quality like an alto horn, sinking into their hearts and speaking there again when it had ceased in fading and cumulate echoes" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 294

Quote 49: "I got de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb!" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 295

Quote 50: "I've seed de first en de last...I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 297

Quote 51: "harshly recapitulant, seeming to get an actual pleasure out of his outrage and impotence. The sheriff did not appear to be listening at all" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 303

Quote 52: "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor of the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for ten years; together they merely symbolised the job in the bank of which he had been deprived before he ever got it" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 306

Quote 53: "a bitch" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 307

Quote 54: "You want somethin to beller about? ...Caddy! Beller now. Caddy! Caddy! Caddy!" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 316

Quote 55: "There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound, and Luster's eyes backrolling for a white instant" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 320



Quote 56: "The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and façade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place" April Eighth, 1928, pg. 321



# Topic Tracking: Compson Curse

## April Seventh, 1928

Compson Curse 1: Here, Roskus gives his opinion on the state of the Compson family. This is the first reference to the family's unluckiness in the novel. Roskus, their black servant, who has known the family all of his life, had his suspicions confirmed when the family decided to change their mentally retarded son's name to Benjamin from Maury.

## June Second, 1910

Compson Curse 2: Here, Quentin and his father are discussing the state of their family, most specifically, Quentin's troubled sister, Caddy. Mr. Compson explains his daughter's behavior to his son by saying that women in general have a knack for bringing evil to any situation in which they find themselves. Thus, Caddy's fall into disgrace seems only natural to Mr. Compson.

Compson Curse 3: Mrs. Compson is found complaining yet again about her family, specifically, Caddy. She begs her husband to let her leave with young Jason, her favorite, because they are not the ones bringing shame to the family. This is the first time in time in the book that we see anybody explicitly say that the Compson family is cursed.

Compson Curse 4: Here, Quentin recalls a conversation he has with Caddy about the young men she fools around with. Both of them have just found out that Caddy is carrying an illegitimate child, another mark on the Compson family. Quentin never finds her happy after being with all the men she is with, and thus asks her why she does it in the first place. She replies that she doesn't really know why, but that she feels there is something inherently "terrible" within her, and she sees that same awfulness in the faces of the men she sleeps with. The terror seems to almost haunt her.

Compson Curse 5: A pivotal moment for the pair of Caddy and Quentin, their exchange takes place after Caddy goes to meet Dalton Ames, the young man who impregnated her, but who was not her husband. Both are upset, yet Quentin is crying even more than his sister over what has happened to her. She tries to console him, telling him that she simply is just a bad, immoral person. He tells her explicitly that there is a curse on the family, which is the first time he ever says anything about a curse. Despite the fact he thinks there's a curse on the Compsons, in his quote he appears to feel guilty, not knowing whether or not the children are to blame for it.

Compson Curse 6: Here, Quentin imagines his entire family in hell. His parents are the guards at the top of the dungeon, while he and his siblings drown beneath in hell's darkness. This marks the first time he has included anyone from his family besides Caddy in his hell fantasies.

## April Sixth, 1928



Compson Curse 7: In a fight that Jason and his niece, Quentin, have before he drops her off at school, she yells at him that she does not really care what happens to her, because she is bad and belongs in hell anyway. Here, she seems to echo the sentiments of her mother, who once said in an exchange with her brother, Quentin, that she is an inherently bad person and cannot help her behavior. Here, we see that Caddy's perception of herself as bad has continued to the next generation.

Compson Curse 8: Here, Jason's memory tells us about Quentin's parentage. It is confirmed that Caddy is her mother, but nobody, not even her mother, has any idea who her father is. A bastard child living in the grand old Compson household embarrasses Jason and his mother to no end.

Compson Curse 9: As the family gathers for dinner, young Quentin throws one of her many tantrums. As she storms up the stairs, Mrs. Compson makes a comment about how her granddaughter is the judgment of two of her children, Quentin and Caddy, onto her. Because she never had a close relationship with those two, she almost says that what she is left with, her granddaughter, is her punishment from the two children that are no longer around.

### **April Eighth, 1928**

Compson Curse 10: When Dilsey takes Benjy to her church service on Easter, she pays special attention to him. Something in the reverend's sermon truly moved the usually absent Benjy to tears. Seeing this touched Dilsey deeply, and she cried in turn, murmuring over and over that she had seen the first and the last of the Compsons. Being the one strong character among the entire clan, she is the one who can observe the downfall of the family. She thus declared the death of the Compson clan.



# Topic Tracking: Quentin's Obsession with Caddy

## June Second, 1910

Obsession 1: Quentin says here that he has deflowered Caddy, not those other boys from town. He imagines the two of them in hell together, with nobody else around. The image of hell is one of the first hints we find of Quentin's suicidal tendencies.

Obsession 2: Here, we find more insight into the nature of his obsession with his sister. In a memory of a conversation he had with his father, Quentin doesn't express a lust for his sister, but instead expresses the desire to protect the women of his family from themselves, for, according to his father; women have no respect for themselves.

Obsession 3: While walking along the Charles River, plotting his own death, Quentin speaks to someone in his thoughts about being in hell. The person to whom he speaks is Caddy. He wants to take her to hell with him, where he thinks he is going after his suicide.

Obsession 4: Quentin remembers a night years ago in their barn, when he and his girlfriend were fooling around. Though they were about to start having sex, Quentin's thoughts were still on Caddy. When she accidentally happens upon them, Quentin's attention and affection immediately falls onto her, angering his friend, Natalie. Angry with each other, he and Caddy start to fight. This is the only time in the book that we see Quentin at all associated with a female other than Caddy. Even in this instance, Quentin seems to care little for his girlfriend.

Obsession 5: Quentin again remembers a conversation he has with Caddy about all the young men in her life. In his obsession over her and her lack of virginity, he insists to her that he was the one who has disgraced her, not the other men. He wants to be the one to be ashamed with his sister.

Obsession 6: In this instance, Quentin remembers fighting his sister's jerk of a lover, Dalton Ames. Quentin is enraged at him for possibly having impregnated his sister, but Dalton does not seem to care a bit. The moment that really set Quentin over the edge happened when Dalton tried to tell Quentin that he should not worry about his sister, because all women are bitches anyway. Quentin proceeded to take a swing at him, but ended up passed out on the ground. He recalled this memory many years later while in Cambridge, hanging out with his college peers, including Gerald Bland. When arrogant ladies' man Gerald boasted about his sexual conquests, also calling all women bitches, Quentin instinctively punched him. Again, Quentin ended up bloody and beaten up, but didn't care because he seemed possessed to fight anyone who would say anything bad about women, remembering his sister, Caddy.



Obsession 7: In a conversation he has with his father about Caddy's promiscuity, he tries to convince his father that he indeed did sleep with his sister. His father sees through him, and Quentin then confesses that he only wishes that he had, so that he could protect her from the cruel world's judgment. This conversation sheds more light onto the nature of Quentin's obsession, which appears to not be a sexual lust after all.



# Topic Tracking: Time/Memory

## April Seventh, 1928

Time/Memory 1: The first scene in the novel shows us that Benjy's mind and memory do not travel in easy to follow, logical pathways. Anything can take his mind back to times past. In this instance, snagging his clothes on the fence in the yard reminds him of a time when Caddy helped him get uncaught from a fence post when they were children. Concrete objects, smells, tastes, and other tactile senses set off his memory, making the record of his entire life a convoluted jumble of events.

Time/Memory 2: As he passes the carriage house, he is reminded of a time where he took a ride in the carriage with his mother. This is another example of how an object triggers his memory

Time/Memory 3: Here, Luster orders Benjy to play in the creek in order to get him out of his hair for a minute. The thirty three year old man wades in the water, and is again reminded of a time as a very small child, when he and his siblings played in the creek as children.

Time/Memory 4: This is an example of one of Benjy's memories triggering yet another memory. Here, he sees an image of a young Caddy, peeking into the house, dirty drawers exposed. This image reminds him of a more grown up Caddy, looking beautiful while getting married at home.

Time/Memory 5: At the present time, seeing Caddy's daughter, Quentin, reminds Benjy of a teenage Caddy. Though they look similar physically, Quentin does not treat Benjy with nearly the same amount of affection Caddy ever did.

Time/Memory 6: Here, Benjy celebrates his birthday by blowing out the candles on his cake. The candles' flames, and Luster's whispering of the name "Caddy" remind him of a time when he and Caddy were by the fire together, crying.

## June Second, 1910

Time/Memory 7: Quentin begins narration of his section by talking about the heirloom watch his father gave him before going to Harvard. His father's first quote is representative of the depressing pieces of advice he gives to his son throughout the section. Here, he tells his son not to try and fight time, for it is unconquerable.

Time/Memory 8: Quentin was very excited to go to the watch repair store. Here, he becomes spellbound by the different times the many watches kept. He was very curious to know if any of them told the correct time. After glancing at his watch that still worked, he expressed that it held everything he used to be sorry about. His quote indicates how important time is to Quentin.



Time/Memory 9: At this point in the novel, Quentin has mulled over his obsession with his sister. Here, he recalls a conversation he has with his father about the nature of his obsession and the root of his problem. After he and his father talk for a long while, Mr. Compson tells his son that his pain is only temporary. This did not comfort Quentin, however, but only made him more anxious. The temporary, as opposed to permanent, quality of his pain is what really started to bother Quentin.



## April Seventh, 1928 (Section 1)

The novel begins April 7, 1928. We are first introduced to Benjy and Luster. Benjy inexplicably moans and cries. His bellows are deafening, and his thoughts do not flow logically from one to the next, so we can thus quickly presume that he is mentally handicapped. Luster is Benjy's family's servant, and must follow Benjy around and attend to his every need. As the scene begins, Benjy stands on the outside of a golf course, moaning, but Luster is only concerned with finding his precious quarter to see a circus coming to town that night, and thus is impatient with his charge. Benjy's mind travels back and forth in time. Places, objects, smells, and other characters' mere presence seem to trigger Benjy's flashbacks to his childhood. For example, as he tries to climb under the fence and snags himself on a nail, he remembers a time as a child when Caddy, his sister, unsnags him from the same fence, and helps him crawl through.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 1

This flashback takes place at a Christmas when Benjy was a child. Here, we meet Caddy, Versh, a family servant, Benjy's mother, and his Uncle Maury. When Caddy returns home from school, she wants to go outside and play with her brother. Mrs. Compson is very worried that her little baby will get sick in the winter cold. Uncle Maury convinces her that the kids will be fine. While Benjy's mother calls him her "poor little baby," Caddy treats him as though there were nothing wrong with him. She also lets him know that he can always depend on her: "'You're not a poor baby. Are you. Are you. You've got your Caddy. Haven't you got your Caddy.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 9

As Benjy and Luster pass by the carriage house, Benjy's mind then races ahead to a time when he and his mother took a trip in their carriage to the cemetery.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 2

One of Mrs. Compson's other children, Jason says, "Father and Quentin can't hurt you" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 11. He is referring to Mrs. Compson's husband and son, Quentin, whose graves Mrs. Compson and Benjy are going to visit. For a moment, Benjy's mind travels backwards to the aforementioned Christmas with Caddy. Uncle Maury had asked the two of them to deliver a letter to their neighbor, Mrs. Patterson. He instructed them to keep it a secret, and Mrs. Patterson appeared anxious while receiving it in her husband's presence, but we don't know what the letter says.

As Luster follows Benjy around the neighborhood, he runs into a friend of his. They talk about today being Benjy's 33<sup>rd</sup> birthday. While Luster searches for his quarter, he tells Benjy to go play in the creek. Wading in the water reminds Benjy yet again of his childhood.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 3



In this scene, Caddy, Quentin, Versh, Jason, and Benjy are all present. Caddy and Quentin's clothes got wet while playing, and the children squabble and threaten to tell on each other to Dilsey and their parents. At the time, our narrator was not called Benjy: "'Carry Maury up the hill, Versh.' Versh squatted and I got on his back." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 20

Benjy's memory then jumps forward to an evening where T.P. and Quentin get drunk off of sassafrilluh. A wedding is taking place at the same time, but nobody mentions whose it is. In their drunkenness, they make Benjy try the alcohol, and Versh must eventually carry Benjy back to bed.

Benjy's memory of Versh takes him back again to the same night when all the children were playing by the creek. Roskus, T.P.'s father, tells the kids to come back home; their parents had company. Though Caddy tries to convince herself and the other children otherwise, their parents were not enjoying the wedding. Their father doesn't seem to care about their mischief, but only tells them to listen to Dilsey, Roskus' wife, who seems to run the entire household. All the children can figure out is that their mother is upset and isn't feeling well. Dilsey shuttles them away from the house to Versh's quarters, and Benjy's impressions jump ahead to a scene where Roskus is milking cows in the barn.

Here, he gives Dilsey his opinion on the Compson family, and also confirms the earlier guess that Benjy's parents changed his name: "'They ain't no luck on this place.' Roskus said. 'I seen it at first but when they changed his name I knowed it.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 29

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 1

Abruptly, Benjy's mind jumps to two years later. In this scene, we find out that Frony is Dilsey's daughter, and Luster is her son. Still a baby at the time, Luster plays with a member of the Compson family, a little girl named Quentin, whose parentage is not revealed. Roskus repeats his belief that the Compson family is unlucky, and states another reason why: "'They aint no luck going be on no place where one of they own chillen's name aint never spoke.'" April Seventh, 1928, pg. 31. Here, we find out that the Compsons no longer speak of one of their children.

Benjy's mind again returns to the night when something was wrong at the Compsons, but the children had no idea what that was. Caddy insisted the entire evening that every child should mind her, but she had no more idea as to what was going on as anyone else did. In fact, Frony let it slip that she knew that Damuddy, the Compsons' grandmother, had died. Caddy refuses to believe her, and Jason starts to cry. Caddy wants to prove to everyone that a party, not a funeral, is going on, so Versh boosts her up to peek into the window from an outside tree: "We watched the muddy bottom of her drawers." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 39 She sees nothing but adults standing around looking solemn. Peeking into the window reminded Benjy of seeing a more grown up Caddy with flowers in her hair.



Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 4

This was the same night of the wedding, when Quentin and T.P. made Benjy drink sassprilluh. Benjy then narrates a frenzied, disconnected series of senses he feels while drunk. He ends up crying, and says that Caddy was there to comfort her, in her "shining veil," April Seventh, 1928, pg. 40, on the day of her wedding. Benjy enjoys his memories of Caddy and continues to think of her, this time, when she was only fourteen. He had been crying and moaning, and while Dilsey was very patient with him, Caddy was the only family member who took the time to see what was wrong with him, and spent time comforting him and playing with him. Just for his own happiness, Caddy still agreed to sleep in the same bed with him.

Benjy's memory rewinds again to the night the children found out their Grandmother died. Dilsey found the children, and ordered them back inside the house.



## April Seventh, 1928 (Section 2)

Benjy's flashback ended for the moment, and we find Luster chasing after Benjy, who stumbles towards the swings, where Quentin and a young man sit. This image takes Benjy back to a time when he had found Caddy and a male friend, Charlie, together on the swings. Benjy started with his bellows when he saw Charlie try to fool around with Caddy. Caddy drove Charlie away, and after she brought Benjy back to the house, she cried with him. She washed her mouth out with soap and promised Benjy, "I wont...I wont anymore, ever." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 48

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 5

In the present situation, however, Quentin is annoyed with Benjy's presence, and gets mad at Luster for not looking after him closely enough. Quentin is with a man who wears a red tie and is from the circus show that Luster plans on seeing that night, once he finds his quarter. Quentin tells on Luster and Benjy to Dilsey, and in the meantime, Benjy's mind wanders back again to the past. In a scene where Benjy clings to the end of the house's gate, waiting to see Caddy, T.P. tells him it's no use, because Caddy had gotten married and left for a place far away from home.

With Caddy's leaving the household, we don't find that the other family members care about him as much as Caddy did. For example, at present, Luster tells him that when his mother dies, they plan on sending him to a home for mentally retarded patients in Jackson, Mississippi. Luster continues to torment Benjy, who is already agitated. To truly set him off, Luster whispers "Caddy" in his ear several times. Dilsey hears this and scolds her grandson. She brings them in to eat the cake she bought for Benjy's birthday. Looking at his birthday candles that Luster blows out for him, Benjy remembers a night sitting in front of the fire with Caddy. She cried inexplicably, saying that she hated everything. All that Benjy recalled was the fire and Caddy's presence.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 6

At the present moment, Benjy burns his hand in the fire, and his subsequent bellowing disturbs his mother, who complains to Dilsey, "You got him started on purpose, because you know I'm sick." April Seventh, 1928, pg. 60. Dilsey tries to calm Mrs. Compson's nerves, and orders Luster to take Benjy to the library.

In the library, Benjy has another flashback to the day when his family changed his name from Maury. On that day, like most others, his mother was sick in bed, so the children, as instructed by their father, had to behave. Caddy and Jason, one of her other brothers, fought because Jason destroyed some dolls Caddy and Benjy had made together. The appearance of Jason interrupts Benjy's flashback, and returns him to the present. Jason is now the grown up man of the house. As he enters, he snaps at Luster and at Quentin, angry at her for associating with the circus man. She snaps right back at him, a sign of their adversarial relations.



Benjy returns to the point in his flashback when Quentin returned from school, apparently looking like he was in a fight. He told his father that he hit a classmate who threatened to put a frog in their teacher's desk. As his father gathered all the children around the fire, Benjy's mind moves a few years ahead to when he finds Caddy visibly upset. He doesn't know what's wrong, but he immediately starts to cry when he sees her sad eyes. His memory ends where they weep together in her bathroom.

In the present, as everyone has sat down for dinner, Benjy's memory goes back to a time when he was especially hungry, and Caddy and Dilsey fed him. Fast forward to the present, and Quentin complains that Benjy is a nuisance. She is convinced that Jason and her grandmother use him to spy on her. Dilsey tries to appease Quentin, but the young girl just pushes her away crankily. As Quentin and Jason fight, Benjy prefers to think about all the food Dilsey and Caddy fed him. While Benjy enjoys his memory, the young, female Quentin storms away from the table, threatening to run away from home.

Benjy returns to his memory of the night Damuddy, the children's grandmother, fell sick and died. After Dilsey found the children, led by Caddy, trying to peek into the house from an outside tree, she brought them up to bed. She scolded Caddy thoroughly for dirtying her drawers. Quentin and Jason slept in one bed, while Benjy (then Maury), slept with Caddy. The chapter ends with Benjy describing his peaceful feeling while sleeping next to his sister:

*"Caddy held me and I could hear us all, and the darkness, and something I could smell. And then I could see the windows, where the trees were buzzing. Then the dark began to go in smooth, bright shapes, like it always does, even when Caddy says that I have been asleep."* April Seventh, 1928, pg. 75



## June Second, 1910 (Section 1)

Quentin, Benjy's brother, narrates this chapter of the book. He tells his story on June 2, 1910, while attending Harvard University in Massachusetts. The scene begins as he wakes in his dorm room to the ticking of a watch his father gave to him. When the elder Compson handed it down to Quentin, he shared with him his defeatist opinion about life:

*"I give it [watch] to you not that you may remember time, but that you might forget it now and then for a moment and not spend all your breath trying to conquer it. Because no battle is ever won he said. They are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools."* June Second, 1910, pg. 76.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 7

In the present day, Quentin decides to cut class. As he lies in bed, his mind every once in a while drifts to conversations he has had with his father. In one, Quentin laments that he wishes that he were the "unvirgin" instead of "her" being the "unvirgin." The "her" he refers to is his sister, Caddy. He ends almost every paragraph repeating the phrase, "That never had a sister." June Second, 1910, pg. 77 He also insists that he has committed incest with Caddy. His virgin status calls into question his confession of incest. We find that the sexual aspect of incest does not seem to be what attracts him to the act. Instead, he likes the idea of being punished with Caddy for his wickedness:

*"Because if it were just to hell; if that were all of it. Finished. If things just finished themselves. Nobody else there but her and me. If we could just have done something so dreadful that they would have fled hell except us. I have committed incest I said Father it was I"* June Second, 1910, pg. 79

Topic Tracking: Obsession With Caddy 1

His father tries to ease his pain and anguish with his cryptic wisdom: "It's not when you realize that nothing can help you--religion, pride, anything--it's when you realize that you don't need any aid." June Second, 1910, pg. 80.

For the moment, Quentin's mind returns to the present. He breaks the face of his relentlessly ticking watch, packs a trunk full of clothes, and writes two notes, one of which, along with his trunk key, he addresses to his father. The other note goes to Shreve. While he was finishing this, he momentarily flashes back to glimpse at Caddy, running in her bridal gown, towards Benjy's bellows. It was the same wedding night Benjy had remembered when T.P. got drunk. Quentin's thoughts return to the present, and he leaves his dorm to run errands for the day. He visits a watch shop to fix the one he had just broken. While there, he appears to be spellbound by the many different, contradictory tickings of the shop's clocks, and asks the owner if any of them told the correct time. None did. The owner found nothing wrong with his watch, for it still kept time correctly, so Quentin leaves. While leaving, he glances at his watch again, thinking



that it was "Holding all I used to be sorry about like the new moon holding water." June Second, 1910, pg. 85

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 8

Quentin then visits a hardware store, where he buys two flat irons. When he gets on the streetcar to leave the store, he sits behind an African-American man, which prompts him to think about his attitudes towards "colored folks." He finds that he misses Roskus and Dilsey.

Quentin gets off the car and stands along the Charles River, leaning against the railing. While staring at his long shadow, he thinks, "Niggers say a drowned man's shadow was watching for him in the water all the time... What a sinful waste Dilsey would say. Benjy knew it when Damuddy died. He cried. *He smell hit. He smell hit.*" June Second, 1910, pg. 90 Watching the crew team, Quentin's thoughts turn to less morbid subjects. He sees a fellow Southerner and Harvard classmate, Gerald. His mother, Ms. Bland, spoils him and is quite overprotective, having bought herself an apartment Cambridge, while her real home is in Kentucky. Quentin's thoughts of Gerald quickly turn to thoughts of his sister. He sounds almost jealous in the way he remembers Caddy fooling around with a young man named Herbert, whom she ends up marrying in April of the same year that Quentin writes. Quentin's mind returns to a few months earlier, at home with his family and Herbert. Caddy's fiancé had just bought her a car, and we hear Mrs. Compson's voice raving on and on about how wonderful Herbert is, and how great it is that he might invite young Jason, her favorite son, to join him in his bank.

During the course of the entire conversation, Quentin keeps thinking to himself that his sister never meets his gaze. Quentin's images of his sister always seem to mingle with the scent of honeysuckle. We also find out during his flashback that the family sold Benjy's pasture in order for Quentin to attend Harvard. Mrs. Compson's voice enters Quentin's head, and we hear she and her husband arguing about Caddy. The subject of Caddy's promiscuity upsets Quentin, and he asks his father why he had to be so blunt about his sister's exploits. His father replies, "I didn't mean to speak so sharply but women have no respect for each other for themselves" June Second, 1910, pg. 96. Quentin is determined that, "Father and I protect women from one another from themselves our women" June Second, 1910, pg. 96.

Topic Tracking: Obsession With Caddy 2

His father knows that they must at least try and protect the Compson women, for his rather biased wisdom dictates that women "have an affinity for evil for supplying whatever the evil lacks in itself... until the evil has served its purpose whether it ever existed or no." June Second, 1910, pg. 97

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 2

Mrs. Compson's voice returns to Quentin's thoughts, and, as usual, she complains about how her family is ungrateful and selfish, a trait of the Compsons, not the Bascombs (her maiden name). She laments that Caddy has disgraced the family, yet



how she did it is still unknown. She says that her son Jason is the only one that cares about her, and she begs the elder Jason to let the two of them go live together, so that they may escape their curse.

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 3



## June Second, 1910 (Section 2)

As he continues to run errands in Cambridge thoughts of home haunt Quentin. As he hops onto a city streetcar, his memories reveal that he has shot Herbert. How he shot him or whether or not the shot was fatal, we don't know, but all that Quentin hears is Caddy's voice, repeating that he has shot Herbert. Quentin remembers a conversation he had with Herbert the first time he met him. Like Quentin, his sister's fiancé also went to Harvard. He seems to have done well for himself as a working adult, but Quentin knew that he had cheated on his exams while at Harvard. In his conversation, Quentin confronts his future brother-in-law about it, and Herbert tries to pay him to keep quiet. Quentin does not take the money, and they almost get in a fight because Quentin does not let him off the hook so easily, but Caddy enters the room just before anything could happen. When she and Quentin are alone, she gets mad at him for poking his nose in her business, but as Quentin continues to tell her that Herbert is not an upstanding gentleman, she admits to him that she has to marry somebody. Not only is she sick with blackguard and needs someone to take care of her, she is also pregnant. The baby may not even be his, because, as Quentin finds out, she has slept with many different boys. Caddy tries to explain to her brother, the virgin, why she has been so promiscuous: "There was something terrible in me sometimes at night I could see it grinning at me I could see it through them grinning at me through their faces it's gone now and I'm sick." June Second, 1910, pg. 112

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 4

Quentin's thoughts turn morbid, when he recalls that Versh told him about a man who mutilated himself with a razor to commit suicide. When he thinks of a time he complained to his father about his tortured existence as a virgin, his father tells him, "Purity [specifically, virginity] is a negative state and therefore contrary to nature. It's nature is hurting you not Caddy." June Second, 1910, pg. 116 Our narrator interrupts his memory to leave his flat irons underneath a bridge by the river. He notices dead plants floating in the water, and wonders to himself:

*"And maybe when He says Rise the eyes will come floating up too, out of the deep quiet and the sleep, to look on glory. And after a while the flat irons would come floating up. I hid them [flatirons] under the end of the bridge and went back and leaned on the rail."* June Second, 1910, pg. 116

Quentin watches the motion of the river quietly, and talks to someone in his thoughts: "Only you and me then amid the pointing and the horror walled by the clean flame" June Second, 1910, pg. 117. We had seen the "clean flame" earlier in Quentin's chapter, in reference to the flames of hell.

Topic Tracking: Obsession With Caddy 3

Quentin interrupts his thoughts of mortality as he finds himself shooting the breeze with a few young local boys fishing off the bridge. They are quite unsuccessful in catching a



famously stubborn trout, so they decide to go swimming instead. One of the boys seems to be the butt of the other two's teasing, so becomes upset and decides not to swim with them. During this time, Quentin talks to the little boy, trying to make him feel better.

After making friends with the young men, Quentin thinks, as usual, of Caddy. He remembers a desperate conversation the two of them had about the unhappy state of their family. While Quentin begs his sister to run away with Benjy and him, Caddy reminds him that the money needed to run away has gone to his Harvard tuition. We also find that Mr. Compson has developed a serious drinking problem, which may kill him if he doesn't quit. Caddy said she did something so awful the year before this conversation took place that it exacerbated his drinking. The agonizing memory ends with Benjy, pulling at his sister's dress, his bellows deafening.



## June Second, 1910 (Section 3)

As Quentin's flashback ends, he walks into a bakery in Cambridge. At the same time he enters, a little girl slips in with him. While the woman working at the bakery refuses to serve the girl because she is an Italian immigrant, Quentin insists that the woman wait on her, and he buys the girl a bun himself. The girl pays for her own loaf of bread, and the cashier reluctantly gives her an old loaf. Quentin and the girl leave together, and he buys her some ice cream. After they eat together, he tries to head back towards campus, but she silently follows him. He unsuccessfully tries to find her house. She cannot help him much, as she refuses to speak. Instead, he wanders around the immigrant sections of Boston, pointing in different directions, looking in her eyes to see if she recognizes any of the alleyways.

While she follows him around town, Quentin's thoughts drift back to home. He remembers lying in the barn with a girl named Natalie. She told the inexperienced, but curious Quentin that sex was like "dancing sitting down" June Second 1910, pg. 135. In the midst of their awkward making out, Caddy walks into the barn.

As Quentin's attention immediately turns to his sister, Natalie leaves, apparently angry with Quentin for his preoccupation with Caddy. After she leaves, Quentin tries to tell Caddy what the two of them were doing. She doesn't seem to care, but instead is very angry with him. The scene ends with them physically fighting in their muddy, rainy barn.

Topic Tracking: Obsession With Caddy 4

As Quentin's thoughts bring him back to the present time, a furious looking man storms up an alleyway, and the little girl finally speaks up, recognizing this man as her brother, Julio. He shakes a stick at Quentin, cursing at him, accusing him of stealing his sister while physically assaulting him. Boston police arrest both men. In the midst of being arrested, Quentin starts to laugh uncontrollably. It takes him several minutes to stop and by the time he calms himself, right before his eyes, he sees a big car, occupied by classmate Gerald, his mother, his roommate Shreve, another classmate, Spoade and two young women. Gerald, Shreve, and Spoade all follow the procession to the police station. While Shreve argues with the constable over the misunderstanding, Quentin remains quiet, appearing detached and amused about the whole situation. He manages to not get in trouble, and ends up having to pay a fine of six dollars to get himself out of this scrape.

Gerald, Shreve, and Spoade take him back to Mrs. Bland's car. Quentin is not even thinking about his brush with the law, but instead continues to obsess over his virgin status:

*"I could not be a virgin, with so many of them walking along in the shadows and whispering with their soft girlvoices lingering in the shadowy places and the words coming out and perfume and eyes you could feel not see, but if it was that simple to do it wouldn't be anything and if it wasn't anything, what was I"* June Second, 1910, pg. 147



Mrs. Bland interrupts his thoughts momentarily, but while she rattles on boringly, his mind again drifts back to memories of Caddy. He remembers an exchange they had concerning sex. As his sister talks about some of the men she had been intimate with, Quentin insists, "we did how can you not know it if you'll just wait and I'll tell you how it was it was a crime we did a terrible crime it cannot be hid you think it can but wait" June Second, pg. 148

Topic Tracking: Obsession with Caddy 5

While Caddy tries to comfort Quentin, who insists that he was the one boy who slept with her, she knew that he has never touched any female before in his life. Hysterical, Quentin draws out a knife with which to kill Caddy, and says that he will end his own life, too. He is crying so uncontrollably, however, that he can hardly steady the blade in his hand. He drops his knife on the ground, and in the barn's darkness cannot find it. They give up their attempt for the moment.

Caddy must leave to go meet her boyfriend, but Quentin chases her, fighting her, trying to keep her from him. He fails to restrain his sister, so he simply follows her to where she's meeting her boyfriend, Dalton Ames. She assures Quentin she will only be gone for a short while, and tells him to meet her later.

In Quentin's walk along the edge of the woods, the moment he smells honeysuckle, he breaks into a sprint to escape its suffocating scent. He makes it to the pasture, where he sees Caddy walking back towards the house. As they walk back together, Quentin asks Caddy if she loves Dalton Ames. She doesn't seem to want to have this conversation with her brother, but by now he is crying, and she must console him. In her own sadness, Caddy says, "don't cry I'm bad anyway you cant help it" June Second, pg. 158. Quentin answers, "theres a curse on us its not our fault is it our fault" June Second, pg. 158.

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 5



## June Second, 1910 (Section 4)

Caddy finally goes to bed, but, unsettled, Quentin wanders around, and happens to bump into Dalton. He arranges to meet him the next day at a nearby creek. At this meeting, Quentin orders his sister's boyfriend to leave town by sundown, and threatens to kill him if he stays. Caddy's lover laughs off young Quentin, whose body is shaking in his anxiety. Dalton assures him, "listen no good taking it so hard its not your fault kid it would have been some other fellow" June Second, pg. 160. Obsessive Quentin then asks him if he had ever had a sister, and Dalton replies to him, "no but theyre all bitches" June Second, pg. 160. The moment Dalton uttered those words; Quentin goes to slap him in the face. The bigger, stronger, Dalton held both of Quentin's wrists, as Quentin struggled, still trying to beat up the boy that disgraced his sister.

Dalton pulls out a rifle, and shoots a nearby bird. He offers his gun to Quentin for protection, but Quentin refuses. Quentin remembers what happens next like it was a dream:

*"I hit him I was still trying to hit him long after he was holding my wrists but I still tried then it was like I was looking at him through a piece of colored glass I could hear my blood."* June Second, pg. 161

Shortly thereafter, Dalton takes off on his horse, leaving Quentin to recover by himself. We find that Caddy's boyfriend did not hit or shoot at Quentin, but that Caddy's young brother had passed out, hurting his head when he banged the ground. Caddy came running after she heard the gunshots, and was relieved to see Quentin only slightly hurt. She tried to run after Dalton, but Quentin held her back, asking her again if she loved him. She told him to repeat her boyfriend's name while holding his hand against her throat. Whenever Quentin said Dalton's name, he could feel the blood surging through her body, a sign that she did indeed love him.

Quentin's flashback ends for the moment, and we find him back in Boston, nursing a black eye and a bloody, cut up face, courtesy of Gerald Bland. Because he passed out and thus forgot what happened to him, his friends Shreve and Spoade tell him that as Gerald boasted about one of his female conquests, Quentin jumped up in his face, asking him if he ever had a sister. When Gerald said no, Quentin began to punch him, repeating his query over and over, until Gerald boxed him around so much he couldn't even stand up straight. Once he feels better, Quentin sends away his friends. He needs to be alone, and takes a ride on a streetcar.

Topic Tracking: Obsession with Caddy 6

Riding the streetcar, Quentin admires the early summer sunset, and remembers the summers of his youth. He recalls its sights and smells, especially, and remembers feeling trapped by honeysuckle's sad, strong scent. It drove him crazy:



*"[T]he whole thing came to symbolise night and unrest I seemed to be lying neither asleep nor awake looking down a long corridor of gray half-light where all stable things had become shadowy paradoxical all I had done shadows all I had felt suffered taking visible form antic and perverse mocking without relevance inherent themselves"* June Second, pg. 170

As the streetcar crosses the Charles River, he notes that he is seeing it and smelling it for the last time.

Quentin heads back to his dorm, where he takes off his bloody clothes and changes into a clean suit and tie. He pours a lot of gasoline onto a vest, and combs his hair. By now, his thoughts have turned into frantic delusions. He imagines himself with his family, in what seems like hell: "the dungeon was Mother herself she and Father upward into weak light holding hands and us lost somewhere below even them without a ray of light." June Second, pg. 173

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 6

He thinks of how the family sold Benjy's pasture so that he could benefit from a Harvard education. Harvard had "a fine sound" June Second, pg. 174, according to his parents, and was worth more than Benjy's pasture. Bitterly, suicidal Quentin now thinks, "A fine dead sound we will swap Benjy's pasture for a fine dead sound." June Second, pg. 174

Listening to the clock ticking away, he thought back to a pivotal conversation he had with his father before leaving for college. Quentin tries to confess to his father that he did commit incest with Caddy. His father sees through him, though, and Quentin quickly breaks down, telling him he wishes he had, because "it was to isolate her out of the loud world so that it would have to flee us of necessity and then the sound of it would be as though it had never been." June Second, pg. 177

Topic Tracking: Obsession with Caddy 7

His father tries to reassure him that whatever pain he feels over what has happened to Caddy is only temporary.

Topic Tracking: Time/Memory 9

This only makes Quentin feel worse. His perceptive father realizes that Quentin hates the uncertainty of life. According to his father's bleak wisdom, Quentin's problem is that he cannot bear to think there will be many other sorrows in a lifetime, and that nobody has any control over how their own affairs will develop.

Quentin's flashback ends, and he puts on his gas drenched vest. Well dressed and clean, he leaves his dorm for the last time, for he is leaving to kill himself.



## April Sixth, 1928 (Section 1)

Jason narrates the section entitled, "April Sixth, 1928," a day before Benjy tells his story. He begins with a commentary on his niece, Quentin: "Once a bitch always a bitch, what I say" April Sixth, pg. 180. The scene opens as Jason, now the man of the house, discusses with his mother, Mrs. Compson, about what they should do with young Quentin. Melodramatic Mrs. Compson, a hypochondriac, constantly laments her and her family's state. The only thing for which she is thankful is that her favorite son, Jason, is still around to help her relieve all of her burdens, one of which is her grandchild. A teenage troublemaker, Quentin skips school all the time, dividing her hours among several young men of the town.

After talking with his mother, Jason storms into the kitchen, ready to whip Quentin for her bad behavior. Dilsey tries to get between the two of them, but he shoves away the frail, arthritic old woman. Ready to beat Quentin with his belt, Jason stops as he sees Mrs. Compson hobble down the stairs. Quentin is safe momentarily from Jason's belt. He lets her get ready for school, and in the meantime yells at Luster for not fixing his tire. We also find that Benjy's retardation terribly humiliates his brother. If it were up to Jason, he would send his big brother to a home in Jackson.

Quentin comes downstairs, ready to go to school. Jason has an incredibly adversarial relationship with his niece, evidenced by the previous scene, and by the fact that they immediately begin to squabble the minute Quentin gets in the car. This time, they fight over who pays for her expenses. While she says her mother's monthly checks pay for everything she needs, Jason counters, "Ask her [your grandmother] what became of those checks. You saw her burn one of them, as I remember." April Sixth, pg. 187 They continue to exchange harsh words on the way to school. As they arrive on campus, Jason chides her for being such a loose woman. She tells him defiantly, "I'm bad and I'm going to hell, and I don't care. I'd rather be in hell than anywhere where you are." April Sixth, pg. 189

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 7

After dropping Quentin off at school, Jason continues in his car to his job, where he works as a store manager. In his mail, he finds a check and a letter from Quentin's mother, asking him why she hasn't heard at all from him about the welfare of her daughter. Jason puts the letter away to discuss his stocks. His gambles aren't garnering much profit. In his discussions with fellow townspeople, Jason expresses his disgust with east coast Jews, and is constantly exasperated with any black person he encounters. He believes that eastern establishment Jews are taking the money he has invested in the stock market, and he is never satisfied with any work a black laborer has done. He goes back to find a letter from a girlfriend in Memphis, telling him how much she misses him. He destroys it, thinking to himself:



*"I never promise a woman anything nor let her know what I'm going to give her. That's the only way to manage them. Always keep them guessing. If you cant think of any other way to surprise them, give them a bust in the jaw." April Sixth, pg. 193*

He is about to open a letter addressed to Quentin from her mother. Before he can do that, however, he is called to work. While working, he has a flashback to his father's funeral. He died only one year after Quentin did. This takes Jason's memory back one year earlier, when young Quentin was brought to the Compson house as a baby. As usual, Mrs. Compson cries and complains about the new burden in her life. This is the first time we find out for certain that Caddy is Quentin's mother. The reason Quentin will be raised by the Compsons is because Herbert, Caddy's husband, has kicked Caddy out of their house, for sleeping with another man. In fact, Caddy doesn't even know who Quentin's father is.

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 8

Her loose ways have disgraced her family so much that Mrs. Compson forbids everyone in the household from uttering her daughter's name. Even though Mr. Compson and Dilsey don't want to completely shut out Caddy from the family, Mrs. Compson is adamant that Quentin will know as little as possible about her sinful mother.

Jason's memory moves ahead to his father's funeral again. As they put his father to rest, Jason becomes as tender as we will ever see him: "Well, I got to...watching them throwing dirt into it, slapping it on anyway like they were making mortar or something or building a fence, and I began to feel sort of funny and so I decided to walk around for a while." April Sixth, pg. 202

While he wanders around, he bumps into Caddy, who is donning a black mourning veil for her father, whose death she had to find out about in the obituary section of the newspaper. Jason warns her that the family wouldn't want her there. She pays him one hundred dollars to see her baby girl. He says he would do it only if she promises to leave on the train that night. She promises to do so, but does not know that Jason will trick her. Jason is still bitter about not getting a job with Herbert's bank, and blames Caddy for it. Though he does smuggle the baby out of its cradle, he holds it up as he rides past Caddy in a carriage, allowing his sister to barely catch a glimpse of her own daughter. She doesn't leave town that night, but instead confronts Jason the next day at his store. They exchange curses with each other, and Caddy storms out of the store. When he returns home from work, he hears Benjy's uncontrollable bellows. From this clue, he knows that Caddy has visited home, and then finds out that Dilsey is the one that allowed her into the house. Though he berates her for doing it, she stands up to him. He threatens Caddy afterwards, and told her, "if she tried Dilsey again, Mother was going to fire Dilsey and send Ben to Jackson and take Quentin and go away." April Sixth, pg. 208 She leaves, making Jason promise to take care of young Quentin.

His flashback ends, and Quentin enters the store as he opens Caddy's letter for her. In the letter is a money order for her daughter worth fifty dollars. She demands the money, not seeming to care about what her mom has written her. Jason does not let Quentin



touch the money order. He lies to her, saying it's only worth ten dollars. Quentin is not at all happy with that small sum of money. Even after she begs him to see the order, he refuses, and hands her a ten-dollar bill from his own pocket, threatening to take the check home to her grandmother, who burns every check Caddy sends. She signs the back of the money order, still not having seen the dollar amount, and sulks her way out of the store.



## April Sixth, 1928 (Section 2)

After Quentin leaves the store, Jason takes his lunch break, making a stop before going home. He goes to a print shop to fabricate a blank check. He forges Caddy's signature, and writes in a dollar amount of two hundred dollars. When he arrives home, he shows his mother the check, which she proceeds to burn with much hand wringing and ceremony, just like every other month. In this situation, we realize that Jason lies to both Quentin and his mother. First, he cashes Quentin's checks from Caddy for his own benefit, giving Quentin only a fraction of the actual amount meant for her. Second, he has let his mother labor under the illusion that the family has not received a single penny from Caddy Compson in seventeen years. Jason also tries to hide from Caddy how he handles the checks she sends every month. In her most recent letter to him, however, she shows that she's beginning to see through his shenanigans, demanding to know where her money goes.

After Mrs. Compson and her son finish burning the fake check, they sit down for lunch minus Quentin, who refuses to come home to eat today. During lunch, Jason tells his mother that his Uncle Maury has asked for more money. She willingly and frequently throws money at her irresponsible brother, who probably won't spend it on anything worth investing. She does it because he is the last of her people, the Bascombs, of whom she is very proud. Just as she begins to get emotional about it, Jason escapes back to work.

There, he gets into an argument with his boss involving his own integrity (or lack thereof). We find that he has stolen his mother's car, paid for with the one thousand dollars he was supposed to have invested in the store. Additionally, the reason he is not a partner in the store is because he had embezzled some of its finances. The only reason Jason's boss keeps him in the store is because he has sympathy for the Compson family. Jason shrugs off his boss' indictment of him, thinking to himself, "I'm glad I haven't got the sort of conscience I've got to nurse like a sick puppy all the time." April Sixth, pg. 229

He goes back to work, and shortly thereafter spots Quentin and a man wearing a red tie run past the store. He is furious to see her skipping school again, and chases after them all through town. While Jason tries to keep up with his niece and her new male friend, who he realizes is from the road show in town, he begins to think back on his youth. Images of his tortured family haunt his memory. He seems especially bitter towards his father, who drank himself to death.

By the time Jason decides to head home to see if Quentin is there, he has developed a pounding headache. He does not find his niece there, so he ventures back into town. Just as he turned onto the main road, Quentin and the boy from the road show screech past him in a stolen car. Jason chases after them again, finally spotting their stolen vehicle parked outside the woods. He parks his car there, too, and tramps through the maze of trees and ticks and lice of the forest. He is a mess, but he doesn't seem to notice. Jason's rage and his pounding headache seem to blind him. He finally spots the



two of them running out of a ditch, but they quickly get into their car and speed away, leaving Jason in the dust. He goes back to his car, and finds that the two of them have let the air out of his tires. Humiliated and even more upset, he gets it fixed at a nearby station, and heads back to town. He received a telegraph, urging him to sell his stock, for the market would be experiencing an incredible downturn. Angry with his broker, for he never gives good advice, Jason ignores the warning, deciding to buy. He then heads back to his store to finish the workday.

A few hours later, he heads back home, to find that Dilsey is not making supper, but is breaking up a fight between Mrs. Compson and Quentin, who arrived home shortly before her uncle. After a short while, Dilsey comes downstairs, ready to make dinner. Luster, her grandson, has been talking about going to the road show all day, wishing he had a quarter to buy a ticket. Coincidentally, Jason's boss had given him two free tickets to the same show that Jason had absolutely no intention of seeing. Instead of simply giving his servant the ticket, he demands money for it, knowing that teenage Luster hasn't even a nickel. Jason proceeds to burn the tickets over the stove, watching Luster's face fall in disappointment. Dilsey shakes her head at him, and promises to procure for a quarter for her grandson by tomorrow night.

In the meantime, Dilsey has prepared supper, but neither Mrs. Compson nor Quentin will come down to eat. As usual, the woman of the house is feeling under the weather, and makes a big production of making it downstairs. Quentin manages to come down as well, but sulks all through the meal, saying nothing. Throughout supper, Jason makes indirect comments to his mother about Quentin's loose behavior, until finally Quentin explodes, seething with anger at her uncle. She blames his cruelty to her for her behavior: "Whatever I do, it's your fault...If I'm bad, it's because I had to be. You made me. I wish I was dead. I wish we were all dead." April Sixth, pg. 260 After yelling this at her family, she storms up to her room. Her grandmother blames her behavior on her heritage, saying she has inherited all of her namesake's and her mother's headstrong traits: "Sometimes I think she is the judgment of both of them upon me." April Sixth, pg. 261

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 9

The argument ends their family supper together, and they all retreat back to their own rooms for the night. Quentin has already gone up to her room to study. Mrs. Compson trudges up the stairs to her own room, and Jason heads back to his room. Hearing Benjy snoring away, he makes a comment about how he should have been sent to the asylum while under anesthesia for a sterilization operation. Bitterly, Jason thinks to himself before he goes to bed:

*"And just let me have twenty-four hours without any damn New York jew to advise me what it's going to do...I just want an even chance to get my money back. And once I've done that they can bring all Beale street and all bedlam in here and two of them can sleep in my bed and another one can have my place at my table too."* April Sixth, pg. 264



## April Eighth, 1928 (Section 1)

Dilsey, the Compsons' black servant, is the center of the April Eighth part of the book. Dilsey is a shrunken, wrinkled, and arthritic elderly woman. Though now weak, we see that she has a strong spirit:

*"She had been a big woman once but now her skeleton rose, draped loosely in unpadding skin that tightened again upon a paunch almost dropsical, as though muscle and tissue had been courage or fortitude which the days or the years had consumed until only the indomitable skeleton was left rising like a ruin or a landmark above the somnolent and impervious guts."* April Eighth, pg. 265-56

However physically tired Dilsey may be, she still does the bulk of the work around the Compson household. The section begins Easter morning, as Dilsey is awake early, beginning to fix breakfast, starting a fire in the fireplace and attending to the needs of the family. Luster, her grandson, is usually supposed to do some of this work, but he overslept, having gone to see the road show in town the night before. Mrs. Compson calls for her incessantly, not realizing, or not caring, that a trip up and down the stairs for Dilsey is an incredibly painful one. Instead of offering to help her, she nags her about a number of things, including not having breakfast ready soon enough, and allowing Luster to sleep in this morning. Dilsey tries to shut up her boss as best she can, so that Mrs. Compson can get out of her hair, which will allow her to attend to the tasks of the morning.

Dilsey prepares breakfast, and the whole family, minus Quentin, comes down to eat. In the meantime, Jason has discovered that his window was broken during the night. They send Dilsey up the stairs yet again to fetch Quentin for breakfast. Jason especially wants Quentin to come downstairs, because he wants to question her about the window. Mrs. Compson, Jason and Dilsey see that Quentin is not in her room. Almost instinctively, Jason races to his own closet, and finds that the money he stores in a locked box has been stolen, the lock broken. He calls the sheriff's office to report a robbery. Downstairs, Luster tells Dilsey that he sees Quentin climb out of her window every night, including last night.

Dilsey lets the Compsons handle their situation by themselves for the time being, for she and her family are going to their church's Easter service. She insists on taking Benjy with them. No members of the congregation make any comments to them about it either, because they all have a great amount of respect for Dilsey and her family.

At church, there is a guest preacher, Reverend Shegog, who has come all the way from St. Louis to give his sermon. Though he is supposed to be very famous, he appears tiny and wrinkled, almost comical. As his sermon begins, he doesn't even sound like a black preacher. His inflection, vocabulary and tone are those of a white man's. As he warms up to the crowd, however, his voice warms, and his sermon sounds more like what the congregation had hoped. His voice became beautiful and full of emotion, as described here: "It was as different as day and dark from his former tone, with a sad, timbrous



quality like an alto horn, sinking into their hearts and speaking there again when it had ceased in fading and cumulate echoes." April Eighth, pg. 294 Reverend Shegog's voice grew louder and louder, as he paced back and forth, sweating, bringing the congregation to their feet. They sang and cried and exclaimed "Yes, Jesus!" as he repeated over and over, "I got de ricklickshun en de blood of de Lamb!" April Eighth, pg. 295 The sermon also moved the usually distracted Benjy, who sat in devoted attention to the preacher. Seeing this, and being caught up in the emotion of the sermon, Dilsey began to cry, with tears falling down her face even after they had all left church. She murmured to herself, "I've seed de first en de last...I seed de beginnin, en now I sees de endin." April Eighth, pg. 297

Topic Tracking: Compson Curse 10



## April Eighth, 1928 (Section 2)

After Dilsey and her family return from church, Dilsey immediately goes back to work. This time, Mrs. Compson is calling for her, asking her if she has found a note from her granddaughter, Quentin. She is convinced that Quentin has committed suicide, just like her uncle, or has run off to have illegitimate children with any common man, like her mother. Dilsey tells her such talk is ridiculous, but Mrs. Compson enjoys complaining, so continues with her laments. Jason hasn't come home yet, but his mother insists that Dilsey make him some lunch, anyway. As she prepares his food, she sings hymns to herself, constantly saying, "Ise seed de first en de last." April Eighth, pg. 301

As Luster and Benjy sit down for food, the scene shifts to Jason. We find him at the sheriff's house, ready to recount the story of how he was robbed. After hearing Jason's story, the officers are not ready to point the finger at Quentin and her road show friend, which frustrates Jason, whose rage towards his niece is almost palpable. As if they hadn't heard the first time, Jason retells his story. He was "harshly recapitulant, seeming to get an actual pleasure out of his outrage and impotence. The sheriff did not appear to be listening at all." April Eighth, pg. 303

Instead of caring about the robbery, the officers perceive that Jason has driven out his niece. They also suspect that the three thousand dollars he had hoarded in his metal box were not in fact his to keep, but that the money were the checks Caddy had sent to her daughter. Because they have no hard evidence that Quentin had stolen her uncle's money, the officers refuse to investigate the case at all.

Frustrated and enraged, Jason storms out of the station, determined to catch the pair himself. He hires a random young black man standing around the town square to drive him towards Mottson, the next stop for the road show. We find how Jason feels in his heart about the robbery: "Of his niece he did not think at all, nor of the arbitrary valuation of the money. Neither of them had had entity or individuality for him for ten years; together they merely symbolised the job in the bank of which he had been deprived before he ever got it." April Eighth, pg. 306 Here, we see that he is still bitter about the fact that he never had the chance to get a job in the bank with Caddy's husband, Herbert, because Herbert ended up throwing Caddy out of the house. Growing angrier and angrier by the second, we find that what really irks him is that a female, Quentin, had outwitted him. What makes it worse to Jason is that his niece isn't even a respectable young girl, but "a bitch." April Eighth, pg. 307

While in the car, he spots circus tents, and a car that looks like the Ford the two had stolen two days earlier. He didn't think that perhaps others may own the same model of car, and he didn't plan that perhaps the two of them might see him before he saw them. He just assumed that he would see them first, grab them, and demand their money, leaving them to rot wherever they please. Jason assaulted the first people he saw, and demanded to know where Quentin and the road show boy were. Though the two men had no idea where the two had run, Jason provokes a physical fight with the two men. He hits his head on a rail, and the men send him away. Jason is stranded, miles away



from Jefferson. He ends up having to pay four dollars to a stranger in Mottson to drive him home.

Meanwhile, back at the Compson house, Dilsey has sent out Luster to play with Benjy, buying herself time to eat her lunch in peace. Outside, Luster teases Benjy, so Benjy starts to bellow and moan. Watching people play golf on his old pasture, Benjy moans some more, and cries become louder and louder each time. Frustrated because he cannot get him to stop, Luster provokes him: "You want somethin to beller about? ...Caddy! Beller now. Caddy! Caddy! Caddy!" April Eighth, pg. 316 Dilsey comes to see what's the matter, and is able to get Benjy to stop his wailing.

To comfort him further, Dilsey tells Luster to take him for a ride in the carriage around the neighborhood. Being a teenager, Luster wanted to show off in front of his peers. He tries to get Queenie, the old horse, to go faster. Just he braces himself to go faster, Benjy starts to wail louder than ever before: "There was more than astonishment in it, it was horror; shock; agony eyeless, tongueless; just sound, and Luster's eyes backrolling for a white instant." April Eighth, pg. 320 Just as Luster turns back to the road, Jason arrives on the scene, knocking Luster off the driver's seat. He appears to be angrier than ever, striking not only Luster, but also, Benjy, for wailing. Despite Jason's blow at him, Benjy's voice has grown to a roar. Once Luster takes the reins to direct the carriage back home, Benjy becomes quiet. The three men head home in silence. The last image of the book comes from Benjy's eyes:

*"The broken flower drooped over Ben's fist and his eyes were empty and blue and serene again as cornice and façade flowed smoothly once more from left to right, post and tree, window and doorway and signboard each in its ordered place."* April Eighth, pg. 321