

WIKI: *Light in August* is a 1932 novel by the Southern American author William Faulkner. It belongs to the Southern gothic and modernist literary genres.

Set in the author's present day, the interwar period, the novel centers on two strangers who arrive at different times in Jefferson, Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi, a fictional county based on Faulkner's home, Lafayette County, Mississippi. The plot first focuses on Lena Grove, a young pregnant white woman from Alabama looking for the father of her unborn child, and then shifts to explore the life of Joe Christmas, a man who has settled in Jefferson and passes as white, but who secretly believes he has some black ancestry. After a series of flashbacks narrating Christmas's early life, the plot resumes with his living and working with Lucas Burch, the father of Lena's child, who fled to Jefferson and changed his name when he found out that Lena was pregnant. The woman on whose property Christmas and Burch have been living, Joanna Burden, a descendant of Yankee abolitionists hated by the citizens of Jefferson, is murdered. Burch is caught at the scene of the crime and reveals that Christmas had been romantically involved with her and is part black, thus implying that he is guilty of her murder. While Burch sits in jail awaiting his reward for turning in Christmas, Lena is assisted by Byron Bunch, a shy, mild-mannered bachelor who falls in love with her. Bunch seeks the aid of another outcast in the town, the disgraced former minister Gail Hightower, to help Lena give birth and protect Christmas from being lynched. Though Hightower refuses the latter, Christmas escapes to his house and is shot and castrated by a state guardsman. Burch leaves town without his reward, and the novel ends with an anonymous man recounting a story to his wife about some hitchhikers he picked up on the road to Tennessee—a woman with a child and a man who was not the father of the child, both looking for the woman's husband.

In a loose, unstructured modernist narrative style that draws from Christian allegory and oral storytelling, Faulkner explores themes of race, sex, class and religion in the American South. By focusing on characters that are misfits, outcasts, or are otherwise marginalized in their community, he portrays the clash of alienated individuals against a Puritanical, prejudiced rural society. Early reception of the novel was mixed, with some reviewers critical of Faulkner's style and subject matter. However, over time, the novel has come to be considered one of the most important literary works by Faulkner and one of the best English-language novels of the 20th century.

FROM his study window he can see the street. It is not far away, since the lawn is not deep. It is a small lawn, containing a half dozen lowgrowing maples. The house, the brown, unpainted and unobtrusive bungalow is small too and by bushing crape myrtle and syringa and Althea almost hidden save for that gap through which from the study window he watches the street. So hidden it is that the light from the corner street lamp scarcely touches it.

From the window he can also see the sign, which he calls his monument. It is planted in the corner of the yard, low, facing the street. It is three feet long and eighteen inches high—a neat oblong presenting its face to who passes and its back to him. But he does not need to read it because he made the sign with hammer and saw, neatly, and he painted the legend which it bears, neatly too, tediously, when he realised that he would have to begin to have to have money for bread and fire and clothing. When he quitted the seminary he had a small income inherited from his father, which, as soon as he got his church, he forwarded promptly on receipt of the quarterly checks to an institution for delinquent girls in Memphis. Then he lost his church, he lost the Church, and the bitterest thing which he believed that he had ever faced—more bitter even than the bereavement and the shame—was the letter

which he wrote them to say that from now on he could send them but half the sum which he had previously sent.

So he continued to send them half of a revenue which in its entirety would little more than have kept him. "Luckily there are things which I can do," he said at the time. Hence the sign, carpentered neatly by himself and by himself lettered, with bits of broken glass contrived cunningly into the paint, so that at night, when the corner street lamp shone upon it, the letters glittered with an effect as of Christmas:

REV. GAIL HIGHTOWER, D.D.

Art Lessons

Handpainted Xmas & Anniversary Cards

Photographs Developed

But that was years ago, and he had had no art pupils and few enough Christmas cards and photograph plates, and the paint and the shattered glass had weathered out of the fading letters. They were still readable, however; though, like Hightower himself, few of the townspeople needed to read them anymore. But now and then a negro nursemaid with her white charges would loiter there and spell them aloud with that vacuous idiocy of her idle and illiterate kind, or a stranger happening along the quiet and remote and unpaved and littleused street would pause and read the sign and then look up at the small, brown, almost concealed house, and pass on; now and then the stranger would mention the sign to some acquaintance in the town. "Oh, yes," the friend would say. "Hightower. He lives there by himself. He come here as minister of the Presbyterian church, but his wife went bad on him. She would slip off to Memphis now and then and have a good time. About twenty-five years ago, that was, right after he come here. Some folks claimed he knew about it. That he couldn't or wouldn't satisfy her himself and that he knew what she was doing. Then one Saturday night she got killed, in a house or something in Memphis. Papers full of it. He had to resign from the church, but he wouldn't leave Jefferson, for some reason. They tried to get him to, for his own sake as well as the town's, the church's. That was pretty bad on the church, you see. Having strangers come here and hear about

it, and him refusing to leave the town. But he wouldn't go away. He has lived out there on what used to be the main street ever since, by himself. At least it aint a principal street anymore. That's something. But then he dont worry anybody anymore, and I reckon most folks have forgot about him. Does his own house-work. I dont reckon anybody's even been inside that house in twenty-five years. We dont know why he stays here. But any day you pass along there about dusk or nightfall, you can see him sitting in the window. Just sitting there. The rest of the time folks wont hardly see him around the place at all, except now and then working in his garden."

So the sign which he carpentered and lettered is even less to him than it is to the town; he is no longer conscious of it as a sign, a message. He does not remember it at all until he takes his place in the study window just before dusk. Then it is just a familiar low oblong shape without any significance at all, low at the street end of the shallow lawn; it too might have grown up out of the tragic and inescapable earth along with the low spreading maples and the shrubs, without help or hindrance from him. He no longer even looks at it, as he does not actually see the trees beneath and through which he watches the street, waiting for nightfall, the moment of night. The house, the study, is dark behind him, and he is waiting for that instant when all light has failed out of the sky and it would be night save for that faint light which daygranaried leaf and grass blade reluctant suspire, making still a little light on earth though night itself has come. *Now, soon*, he thinks; *soon, now* He does not say even to himself: "There remains yet something of honor and pride, of life."

When Byron Bunch first came to Jefferson seven years ago and saw that little sign *Gail Hightower D.D. Art Lessons Christmas Cards Photographs Developed* he thought, 'D.D. What is D.D.,' and he asked and they told him it meant Done Damned. Gail Hightower Done Damned in Jefferson anyway, they told him. And how Hightower had come straight to Jefferson from the seminary, refusing to accept any other call; how he had pulled every string he could in order to be sent to Jefferson. And how he arrived with his

young wife, descending from the train in a state of excitement already, talking, telling the old men and women who were the pillars of the church how he had set his mind on Jefferson from the first, since he had first decided to become a minister; telling them with a kind of glee of the letters he had written and the worrying he had done and the influence he had used in order to be called here. To the people of the town it sounded like a horse-trader's glee over an advantageous trade. Perhaps that is how it sounded to the elders. Because they listened to him with something cold and astonished and dubious, since he sounded like it was the town he desired to live in and not the church and the people who composed the church, that he wanted to serve. As if he did not care about the people, the living people, about whether they wanted him here or not. And he being young too, and the old men and the old women trying to talk down his gleeful excitement with serious matters of the church and its responsibilities and his own. And they told Byron how the young minister was still excited even after six months, still talking about the Civil War and his grandfather, a cavalryman, who was killed, and about General Grant's stores burning in Jefferson until it did not make sense at all. They told Byron how he seemed to talk that way in the pulpit too, wild too in the pulpit, using religion as though it were a dream. Not a nightmare, but something which went faster than the words in the Book; a sort of cyclone that did not even need to touch the actual earth. And the old men and women did not like that, either.

It was as if he couldn't get religion and that galloping cavalry and his dead grandfather shot from the galloping horse untangled from each other, even in the pulpit. And that he could not untangle them in his private life, at home either, perhaps. Perhaps he did not even try to at home, Byron thought, thinking how that is the sort of thing that men do to the women who belong to them; thinking that that is why women have to be strong and should not be held blameable for what they do with or for or because of men, since God knew that being anybody's wife was a tricky enough business. They told him how the wife was a small, quietlooking girl who at first the town thought just had nothing to say for herself. But the town said that if Hightower had just been a more depend-

able kind of man, the kind of man a minister should be instead of being born about thirty years after the only day he seemed to have ever lived in—that day when his grandfather was shot from the galloping horse—she would have been all right too. But he was not, and the neighbors would hear her weeping in the parsonage in the afternoons or late at night, and the neighbors knowing that the husband would not know what to do about it because he did not know what was wrong. And how sometimes she would not even come to the church, where her own husband was preaching, even on Sunday, and they would look at him and wonder if he even knew that she was not there, if he had not even forgot that he ever had a wife, up there in the pulpit with his hands flying around him and the dogma he was supposed to preach all full of galloping cavalry and defeat and glory just as when he tried to tell them on the street about the galloping horses, it in turn would get all mixed up with absolution and choirs of marital seraphim, until it was natural that the old men and women should believe that what he preached in God's own house on God's own day verged on actual sacrilege.

And they told Byron how after about a year in Jefferson, the wife began to wear that frozen look on her face, and when the church ladies would go to call Hightower would meet them alone, in his shirt sleeves and without any collar, in a flurry, and for a time it would seem as though he could not even think what they had come for and what he ought to do. Then he would invite them in and excuse himself and go out. And they would not hear a sound anywhere in the house, sitting there in their Sunday dresses, looking at one another and about the room, listening and not hearing a sound. And then he would come back with his coat and collar on and sit and talk with them about the church and the sick, and they talking back, bright and quiet, still listening and maybe watching the door, maybe wondering if he knew what they believed that they already knew.

The ladies quit going there. Soon they did not even see the minister's wife on the street. And he still acting like there was nothing wrong. And then she would be gone for a day or two; they would see her get on the early train, with her face beginning to get thin and gaunted as though she never ate enough and that frozen look

on it as if she were not seeing what she was looking at. And he would tell that she had gone to visit her people downstate somewhere, until one day, during one of her absences, a Jefferson woman shopping in Memphis saw her walking fast into a hotel there. It was one Saturday that the woman returned home and told it. But the next day Hightower was in the pulpit, with religion and the galloping cavalry all mixed up again, and the wife returned Monday and the following Sunday she came to church again, for the first time in six or seven months, sitting by herself at the rear of the church. She came every Sunday after that for a while. Then she was gone again, in the middle of the week this time (it was in July and hot) and Hightower said that she had gone to see her folks again, in the country where it would be cool; and the old men, the elders, and the old women watching him, not knowing if he believed what he was telling or not, and the young people talking behind his back.

But they could not tell whether he himself believed or not what he told them, if he cared or not, with his religion and his grandfather being shot from the galloping horse all mixed up, as though the seed which his grandfather had transmitted to him had been on the horse too that night and had been killed too and time had stopped there and then for the seed and nothing had happened in time since, not even him.

The wife returned before Sunday. It was hot; the old people said that it was the hottest spell which the town had ever known. She came to church that Sunday and took her seat on a bench at the back, alone. In the middle of the sermon she sprang from the bench and began to scream, to shriek something toward the pulpit, shaking her hands toward the pulpit where her husband had ceased talking, leaning forward with his hands raised and stopped. Some people nearby tried to hold her but she fought them, and they told Byron how she stood there, in the aisle now, shrieking and shaking her hands at the pulpit where her husband leaned with his hand still raised and his wild face frozen in the shape of the thundering and allegorical period which he had not completed. They did not know whether she was shaking her hands at him or at God. Then he came down and approached and she stopped fighting then and he

led her out, with the heads turning as they passed, until the superintendent told the organist to play. That afternoon the elders held a meeting behind locked doors. The people did not know what went on behind them, save that Hightower returned and entered the vestry room and closed the door behind him too.

But the people did not know what had happened. They only knew that the church made up a sum to send the wife to an institution, a sanatorium, and that Hightower took her there and came back and preached the next Sunday, as usual. The women, the neighbors, some of whom had not entered the parsonage in months, were kind to him, taking him dishes now and then, telling one another and their husbands what a mess the parsonage was in, and how the minister seemed to eat like an animal—just when he got hungry and just whatever he could find. Every two weeks he would go and visit his wife in the sanatorium, but he always returned after a day or so; and on Sunday, in the pulpit again, it was as though the whole thing had never happened. The people would ask about her health, curious and kind, and he would thank them. Then Sunday he would be again in the pulpit, with his wild hands and his wild rapt eager voice in which like phantoms God and salvation and the galloping horses and his dead grandfather thundered, while below him the elders sat, and the congregation, puzzled and outraged. In the fall the wife came home. She looked better. She had put on a little flesh. She had changed more than that, even. Perhaps it was that she seemed chastened now; awake, anyway. Anyhow she was now like the ladies had wanted her to be all the time, as they believed that the minister's wife should be. She attended church and prayer meeting regularly, and the ladies called upon her and she called upon them, sitting quiet and humble, even in her own house, while they told her how to run it and what to wear and what to make her husband eat.

It might even be said that they forgave her. No crime or transgression had been actually named and no penance had been actually set. But the town did not believe that the ladies had forgot those previous mysterious trips, with Memphis as their destination and for that purpose regarding which all had the same conviction, though none ever put it into words, spoke it aloud, since the town

believed that good women dont forget things easily, good or bad, lest the taste and savor of forgiveness die from the palate of conscience. Because the town believed that the ladies knew the truth, since it believed that bad women can be fooled by badness, since they have to spend some of their time not being suspicious. But that no good woman can be fooled by it because, by being good herself, she does not need to worry anymore about hers or anybody else's goodness; hence she has plenty of time to smell out sin. That was why, they believed, that good can fool her almost any time into believing that it is evil, but that evil itself can never fool her. So when after four or five months the wife went away again on a visit and the husband said again that she had gone to visit her people, the town believed that this time even he was not fooled. Anyway, she came back and he went on preaching every Sunday like nothing had happened, making his calls on the people and the sick and talking about the church. But the wife did not come to church anymore, and soon the ladies stopped calling on her, going to the parsonage at all. And even the neighbors on either side would no longer see her about the house. And soon it was as though she were not there; as though everyone had agreed that she was not there, that the minister did not even have a wife. And he preaching to them every Sunday, not even telling them now that she had gone to visit her people. Maybe he was glad of that, the town thought. Maybe he was glad to not have to lie anymore.

So nobody saw her when she got on the train that Friday, or maybe it was Saturday, the day itself. It was Sunday morning's paper which they saw, telling how she had jumped or fallen from a hotel window in Memphis Saturday night, and was dead. There had been a man in the room with her. He was arrested. He was drunk. They were registered as man and wife, under a fictitious name. The police found her rightful name where she had written it herself on a piece of paper and then torn it up and thrown it into the waste basket. The papers printed it, with the story: wife of the Reverend Gail Hightower, of Jefferson, Mississippi. And the story told how the paper telephoned to the husband at two A.M. and how the husband said that he had nothing to say. And when they reached the church that Sunday morning the yard was full of Memphis

reporters taking pictures of the church and the parsonage. Then Hightower came. The reporters tried to stop him but he walked right through them and into the church and up into the pulpit. The old ladies and some of the old men were already in the church, horrified and outraged, not so much about the Memphis business as about the presence of the reporters. But when Hightower came in and actually went up into the pulpit, they forgot about the reporters even. The ladies got up first and began to leave. Then the men got up too, and then the church was empty save for the minister in the pulpit, leaning a little forward, with the Book open and his hands propped on either side of it and his head not bowed either, and the Memphis reporters (they had followed him into the church) sitting in a line in the rear pew. They said he was not watching his congregation leaving; he was not looking at anything.

They told Byron about it; about how at last the minister closed the Book, carefully, and came down into the empty church and walked up the aisle without once looking at the row of reporters, like the congregation had done, and went out the door. There were some photographers waiting out in front, with the cameras all set up and their heads under the black cloths. The minister had evidently expected this. Because he emerged from the church with an open hymn book held before his face. But the cameramen had evidently expected that too. Because they fooled him. Very likely he was not used to it and so was easily fooled, they told Byron. One of the cameramen had his machine set up to one side, and the minister did not see that one at all, or until too late. He was keeping his face concealed from the one in front, and next day when the picture came out in the paper it had been taken from the side, with the minister in the middle of a step, holding the hymn book before his face. And behind the book his lips were drawn back as though he were smiling. But his teeth were tight together and his face looked like the face of Satan in the old prints. The next day he brought his wife home and buried her. The town came to the ceremony. It was not a funeral. He did not take the body to the church at all. He took it straight to the cemetery and he was preparing to read from the Book himself when another minister came forward

and took it from his hand. A lot of the people, the younger ones, remained after he and the others had gone, looking at the grave.

Then even the members of the other churches knew that his own had asked him to resign, and that he refused. The next Sunday a lot of them from the other churches came to his church to see what would happen. He came and entered the church. The congregation as one rose and walked out, leaving the minister and those from the other churches who had come as though to a show. So he preached to them, as he had always preached: with that rapt fury which they had considered sacrilege and which those from the other churches believed to be out and out insanity.

He would not resign. The elders asked the church board to recall him. But after the story, the pictures in the papers and all, no other town would have him either. There was nothing against him personally, they all insisted. He was just unlucky. He was just born unlucky. So the people quit coming to the church at all, even the ones from the other churches who had come out of curiosity for a time: he was no longer even a show now; he was now only an outrage. But he would reach the church at the old hour each Sunday morning and go to the pulpit, and the congregation would rise and leave, and the loafers and such would gather along the street outside and listen to him preaching and praying in the empty church. And the Sunday after that when he arrived the door was locked, and the loafers watched him try the door and then desist and stand there with his face still not bowed, with the street lined with men who never went to church anyway, and little boys who did not know exactly what it was but that it was something, stopping and looking with still round eyes at the man standing quite motionless before the locked door. The next day the town heard how he had gone to the elders and resigned his pulpit for the good of the church.

Then the town was sorry with being glad, as people sometimes are sorry for those whom they have at last forced to do as they wanted them to. They thought of course that he would go away now, and the church made up a collection for him to go away on and settle somewhere else. Then he refused to leave the town. They told Byron of the consternation, the more than outrage, when they learned that he had bought the little house on the back street

where he now lives and has lived ever since; and the elders held another meeting because they said that they had given him the money to go away on, and when he spent it for something else he had accepted the money under false pretences. They went to him and told him so. He asked them to excuse him; he returned to the room with the sum which had been given him, to the exact penny and in the exact denominations, and insisted that they take it back. But they refused, and he would not tell where he had got the money to buy the house with. So by the next day, they told Byron, there were some who said that he had insured his wife's life and then paid someone to murder her. But everyone knew that this was not so, including the ones who told and repeated it and the ones who listened when it was told.

But he would not leave the town. Then one day they saw the little sign which he had made and painted himself and set in his front yard, and they knew that he meant to stay. He still kept the cook, a negro woman. He had had her all the time. But they told Byron how as soon as his wife was dead, the people seemed to realise all at once that the negro was a woman, that he had that negro woman in the house alone with him all day. And how the wife was hardly cold in the shameful grave before the whispering began. About how he had made his wife go bad and commit suicide because he was not a natural husband, a natural man, and that the negro woman was the reason. And that's all it took; all that was lacking. Byron listened quietly, thinking to himself how people everywhere are about the same, but that it did seem that in a small town, where evil is harder to accomplish, where opportunities for privacy are scarcer, that people can invent more of it in other people's names. Because that was all it required: that idea, that single idle word blown from mind to mind. One day the cook quit. They heard how one night a party of carelessly masked men went to the minister's house and ordered him to fire her. Then they heard how the next day the woman told that she quit herself because her employer asked her to do something which she said was against God and nature. And it was said that some masked men had scared her into quitting because she was what is known as a high brown and it was known that there were two or three men

in the town who would object to her doing whatever it was which she considered contrary to God and nature, since, as some of the younger men said, if a nigger woman considered it against God and nature, it must be pretty bad. Anyway, the minister couldn't—or didn't—get another woman cook. Possibly the men scared all the other negro women in town that same night. So he did his own cooking for a while, until they heard one day that he had a negro man to cook for him. And that finished him, sure enough. Because that evening some men, not masked either, took the negro man out and whipped him. And when Hightower waked the next morning his study window was broken and on the floor lay a brick with a note tied to it, commanding him to get out of town by sunset and signed K.K.K. And he did not go, and on the second morning a man found him in the woods about a mile from town. He had been tied to a tree and beaten unconscious.

He refused to tell who had done it. The town knew that that was wrong, and some of the men came to him and tried again to persuade him to leave Jefferson, for his own good, telling him that next time they might kill him. But he refused to leave. He would not even talk about the beating, even when they offered to prosecute the men who had done it. But he would do neither. He would neither tell, nor depart. Then all of a sudden the whole thing seemed to blow away, like an evil wind. It was as though the town realised at last that he would be a part of its life until he died, and that they might as well become reconciled. As though, Byron thought, the entire affair had been a lot of people performing a play and that now and at last they had all played out the parts which had been allotted them and now they could live quietly with one another. They let the minister alone. They would see him working in the yard or the garden, and on the street and in the stores with a small basket on his arm, and they would speak to him. They knew that he did his own cooking and housework, and after a while the neighbors began to send him dishes again, though they were the sort of dishes which they would have sent to a poor mill family. But it was food, and wellmeant. Because, as Byron thought, people forget a lot in twenty years. 'Why,' he thinks, 'I dont reckon there is anybody in Jefferson that knows that he sits in that window from

sundown to full dark every day that comes, except me. Or what the inside of that house looks like. And they dont even know that I know, or likely they'd take us both out and whip us again, since folks dont seem to forget much longer than they remember.' Because there is one other thing, which came into Byron's own knowledge and observation, in his own time since he came to Jefferson to live.

Hightower read a great deal. That is, Byron had examined with a kind of musing and respectful consternation the books which lined the study walls: books of religion and history and science of whose very existence Byron had never heard. One day about four years ago a negro man came running up to the minister's house from his cabin on the edge of town immediately behind it, and said that his wife was at childbed. Hightower had no telephone and he told the negro to run next door and call a doctor. He watched the negro go to the gate of the next house. But instead of entering, the negro stood there for a time and then went on up the street toward town, walking; Hightower knew that the man would walk all the way to town and then spend probably thirty minutes more getting in touch with a doctor, in his fumbling and timeless negro fashion, instead of asking some white woman to telephone for him. Then he went to his kitchen door and he could hear the woman in the not so distant cabin, wailing. He waited no longer. He ran down to the cabin and found that the woman had got out of bed, for what reason he never learned, and she was now on her hands and knees on the floor, trying to get back into the bed, screaming and wailing. He got her back into the bed and told her to lie still, frightened her into obeying him, and ran back to his house and took one of the books from the study shelf and got his razor and some cord and ran back to the cabin and delivered the child. But it was already dead; the doctor when arrived said that she had doubtless injured it when she left the bed where Hightower found her. He also approved of Hightower's work, and the husband was satisfied too.

'But it was just too close to that other business,' Byron thought, 'even despite the fifteen years between them.' Because within two days there were those who said that the child was Hightower's

and that he had let it die deliberately. But Byron believed that even the ones who said this did not believe it. He believed that the town had had the habit of saying things about the disgraced minister which they did not believe themselves for too long a time to break themselves of it. 'Because always,' he thinks, 'when anything gets to be a habit, it also manages to get a right good distance away from truth and fact.' And he remembers one evening when he and Hightower were talking together and Hightower said: "They are good people. They must believe what they must believe, especially as it was I who was at one time both master and servant of their believing. And so it is not for me to outrage their believing nor for Byron Bunch to say that they are wrong. Because all that any man can hope for is to be permitted to live quietly among his fellows." That was soon after Byron had heard the story, shortly after the evening visits to Hightower's study began and Byron still wondered why the other remained in Jefferson, almost within sight of, and within hearing of, the church which had disowned and expelled him. One evening Byron asked him.

"Why do you spend your Saturday afternoons working at the mill while other men are taking pleasure down town?" Hightower said.

"I dont know," Byron said. "I reckon that's just my life."

"And I reckon this is just my life, too," the other said. 'But I know now why it is,' Byron thinks. 'It is because a fellow is more afraid of the trouble he might have than he ever is of the trouble he's already got. He'll cling to trouble he's used to before he'll risk a change. Yes. A man will talk about how he'd like to escape from living folks. But it's the dead folks that do him the damage. It's the dead ones that lay quiet in one place and dont try to hold him, that he cant escape from.'

They have thundered past now and crashed silently on into the dusk; night has fully come. Yet he still sits at the study window, the room still dark behind him. The street lamp at the corner flickers and glares, so that the bitten shadows of the unwinded maples seem to toss faintly upon the August darkness. From a distance, quite faint though quite clear, he can hear the sonorous waves of massed voices from the church: a sound at once austere

and rich, abject and proud, swelling and falling in the quiet summer darkness like a harmonic tide.

Then he sees a man approaching along the street. On a week night he would have recognised the figure, the shape, the carriage and gait. But on Sunday evening, and with the echo of the phantom hooves still crashing soundlessly in the duskfilled study, he watches quietly the puny, unhorsed figure moving with that precarious and meretricious cleverness of animals balanced on their hinder legs; that cleverness of which the man animal is so fatuously proud and which constantly betrays him by means of natural laws like gravity and ice, and by the very extraneous objects which he has himself invented, like motor cars and furniture in the dark, and the very refuse of his own eating left upon floor or pavement; and he thinks quietly how right the ancients were in making the horse an attribute and symbol of warriors and kings, when he sees the man in the street pass the low sign and turn into his gate and approach the house. He sits forward then, watching the man come up the dark walk toward the dark door; he hears the man stumble heavily at the dark bottom step. "Byron Bunch," he says. "In town on Sunday night. Byron Bunch in town on Sunday."