Can one individual ruin an entire family? In the story, “Barn Burning” by William Faulkner, the author depicts how a father plays a significant and vital role in the family. The story follows a ten-year-old protagonist, Colonel Sartoris Snopes (Sarty), and his father, Abner Snopes, and their complicated relationship. Each family member lacks identity and independence because of the anger and hates that so defines Abner’s life. Parents play an essential role in every child’s life. Faulkner suggests that a true father will not be rude, selfish and cruel, but that fatherhood is characterized by love, care, and responsibility.

First of all, parents play a crucial role in every child’s life. Home is considered as the first school for children. According to a researcher in Hong Kong, “parental anxiety increases the risk of children developing depression, and whether positive psychological traits, including optimism…” (Tam 283). Children learn from their parent’s behavior, and, most of the time, they follow the footsteps of parents. The flaws in parenting can lead to various diseases and depression for children. Parents need to show love and care. Also, they need to make sure that their children can trust them.

In the starting of the story, the author describes a scene where the boy and his father were in a store that was also being used as a courtroom because the owner of a barn, Harris, accused Abner of burning his barn. The justice of the town asked Sarty about his father’s crime. Sarty lied to the judge that his father was innocent and did not burn the barn. According to the
story, the justice told Abner, “Leave this country and don't come back to it” (William 2). The judge dismissed the case and told Sartoris’s father, Snopes, to leave with his family just because of Abner’s negative and hateful attitude. The whole family suffered because of the one person. The children had to leave their home because their father was short tempered.

Also, fathers have a crucial role to play in the cognitive, social, and emotional development of their children. An involved father is one who is engaged, available, and responsible. He is sensitive and helpful, encouraging and affectionate. Children expected their father to be a very strong man; they always think that their father can fulfill their every wish. According to the Book of Parenting Control, “Parents may not know what is going on with their children, or they may not have the emotional closeness…” (Grolnick 93). It is very important for fathers to give time to their children and make them realized that he is their friend and they can share anything with him.

Later in the story, the author showed that, on the way to the new place, Sartoris was thinking that maybe this was the last time his family would suffer because of his father. Sartoris wanted his father to stop acting selfishly and lashing out against rich people. If Snopes were responsible and caring, his family would never suffer. On the night they camped, his father scolded him and said that he should always be loyal to his family and never speak against them. According to the story, “But now he said nothing. He was not crying. He just stood there” (William 3). Sartoris did not misbehave with his father, but he was agitated because of his father’s rude behavior. Snopes never showed love and care towards Sartoris.

In addition to this, children, most of the time, are closer to their mother than fathers. There are still some fathers in this modern society who think that it is a mother’s responsibility to take care of children. According to the research, “Mothers and fathers have historically had
delineated gendered roles, with mothers adopting the majority of caregiving responsibilities” (Davison 53). It is very important in children’s lives that both parents should give equal care to their family. Children who have an involved father are more emotionally secure than those who don’t have a caring father. Also, there are better educational outcomes for the children who have responsible fathers.

Furthermore, even after they moved to new place, Sartoris father did not change his attitude. Abner first ruined the expensive carpet of his new employer, Major De Spain, and, when the owner told him to him the money for the carpet, Snopes planned to burn his new employer’s barn. Sartoris wanted to stop his father. According to the story, "Lennie. Take hold of him. I want to see you do it. His mother took him by the wrist. If he gets loose, don't you know what he is going to do? He will go up yonder” (William 10). Once again, Abner showed his cruel behavior; he tied up Sartoris and told his wife to hold him tightly. Abner was sure that Sarty would warn Major De Spain about his selfish intentions. Sarty finally was successful; he escaped and told the owner about his father’s plan. In the end, Major De Spain shot Sarty’s father when Abner tried to burn the barn. Sartoris and his family could be happy if his father showed love and care towards other. Abner’s family suffered every time because of his personality. Sarty was upset about his father’s death, but, at the same time, he knew that his family would never face problems again because of his father.

In the light of science and psychology, there are four types of parenting styles: authoritative, neglectful, permissive, and authoritarian. Every parenting style has different characteristics and carries about different reactions in the children which they are used on. The most beneficial and effective parenting style is “Authoritative.” The authoritative parenting style is considered a style in which children know the expectations of parents from them, and there is
an open and healthy line of communication between children and parents. Parents should not scold their children for everything. Strictness is necessary, but every time. According to the book, *Yelling and spanking Don’t Help*, “Spanking is not a satisfactory way to achieve compliance” (Indsay 63). Yelling at a child is not a good way to teach them what is right and what is wrong. Parents should treat their children with love and explain to them very calmly to stay away from harmful activities. Parents can discipline their child more effectively without yelling and spanking.

Comparatively, neglecting parenting style is the most harmful parenting style used on the children. In this parenting style, parents do not know their child needs; they do not know what is going on in their child’s life. In this kind of parenting, children do not feel safe to share their experiences in the home (Indsay 63). Neglectful parenting is harmful to children because they have no trust base with their parents from which to explore the world. Children who have neglectful parents could not be able to build relationship easily with others.

In conclusion, parents play a vital role in every child’s life. Home is considered as the first school for children. Children learn from their parents, and parenting style can impact the whole life of children. In this story, the author conveys the message that father love and support towards his family is very important for every family member. Abner’s family suffered because of his hatred towards the rich families. If Abner was loving and caring, his family could be very happy, and they could be able to live happily, even with very little money. Abner's children’s lives would be successful if he was an involved and supportive father. A father should be a role model for their children. A father is considered as the strongest pillar and the backbone of the family.
Works Cited


