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William Faulkner Soldiers' Pay





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Also by William Faulkner

GO DOWN, MOSES

The seven dramatic stories in this volume, first published in 1942, show this great writer's compassionate understanding of the negro world of the Deep South. His characters are the humble people who live out their lives within the same small circle of the earth, who die unrecorded. The powerful prose is weighted with the passion and the agony of the human body and spirit.

'Has a richness of colour and feeling that belongs to maturity . . . exceptional wisdom and sympathy' - *Observer*

'Magnificent stuff. . . All the tales are good and all contain vivid straight-from-the-horse's-mouth pictures of a swiftly disintegrating society' - *Time and Tide*

'As an introduction to the Faulkner world, *Go Down, Moses* is an indispensable book for the hesitating visitor' - *Tribune*

REQUIEM FOR A NUN

William Faulkner

Nancy, a negro nursemaid, is about to be hanged for killing her mistress's baby: her lawyer, Gavin Stevens, compels the mistress to confess the reason for Nancy's crime. The law takes its course; but justice, in Faulkner's sense, has been done.

William Faulkner's novels have always been explosively dramatic: by a logical extension he has given this moving story the framework of a play, each act preceded by an historical account of the scene to follow. It moves on three levels: the intense drama of the crime and the confession; the interplay of human passions; and the present influence of the ever-living past.

'There is tension and passion enough in the drama. The impetus never fails' - *Observer*

'It is subtle, explosive, dramatic. It enhances Faulkner's claim to be considered the greatest by far of contemporary American novelists' - *Queen*

'A wonderful example of Faulkner's power of dramatic suspense. . . . Faulkner is a great poet and tragedian' - *Listener*

SANCTUARY

William Faulkner

The landscape of this turbulent drama is Tennessee and the Deep South; the characters are a group of social misfits and outcasts whose fates become entangled in a pitiful miscarriage of justice. Yet no perceptive reader of this tragedy of degenerates and delinquents will mistake it for a lurid narrative of violence. William Faulkner sets out once more to explore the devious motives which determine human conduct in its sinister as well as its noble aspects; and there are many who maintain that *Sanctuary* is the best of all his novels.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949; and has been described (by Anthony West) before his death as 'the one unchallengeable and unquestionable genius at present functioning at the full tide of his creative powers on the American literary scene'.

THE WILD PALMS

William Faulkner

‘But it was only recently I have clearly seen, followed out the logical conclusion, that it is one of what we call the prime virtues – thrift, industry, independence – that breeds all the vices – fanaticism, smugness, meddling, fear, and, worst of all, respectability.’

This beguiling sentiment is placed by Faulkner in the mouth of Harry Wilbourne, as he escapes with his lover from the snares of Chicago and security. Shades of the prison house, of the cataclysm and death, seem to close about them as, in effect, they turn their backs on life in order to conserve love. As surely as the inmates of the state penitentiary – whose grey progress is interleaved with theirs – Harry and Charlotte are prisoners, if only of themselves. Blindly, remorselessly, their contempt for society, security, and the deepest springs of life hounds them on to the final abyss.

‘Brilliant, clever, accomplished, extremely dangerous and queerly successful . . . should be read by anyone interested in the possibilities of the novel form’ – *Time and Tide*

Also published in Penguins

AS I LAY DYING
ABSALOM, ABSALOM!
INTRUDER IN THE DUST
LIGHT IN AUGUST
THE SOUND AND THE FURY
THE UNVANQUISHED

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PENGUIN MODERN CLASSICS

SOLDIERS' PAY

William Faulkner was born near Oxford, Mississippi, in 1897. His great-grandfather, Colonel William Falkner (so spelt), had been one of the wild characters of the South. The author, who had made little impression at school, was rejected by the U.S. Army when America entered the First World War but became a pilot in the Canadian Flying Corps. After the war he attended the University of Mississippi for a time and then for several years did odd jobs of many kinds. While working in New Orleans he met Sherwood Anderson, the novelist, who encouraged him: as a result he wrote this, his first novel, in 1926. Others followed. It was in 1929, the year of his marriage, that he took a job as a coal-heaver on night-work at the local power station and wrote *As I Lay Dying* (1930) between the hours of midnight and 4 a.m. during a space of six summer weeks. He then wrote *Sanctuary*, intending it to be sensational enough to attract sales, which had not been good on his earlier books. Later he worked on scripts in Hollywood, simply for the money. Not long before his death in July 1962 William Faulkner moved his home to Charlottesville, Virginia. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1949. His other books include *The Sound and the Fury* (1929), *Light in August* (1932), *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936) *The Unvanquished* (1938), *The Wild Palms* (1939), *Go Down, Moses* (1942), *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), and *Requiem for a Nun* (1951), all published in Penguins.



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WILLIAM FAULKNER

外文书库

Soldiers' Pay



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SOLDIER

*'The hushèd plaint of wind in stricken trees
Shivers the grass in path and lane
And Grief and Time are tideless golden seas –
Hush, hush! He's home again.'*

CHAPTER ONE

I

ACHILLES: Did you shave this morning, Cadet?

MERCURY: Yes, Sir.

ACHILLES: What with, Cadet?

MERCURY: Issue, Sir.

ACHILLES: Carry on, Cadet. *Old Play (about 19- ?)*

LOWE, JULIAN, number — , late a Flying Cadet, Umptieth Squadron, Air Service, known as 'One Wing' by the other embryonic aces of his flight, regarded the world with a yellow and disgruntled eye. He suffered the same jaundice that many a more booted one than he did, from Flight Commanders through Generals to the ambrosial single-barred (not to mention that inexplicable beast of the field which the French so beautifully call an aspiring aviator); they had stopped the war on him.

So he sat in a smouldering of disgusted sorrow, not even enjoying his Pullman prerogatives, spinning on his thumb his hat with its accursed white band.

'Had your nose in the wind, hey, buddy?' said Yaphank, going home and smelling to high heaven of bad whisky.

'Ah, go to hell,' he returned sourly and Yaphank doffed his tortured hat.

'Why, sure, General - or should I of said Lootenant? Excuse me, madam. I got gassed doing k.p. and my sight ain't been the same since. On to Berlin! Yeh, sure, we're on to Berlin. I'm on to you, Berlin. I got your number. Number no thousand no hundred and naughty naught Private (very private) Joe Gilligan, late for parade, late for fatigue, late for breakfast when breakfast is late. The Statue of Liberty ain't never seen me, and if she do, she'll have to 'bout face.'

Cadet Lowe raised a sophisticated eye. 'Say, whatcher drinking, anyway?'

'Brother, I dunno. Fellow that makes it was gave a Congressional medal last Chuesday because he has got a plan to stop the war. Enlist all the Dutchmen in our army and make 'em drink

so much of his stuff a day for forty days, see? Ruin any war. Get the idea?’

‘I’ll say. Won’t know whether it’s a war or a dance, huh?’

‘Sure, they can tell. The women will all be dancing. Listen, I had a swell jane and she said, “for Christ’s sake, you can’t dance”. And I said, “like hell I can’t”. And we was dancing and she said, “what are you, anyways?” And I says, “what do you wanta know for? I can dance as well as any general or major or even a sergeant, because I just win four hundred in a poker game,” and she said, “oh, you did?” and I said, “sure, stick with me, kid,” and she said, “where is it?” Only I wouldn’t show it to her and then this fellow come up to her and said, “are you dancing this one?” And she said, “sure, I am. This bird don’t dance.” Well, he was a sergeant, the biggest one I ever seen. Say, he was like that fellow in Arkansaw that had some trouble with a nigger and a friend said to him, “well, I hear you killed a nigger yesterday.” And he said, “yes, weighed two hundred pounds.” Like a bear.’ He took the lurching of the train limberly and Cadet Lowe said, ‘For Christ’s sake.’

‘Sure,’ agreed the other. ‘She won’t hurt you, though. I done tried it. My dog won’t drink none of it of course, but then he got bad ways hanging around Brigade H.Q. He’s the one trophy of the war I got: something that wasn’t never bawled out by a shave-tail for not saluting. Say, would you kindly like to take a little something to keep off the summiferous dews of this goddam country? The honour is all mine and you won’t mind it much after the first two drinks. Makes me homesick: like a garage. Ever work in a garage?’

Sitting on the floor between two seats was Yaphank’s travelling companion, trying to ignite a splayed and sodden cigar. Like devastated France, thought Cadet Lowe, swimming his memory through the adenoidal reminiscences of Captain Bleyth, an R.A.F. pilot delegated to temporarily reinforce their democracy.

‘Why, poor soldier,’ said his friend, tearfully, ‘all alone in no man’s land and no matches. Ain’t war hell? I ask you.’ He tried to push the other over with his leg, then he fell to kicking him, slowly. ‘Move over, you ancient mariner. Move over, you goddam bastard. Alas, poor Jerks or something (I seen that in a

play, see? Good line) come on, come on; here's General Pershing come to have a drink with the poor soldiers.' He addressed Cadet Lowe. 'Look at him: ain't he sodden in depravity?'

'Battle of Coonyak,' the man on the floor muttered. 'Ten men killed. Maybe fifteen. Maybe hundred. Poor children at home saying "Alice, where art thou?"'

'Yeh, Alice. Where in hell are you? That other bottle. What'n'ell have you done with it? Keeping it to swim in when you get home?'

The man on the floor weeping said: 'You wrong me as ever man wronged. Accuse me of hiding mortgage on house? Then take this soul and body; take all. Ravish me, big boy.'

'Ravish a bottle of vinegar juice out of you, anyway,' the other muttered, busy beneath the seat. He rose triumphant, clutching a fresh bottle. 'Hark! the sound of battle and the laughing horses draws near. But shall they dull this poor unworthy head? No! But I would like to of seen one of them laughing horses. Must of been lady horses all together. Your extreme highness' - with ceremony, extending the bottle - 'will you be kind enough to kindly condescend to honour these kind but unworthy strangers in a foreign land?'

Cadet Lowe accepted the bottle, drank briefly, gagged and spat his drink. The other supporting him massaged his back. 'Come on, come on, they don't nothing taste that bad.' Kindly cupping Lowe's opposite shoulder in his palm he forced the bottle mouthward again. Lowe released the bottle, defending himself. 'Try again. I got you. Drink it, now.'

'Jesus Christ,' said Cadet Lowe, averting his head.

Passengers were interested and Yaphank soothed him. 'Now, now. They won't nothing hurt you. You are among friends. Us soldiers got to stick together in a foreign country like this. Come on, drink her down. She ain't worth nothing to no one, spit on his legs like that.'

'Hell, man, I can't drink it.'

'Why, sure you can. Listen: think of flowers. Think of your poor grey-haired mother hanging on the front gate and sobbing her grey-haired heart out. Listen, think of having to go to work again when you get home. Ain't war hell? I would of been a corporal at least, if she had just hung on another year.'

‘Hell, I can’t.’

‘Why, you got to,’ his new friend told him kindly, pushing the bottle suddenly in his mouth and tilting it. To be flooded or to swallow were his choices so he drank and retained it. His belly rose and hung, then sank reluctant.

‘There now, wasn’t so bad, was it? Remember, this hurts me to see my good licker going more than it does you. But she do kind of smack of gasoline, don’t she?’

Cadet Lowe’s outraged stomach heaved at its muscular moorings like a captive balloon. He gaped and his vitals coiled coldly in a passionate ecstasy. His friend again thrust the bottle in his mouth.

‘Drink, quick! You got to protect your investment, you know.’

His private parts, flooded, washed back to his gulping and a sweet fire ran through him, and the Pullman conductor came and regarded them in helpless disgust.

‘Ten – shun,’ said Yaphank, springing to his feet. ‘Beware of officers! Rise, men, and salute the admiral here.’ He took the conductor’s hand and held it. ‘Boys, this man commanded the navy,’ he said. ‘When the enemy tried to capture Coney Island he was there. Or somewhere between there and Chicago, anyway, wasn’t you, Colonel?’

‘Look out, men, don’t do that.’ But Yaphank had already kissed his hand.

‘Now, run along, Sergeant. And don’t come back until dinner is ready.’

‘Listen, you must stop this. You will ruin my train.’

‘Bless your heart, Captain, your train couldn’t be no safer with us if it was your own daughter.’ The man sitting on the floor moved and Yaphank cursed him. ‘Sit still, can’t you? Say, this fellow thinks it’s night. Suppose you have your hired man bed him down? He’s just in the way here.’

The conductor, deciding Lowe was the sober one, addressed him.

‘For God’s sake, soldier, can’t you do something with them?’

‘Sure,’ said Cadet Lowe. ‘You run along; I’ll look after them. They’re all right.’

‘Well, do something with them. I can’t bring a train into Chicago with the whole army drunk on it. My God, Sherman was sure right.’

Yaphank stared at him quietly. Then he turned to his companions. ‘Men,’ he said solemnly, ‘he don’t want us here. And this is the reward we get for giving our flesh and blood to our country’s need. Yes, sir, he don’t want us here; he begrudges us riding on his train, even. Say, suppose we hadn’t sprang to the nation’s call, do you know what kind of a train you’d have? A train full of Germans. A train full of folks eating sausage and drinking beer, all going to Milwaukee, that’s what you’d have.’

‘Couldn’t be worse than a train full of you fellows not knowing where you’re going,’ the conductor replied.

‘All right,’ Yaphank answered. ‘If that’s the way you feel, we’ll get off your goddam train. Do you think this is the only train in the world?’

‘No, no,’ the conductor said hastily, ‘not at all. I don’t want you to get off. I just want you to straighten up and not disturb the other passengers.’

The sitting man lurched clumsily and Cadet Lowe met interested stares.

‘No,’ said Yaphank, ‘no! You have refused the hospitality of your train to the saviours of your country. We could have expected better treatment than this in Germany, even in Texas.’ He turned to Lowe. ‘Men, we will get off his train at the next station. Hey, General?’

‘My God,’ repeated the conductor. ‘If we ever have another peace I don’t know what the railroads will do. I thought war was bad, but my God.’

‘Run along,’ Yaphank told him, ‘run along. You probably won’t stop for us, so I guess we’ll have to jump off. Gratitude! Where is gratitude, when trains won’t stop to let poor soldiers off? I know what it means. They’ll fill trains with poor soldiers and run ’em off into the Pacific Ocean. Won’t have to feed ’em any more. Poor soldiers! Woodrow, you wouldn’t of treated me like this.’

‘Hey, what you doing?’ But the man ignored him, tugging the window up and dragging a cheap paper suit-case across his companion’s knees. Before either Lowe or the conductor could