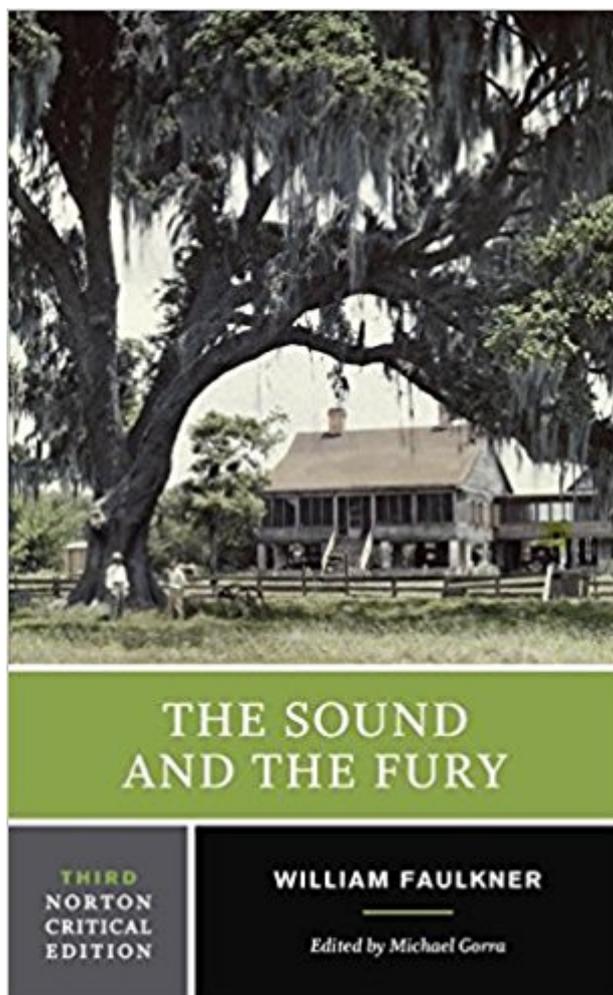


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# The Sound And The Fury (Norton Critical Editions)



## Synopsis

The text of this Norton Critical Edition is that of the corrected edition scrupulously prepared by Noel Polk, whose textual note precedes the text. David Minter's annotations are designed to assist the reader with obscure words and allusions. "Backgrounds" begins with the appendix Faulkner wrote in 1945 and sometimes referred to as another telling of *The Sound and the Fury* and includes a selection of Faulkner's letters, excerpts from two Faulkner interviews, a memoir by Faulkner's friend Ben Wasson, and both versions of Faulkner's 1933 introduction to the novel. "Cultural and Historical Contexts" presents four different perspectives on the place of the American South in history. Taken together, these works by C. Vann Woodward, Richard H. King, Carolyn Porter, and Robert Penn Warren provide the reader with valuable contexts for understanding the novel. "Criticism" includes seventeen essays on *The Sound and the Fury* that collectively trace changes in the way we have viewed this novel over the last four decades. The critics are Jean-Paul Sartre, Irving Howe, Ralph Ellison, Olga W. Vickery, Cleanth Brooks, Michael Millgate, John T. Irwin, Myra Jehlen, Donald M. Kartiganer, David Minter, Warwick Wadlington, John T. Matthews, Thadious M. Davis, Wesley Morris and Barbara Alverson Morris, Minrose C. Gwin, André Bleikasten, and Philip M. Weinstein. A revised Selected Bibliography is also included.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In case you are one of the unlucky few that has not read *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*, let me tell you that you are missing one of literature's most prized works. As an English major, I have come across many "famous" novels that left me wondering what the author had to do (wink, wink) to get

his/her novel well known. However, this novel is definitely not one of those. In short, Faulkner's novel is about the Compson family, composed of a mentally disabled son (Benjy), a sexual daughter (Caddy) and granddaughter (Quentin), a suicidal son (Quentin-yes, 2 Quentins!), an uncaring and greedy son (Jason), a drunken father, a nutty mother, and a caring servant (Dilsey) and her family. The book itself is divided into four sections-one written by Benjy, one written by Quentin (the son), one by Jason, and one by Dilsey. Faulkner incorporates a HUGE amount of symbolism in this novel (something I love). However, what makes this novel famous are Faulkner's writing techniques. The first section by Benjy is pretty darn confusing, for Benjy is mentally retarded. Benjy's thoughts cover many time lengths and flash back and forth between times without any notice or any indication. The reader must figure out when something occurs. Often, only one paragraph may take place in time A, then it will switch to time B for a page, time C for a sentence, time B for 3 pages, and so on. Mostly what triggers these time changes are words. For example, Benjy is outside and hears a golfer call to his caddie (this occurs in time A). The word "caddie" triggers a thought about Caddy, his sister, and he thinks about a time in time G when somebody called out "Caddy" and so on. It sounds pretty confusing; that's because it is. Quentin's section is composed of stream-of-consciousness, something Faulkner is famous for using.

Okay. I have had a bitter love/hate relationship with Faulkner since the first work I read of his, "The Bear." Well, after reading this novel, struggling, cussing, and questioning, I think it is safe to say that Faulkner is the greatest American author of the 20th century. (Deep breath) So what do we have in "The Sound and the Fury"? Too much to type, and I don't know most of it anyway. What I do know is that reading this book turns the experience into an obsession. It is tremendously difficult to read and it takes over your life. I believe that the reason Faulkner wrote it this way is because he is arguing that language can unite people. No, you can't use language to make good mothers, fathers, brothers, or sisters - just take a look at the Compson family. But maybe language can serve as a unifying factor between this and other books in Modernism? Whatever. Here, this might be at least slightly helpful. Caddy: Central character of the book. She is the object of fixation by her brothers, yet there isn't anything exceptional about her - the obsession is arbitrary. Faulkner doesn't give her a voice, but she speaks through her actions (Example: Squatting on the branch with muddy underwear looking through the window at her grandmother's funeral -- a feat her brother's looked upon with awe). Benjy: His narration is the first one of the book and it contains the truth of the Compson family situation objectively because he is retarded. The only thing he notices is that things happen, no emotions or thoughts attached. No desire. He does have an amazing ability in being

able to predict Caddy's sexual decline (Young Caddy smells like trees, purity) - (Teenage Caddy smells like rain, she is wearing perfume).

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