

The interior castle: Including Boston adventure, The mountain lion, and a new collection of short stories, Children are bored on Sunday

Jean Stafford

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Contains two complete novels, Boston Adventure and The Mountain Lion, and a collection of short stories, Children are bored on Sunday. The scope of Boston Adventure is a very broad one. The novel, which begins with what is happening to an emigrant German shoemaker, his unhappy Russian wife and their two loveless children, spreads out to take in practically all of the people in the fishing village of Chichester and its resort hotel, and then expands still further to embrace the lives and loves of many of the richest people of Beacon Hill. There are innumerable scenes that are unforgettable, such as where a violently insane woman holds her daughter captive and in fear of death all night beside a stove flaming with a fierce fire in torrid midsummer weather, and the pretended burial of a child at sea. The sharp witted encounters of people in a Beacon Hill drawing room are social satire at its best. The Mountain Lion covers two entirely different segments of society. The Fawcett family, with the swooning, shrieking mother at its head, lives one kind of life with its neighbors - and the neighbors become very well known to us, too - while their Kenyon relatives live another. The first unfolding of a boy's spirit into a confusion of love and sex is very real. Children are Bored on Sunday is a satirical examination of avant-garde intellectual life in New York through the eyes of a selfstyled "rube," The Home Front, about a German doctor in an American defense plant town. The Interior Castle is set in the featureless ether-smelling world of a hospital where the heroine is recovering after a nearfatal accident. The versatile forms of these stories - ranging from satire to interior monologue, from pathos to grotesquerie - are carried out in a style so consistently controlled, so full of imaginative power and so alive to nuance both verbal and pictorial, that the collection takes on a compelling unity in its very diversity.



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