The Sound and the Fury—Jason’s section discussion questions

1. The title of the book is taken from the despairing speech in William Shakespeare's *MacBeth*:

"Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow

Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,

To the last syllable of recorded time

And all our yesterdays have lighted fools

The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player

That struts and frets his hour upon the stage

And then is heard no more. It is a tale

Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,

Signifying nothing."

At this point in the play, MacBeth has just learned that his wife has killed herself and their plans for seizing the throne will not work out. How are Benjy and Quentin represented in the *MacBeth* quote? Who do you think is "the idiot"?Is Jason represented in the quote from Shakespeare's *MacBeth*?

1. There is a great deal of biblical symbolism in this story. For example, the date three dates of Benjy’s section, Jason’s section, and the final section (often referred to as “Dilsey’s section) take place over Easter weekend. Jason’s section is on Good Friday, Benjy’s on Holy Saturday, and Dilsey’s section on Easter Sunday. Also, the three ages that we see Benjy (as a small child, as a teenager, and at 33) are the same ages that Jesus is described in the Bible. Can you see any other biblical symbolism? What do you think this symbolism could mean? Could any one be a Christ figure? A Satanic figure? How so? And what does that mean if they are a that figure?
2. How does this section differ from Benjy and Quentin's? What does the difference signify about each brother's personality, specifically in terms of isolation and happiness?
3. Benjy, Quentin and Jason each put more emphasis on Caddy's life than can be considered healthy. How does each do this? What happens because of it?
4. Who does Jason choose as the targets of his anger? What does this say about him? Is Jason really the confident "lord of the house" that he makes himself out to be? Do you think he succeeds in preserving the appearance of normality that is so important to him?
5. Why did Jason prevent Caddy from seeing her own daughter, Miss Quentin? How would you describe Jason's mode of thinking and reasoning?
6. Mrs. Compson says approvingly that Jason is more Bascomb (her family) than Compson (her husband's). Is this really such a compliment? How do you perceive Mrs. Compson's relationship with her children?
7. While Caddy is presented as maternal and promiscuous, she is also unknowable, given that she can only be glimpsed in the rather unreliable narrations of her brothers. Does she appeal to you as a sympathetic character? Is Caddy's fall the cause of the family tragedy or is she just another child-victim of the abdication of parental responsibility?
8. In which characters, if any, do we find love, honor, loyalty, strength? Is Jason the embodiment of the opposite traits? How does Caddy's daughter, Quentin, fit into the scheme of value here? Do Benjy's perceptions function as a sort of touchstone for the reader?

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