The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford Study Guide

The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford by Jean Stafford

BOOKRAGS

Contents

Plot Summary

The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford by Jean Stafford was published in 1969. Comprised of thirty short stories, separated into four distinct sections, and covering a varied number of subjects, each story is unique and each is prized for its contribution to literature. This collection was the winner of the 1970 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

The first section is titled *The Innocents Abroad*. It is made up of six stories, each wonderfully detailed in their depiction of naivety, innocence lost, and the distinctions of class. There is the story of young Maggie Meriwether in *Maggie Meriwether's Rich Experience.* Maggie is a young woman who has traveled abroad and will experience the hubris of the English upper crust on vacation in the French countryside. *The Children's Game* and *A Modest Proposal* are stories of divorcees forced into a social confinement - an exile - from their peers for a period of time that would be deemed acceptable for them to return to polite society.

Sue Ledbetter is the young girl who befriends Ramona Dunn in *The Echo and the Nemesis*. Both girls are college students at Heidelberg University and Ramona, as Sue discovers, suffers a mental illness and exhibits multiple personalities. *The Maiden* is a darkly disturbing tale that defines polite conversation between two previously warring peoples. At a dinner party hosted by the English, a German couple finds humor in relating the tale of how they met while observing the death of a man by Le Guillotine. *Caveat Emptor* is the tale of a young couple who discover and almost lose each other for the entertainment of the bored and presumptuous faculty of Alma Hettrick, a finishing school for young women and the mothers of tomorrow.

Jean Stafford further exemplifies the distinctions between classes, snobbery at its finest, and the impoverishment of young women in the section titled *The Bostonians, and Other Manifestations of the American Scene*. *Life Is No Abyss* is the story of Cousin Lily and her visit, by proxy, to an ailing Cousin, Isobel Carpenter. Miss Rhoda Bellamy is a contrary woman, in her eighties, who remembers her past and the opportunities wasted in *The Hope Chest*. Mrs. Margaret Heath caves into social pressure when she visits Mrs. Wainright-Lowe for tea and *Polite Conversation*. In *A Country Love Story*, May, Daniel's wife, is distraught when the winter months' confinement increases the symptoms of her husband's illness. May imagines a lover in the absence of her husband's attention. May's imaginary lover saves her sanity and, in the end, is her bane, when she discovers there is no salvation to be had.

A young Mexican woman from the West, Rose Fabrizio, rails fate for her father who is a low person without the means to provide for her in the manner of the upright gentlefolk for whom she worked. In *The Bleeding Heart*, Rose learns that all gentlefolk are not what they are imagined - nor are their lives. *The Lippia Lawn* is the rather confusing tale of a young woman who spends time with a horticulturist and some plants. The woman reminisces and the flowers, shrubs, or trees that affect the thought, color every memory. A disturbing tale follows this horticulturist endeavor when Pansy Vanneman is introduced in *The Interior Castle*. *The Interior Castle* reminds again of the

autobiographical nature of these short stories by Jean Stafford. Pansy Vanneman, like Jean Stafford, is severely injured in an automobile accident and is hospitalized, awaiting facial reconstructive surgery.

In *Cowboys and Indians, and Magic Mountains*, Jean Stafford introduces orphaned children, impoverished families, societal expectations placed on women and children alike, and the spiritual affects on a society ruled by class distinctions. This section suggestions that New England, specifically Boston and New York, is the last outpost of civilization. In *The Healthiest Girl in Town,* an eight-year-old girl, Jessie, is moved to a Western town by her recently widowed mother. Jessie's mother has retained work, applying her nursing skills to a town of invalids.

The *Tea Time of Stouthearted Ladies* speaks directly of the families who have been socially rejected by Bostonian society when members of their families take ill. Judy Grayson is a woman in the thrall of young love to her new fiancy and the beauty of a mountain day in *A Mountain Day*. The day is marred by tragedy when two young maids are discovered drowned. Another young woman, Ella, is afraid of the dark in *The Darkening Moon*. *Bad Characters* is the introduction of Emily Vanderpool. Emily is an eleven-year-old girl living in Adams, Colorado, whose mouth and association with a young delinquent, creates the social faux pas inherent to the very young and the very old.

In the Zoo, the sixth story in *Cowboys and Indians, and Magic Mountains*, is one of Jean Stafford's most popular and renowned stories. *In the Zoo* creates similes among the zoo's inhabitants and the people who inhabit the memories of two women. Polly Bay escapes societal pressures and familial expectations in *The Liberation*. *A Reading Problem* is another story of young Emily Vanderpool. Emily is struggling to find a quiet reading place, and every attempt and each location is an experience in itself. *A Summer Day* is the lone tale of an orphaned boy. The child is Indian, possibly Cherokee, and arrives on a hot, summer day at a reservation school. A young man commits suicide and only a fellow female college student ponders, with any depth, the philosophy behind it in *The Philosophy Lesson*.

Manhattan Island is a compilation of seven stories whose characters seek acceptance in the glittering whirl of New York City. *Children Are Bored on Sunday* is the story of young woman in the city who is rejected from the intellectual class. Free as a child without a care, she finds herself at the Metropolitan Museum on a Sunday afternoon. A young woman, and darling of society, loses her hearing on the eve of her wedding day in *Beatrice Trueblood's Story*. *Between the Porch and the Altar* is where a woman does penance at the beginning of Lent. A woman of forty-three, who has never been married, narrates the tale, *I Love Someone*. After the death of a friend, the woman considers her life.

The final two stories in this section based on Manhattan Island are centered on beauty and its acknowledgement in a society with high expectations. *Cops and Robbers* is the tale of a young girl's loss of her beautiful tresses to a father's petty injustice to his wife. As the youngest of five children, the youth's hair, so like her mother's, was the child's

perceived single contribution to her family. A beautiful woman is kept so by the contributions of medical science in the story *The End of a Career*. When her story ends, so does her life. The woman's beauty has faded and so had her purpose for living.

Part 1, Chapter 1

Part 1, Chapter 1 Summary

Maggie Meriwether's Rich Experience is the story of young Maggie Meriwether, a college student and American, on a European vacation. Maggie has been invited to Chantilly to the home of Karl von Bubnoff, M. le Baron. Maggie is posed on the grass on the grounds of the Baronial estate, Magnamont. Maggie is in the attendance of ladies from England's upper crust, Mme Floquet and Mrs. Preston. The partygoers are all speaking French. Being fluent in French, Maggie Meriwether is dismayed to find herself tongue-tied upon her arrival in Paris a week ago and quite unable to comport herself in the august group's company. A young, English college student, Tippy Akenside, who had befriended her in Paris, issues her the invitation on this day. Tippy, who is known to the group and a friend of the Baron's, has assured that all in attendance would speak English.

Young Maggie Meriwether has not traveled abroad or to such a gathering as this. Maggie is unprepared to discover that a change of clothes is needed for the outdoor entertainment. It is a hot day and uncomfortably muggy. Presented in a dress and stockings, Maggie is cast in an unflattering light to the ladies, who had changed clothes in to shorts, jewels, and monogrammed handkerchiefs. Maggie eats little, for fear of disgracing herself with the complicated dinner service. After the rejection of her single, conversational gambit with the women of the party, Maggie is astonished to discover a young, unkempt, gentleman, talking to her at table. Returning with Tippy to Paris, Maggie learns that it was a jest of Tippy's to tell everyone they should only speak French in Maggie's presence. Maggie Meriwether is not amused. With only a curt goodbye, Maggie quits his company. Maggie is later approached to dine with a brother of a friend and his companions, all Americans. They enjoy the story of Maggie's day and make her feel sophisticated and appreciated for her effort.

Part 1, Chapter 1 Analysis

Maggie Meriwether is young and innocent to the ways of this society's elite. The mannerisms, speech, and symbolism of purpose all work to place this group into their own world of self-interest. This young, country-club girl comes from a nation barely two centuries old and an entire world away from the history of position and class distinction that defines these people. Tippy Akenside's message to the partygoers to not speak English to the American is a poor attempt at humor. Tippy is ignorant, not uncaring, of the impact he makes on the impressionable young American. Tippy is not uncaring because, in truth, he cannot think beyond his own self-interest.

Part 1, Chapter 2

Part 1, Chapter 2 Summary

A widow in self-exile from friends and family, Abby Reynolds is in Belgium. Abby is escorted by Hugh Nicholson, a man estranged from his wife, and in whom, Abby finds the pleasure of company. Abby Reynolds is vaguely disillusioned by the squalor found in real gambling establishments, in this area and others. Abby was expecting, even hoping, for the glamour of the gaming houses presented by the movies of Hollywood. Abby has been abroad for almost a year and has traveled widely. Abby fears the pity of family, because a woman alone is one who fills a degrading and contemptible situation. Abby Reynolds grew up with this mindset, and she has spent her life depending on someone to be there to lean on through the hard times.

Abby Reynolds comes to her senses while in Paris. Abby will arrange to go home to America. It is while waiting for passage that she is invited to Sussex, where Hugh Nicholson is staying. Hugh Nicholson has spent more time in London than he has in his native Canada. Hugh has an estranged wife and two sons. Abby and her husband met Hugh for the first time while they were all in New York.

After a house party in Sussex, Hugh invites Abby to stay. Abby and Hugh gambled, first at Ostend, where they won, and then at the Knokke-le-Zoute in Belgium. It is while they are in Belgium that each recognizes having affection for each other. In being honest with Abby, Hugh admits that a gambling problem is one cause for his current estrangement from his wife. Abby cannot understand the affliction, and Hugh introduces her to roulette. Hugh requests Abby spend an evening playing the game. After the evening, she recognizes the deadly seriousness of being caught in the wheel's thrall. The melancholy feeling after the last spin of the wheel left her less innocent and more understanding of Hugh's predicament. Hugh and Abby say good-bye to each other in Knokke-le-Zoute.

Part 1, Chapter 2 Analysis

Abby Reynolds has permitted her lifestyle to place her in a position that makes her lonely and alone. Hugh Nicholson is a worldly companion, and she is, admittedly, a woman who is unaccustomed to depending on herself. Abby has only recently come to the realization that she is lonely and has just made the decision to return to her home in the United States. Being invited to spend time with Hugh places Abby back into her old lifestyle of being with someone who needs her. For a brief time, until Hugh explains that he cannot change, even for her, Abby is no longer lonely. With Hugh Nicholson, Abby comes very close to giving up her the independence that she didn't even know she had.

Part 1, Chapter 3

Part 1, Chapter 3 Summary

Two young, American women, Sue Ledbetter and Ramona Dunn, meet over coffee at Heidelberg University. It is the winter before the war. Sue is as shy as Ramona is vain and effusive. The two women do not care for each other but found some comfort in the companionship they began to share on the days they had class together. Sue's father is dead and her mother is uptight. Ramona comes from a rich family, who had moved to Italy from New York. Mr. And Mrs. Dunn are both still living, as are Ramona's three brothers, Justin, Daniel, and Robert. Ramona explains that her twin sister, Martha, had died five years previously, when they were only sixteen.

Ramona Dunn is not a beautiful girl, being short and severely overweight, but she had pretty features that were not completed disguised by her layers of fat. Ramona beseeches Sue to visit the Dunn family at her invitation and expense. Plans are discussed. In preparation for the trip home, Ramona begs Sue to help manage her weight. Ramona asks that Sue ensure she not overeat or partake of extra snacks and crumbs she was used to having. Ramona confesses that she is under the supervision of a Doctor Fruedenberg, although Sue is unclear of what is the nature of Ramona's illness. When the vacation draws closer and closer, Sue is dismayed when curious phrases and comments by Ramona indicate that Sue will not be visiting the Dunn family after all. Ramona's behavior turns odd. Ramona becomes short-tempered, paranoid, and complains about all manner of things big and small. There is another mention of Martha, when Ramona draws a comparison between her mysterious and dead twin sister, Martha, to Sue Ledbetter. Ramona explains that her father would be arriving the next day to take her home to Italy. Ramona's attendance at Heidelberg is only an experiment and that she might require hospitalization.

After inviting Sue to her room, Ramona begins to lose all form of rationality. Ramona's mood swings from high to low and borders on dangerous when she grabs Sue by the arm and proceeds to yell at her. Ramona begins to cry, and she confesses with considerable self-loathing that she has cheated on her diet. Drawing foodstuff from every conceivable cubbyhole, Ramona furiously begins eating it. Sue observes a photo of a pretty young girl on the sideboard. Picking it up to take a closer look, Sue discovers that Martha is a figment of Ramona Martha Dunn's imagination. Sue escapes into the night.

Part 1, Chapter 3 Analysis

Sue Ledbetter is away from her family and attending college in a foreign land. Although she has never been comfortable with her family, her upbringing did not give her the confidence to strike out alone at Heidelberg University. Meeting Ramona Dunn, Sue recognizes another in similar circumstances, someone alone, due to her own

personality and mannerisms. Neither girl particularly cares for the other, and, in a manner, they are using each other to their own ends. Sue does not discern to what end Ramona is heading, but grows increasingly uncomfortable with the other young lady's odd habits and progressively destructive nature. The evening Sue is taken back to Ramona's room, she grabs Sue by the arm and slaps her. Sue Ledbetter determines she cannot ignore Ramona's peculiarities any longer.

Part 1, Chapter 4

Part 1, Chapter 4 Summary

At a party hosted by the Mr. and Mrs. Andreas, Evan Leckie, an American journalist, will observe the interaction between the vanquished and the victors. This takes place after the ware. The party is hosted in Heidelberg, Germany. Evan has only a month previously transferred from Nuremberg. Evan's situation wrought many changes for the young man when his wife, Virginia, chose that time to declare she was leaving him. During his time in Heidelberg, Evan Leckie discovers in this quiet town a chivalrous attitude. The war and subsequent Occupation are only indirectly discussed.

Three other women who attend the party impress upon him the crassness of the bluestockings. They arrogantly and loquaciously speak to Doctor Reinmuth of the people who have forced their world into war. Having directly faced the violence of the war, as opposed to the inherent lack of awareness for anything outside their own, Frau Reinmuth earned Evan Leckie's admiration and respect with her personable nature. Evan recalls a time two years previous that he and his wife Virginia visited Heidelberg. Evan's wife had made similar caustic and tactless comments about Germany, similar to those being spoken tonight by the American women.

Doctor Reinmuth begs permission to relate the case of his first trial as a new lawyer, only twenty-three. Given permission by the host, he begins to regale the assemblage with the loss of his case and the resulting punishment for the crime of stealing sixty pfennigs that the perpetrator had committed. The guilty man was to die by Le Guillotine. The barbaric occurrence happened twenty years ago this May, and is the day he asked his lovely Lisolette, Frau Reinmuth, to marry him. The group is stunned by the story. Evan Leckie is unsure whether they are stunned by the pleasure the Doctor implies in the marriage to his wife or the formidable penalty for the paltry crime. Doctor Reinmuth claims to have never been happier.

Part 1, Chapter 4 Analysis

Doctor and Frau Reinmuth are meant to be demeaned and intimidated by the crowd at the Andreas' home. It is the studied casualness of the affair that gains Evan Leckie's attention. There are gathered the victors and the vanquished. Scandalous, uncouth Americans accompany snobbish Brits to entertain the two Germans. In the end, it is the Germans who declare victory over their hosts. In love and, by all appearances, oblivious to the undercurrents of callousness toward her and her husband, Frau Reinmuth is the essence of femininity and grace. Not a pretty woman, it is her demeanor that attracts notice. Doctor Reinmuth is enamored of his wife. The tale of their engagement is prefaced by the tale of a barbaric act. It is the coup de grace in civility from a man with a biting and educated wit.

Part 1, Chapter 5

Part 1, Chapter 5 Summary

Mrs. Otis is in the Caribbean and is in the fifth week of a six-week exile, imposed by the members of her social set on new divorcees. The day is warm and sunny and a group of like-minded philistines has gathered at the home of Captain Sundstrom. They gossip, discussing weather, politics, and the market. Moving to a seat nearer the beach, Mrs. Otis is away from the larger group of partygoers. Mrs. Otis observes a group of aborigine children upon a horse while she is eavesdropping on the conversation of her peers. Mrs. Otis' thoughts are for the comparison of the rugged land and beautiful simplicity of the Caribbean natives' lives to the judgment and caustic ways of civilization. Using binoculars, the divorcee watches while the children entertain themselves, playing in the surf and with a horse that is obviously does not belong to the children. The children are innocent and their female watcher admires them.

Another lady guest, Mrs. Fairweather, is embarrassed by the denigrating references the Captain uses when he refers to the natives, particularly when he becomes aware of the children's activities nearby. A gentleman guest, Mr. Robertson, tells the red-faced Mrs. Fairweather not to concern herself, because the Captain really cares for the lot. The conversation then turns morbid. Mr. Robertson offers an example of Captain Sundstrom's fondness toward the natives that involves Mr. Robertson's offer of a burnt husk of a black child's body to the Captain for a meal. The rest of the party is shocked into silence at the story's telling. A sudden deluge of rain from an afternoon storm brought them from their immobile state, and Mrs. Otis from her stupor, and the group, including Mrs. Otis, sought refuge inside.

Part 1, Chapter 5 Analysis

Mrs. Otis is experiencing apathy in this, the fifth week of her six-week social exile. Why is the woman expected to endure exile, when the man is accepted back into polite society quite comfortably and immediately? The woman is eavesdropping on those of her social class who have taken up residence on this island in the Caribbean. Some of them are permanent residents, most are not. They, the same as she, have come here to avoid the scandal of appearing at a function without a companion. Being unattached is viewed with disfavor and as a disgrace. These people to whom she is listening sound pitiable while they gossip about and harangue everything from the island natives to the weather, as well as the members of their socially elite set who are not present. Removed from the group by more than distance, Mrs. Otis is achieving, without conscious volition, a form of independence all her own.

Part 1, Chapter 6

Part 1, Chapter 6 Summary

The Alma Hettrick College for Girls is Malcolm and Victoria's new employer. Recent graduates, both awarded Master's degrees, Malcolm and Victoria have lofty expectations of their teaching positions. They meet on the first day of the new term in September. Both are dismayed to discover the purpose of the school is less than academically ideal. The objective of the school is to provide the finishing touches to young girls that prepare them for their positions as wives and mothers. Malcolm and Victoria, who were previously unknown to each other, found each other by their common purpose. They consciously set out to undermine the school's mission. Realizing the futileness of their goal, Malcolm and Victoria still endeavor to escape the school's confines every weekend and retreat to Georges Duval's Mill. There, in the L'Hotel Dauphin, they enjoy the traditional and rustic atmosphere, the direct opposite of the Alma Hettrick College for Girls. At the mill, not all of the buildings have electricity, livestock is loose to roam about, and its people are unpretentious.

The two young teachers spend so much time together that the other faculty believe they are enamored of each other. In fact, Malcolm and Victoria are both engaged to other people and unaware of the picture their actions present. The amount of time spent in each other's company has begun to have an affect. Malcolm and Victoria realize they love each other. To avoid the speculation, these two assiduously avoid each other while at school. This attracts more attention, because it deviates so strongly from their previous behavior.

The two are followed to Georges Duval's Mill in an attempt to deduce what has changed in the relationship. Finding the town, its people, and lack of civilized accoutrements is very disturbing to the members of the Alma Hettrick College for Girls. Faculty begins to invade the town. Only after they have determined there is nothing to recommend the town, no appreciation of art or fripperies, no evidence of advanced intellect, and no genealogical stamp to set it above, did the faculty declare the persons of Georges Duval's Mill to be ordinary and, worse, boring.

The initial find of the town had raised Malcolm and Victoria's status in the eyes of their coworkers. Their coworkers will never learn Malcolm and Victoria, to throw the nosy staff from the scent of the growing relationship between the two young people, contrived this situation. The final evaluation reduces the staff's interest of the two to pity. Malcolm and Victoria maintain their relationship, invisible now to the meddlesome members of the Alma Hettrick College for Girls.

Part 1, Chapter 6 Analysis

Teachers of the Alma Hettrick College for Girls conform to the standards of the school. The teachers who don't conform won't have their contracts renewed. Malcolm and Victoria are educated and idealistic. The school is perceived to be forward thinking, however, in reality, the finishing school's goal of educating tomorrow's mothers and homemakers is outmoded. When presented with the traditionalist views of Georges Duval's Mill, the Alma Hettrick College for Girls is up in arms over this backward thinking colony in the school's own backyard. The simile is the comparison between Malcolm and Victoria's dashed ideals in teaching these young girls nothing of value that increases their independence and the Alma Hettrick College for Girls determination that there is nothing of social merit to the people in town of Georges Duval's Mill.

Part 2, Chapter 7

Part 2, Chapter 7 Summary

Young Cousin Lily Holmes is impressed upon by her Cousin, Will Hamilton, to visit the poorhouse to see Cousin Isobel Carpenter. Cousin Isobel has confined herself there after Will had lost all of her money in speculating on the market. Many family members have all asked that she come live with them. Cousin Isobel refuses to leave; she is enjoying her position as a martyr. Will is Lilly's guardian and employer. Will is abed with bronchitis, and he has imposed upon Lilly to attend to his regular visit to Cousin Isobel. Lilly had plans for the day, which she was required to change, and is resentful of Will's imposition. Lilly Holmes has no close relatives. In fact, all of these cousins are very distantly related. It is her responsibility as Will's ward that prevented her enjoying an outing with her beau, Tucky Havermeyer.

During Lily's visit to Isobel, Cousin Augusta Shephard arrives. Cousin Augusta announces that cousin Isobel must come live with her and her husband. The Shephards have completely redone the third floor of their home for Isobel. Cousin Augusta claims that the game is up, because any number of relatives would love to have the dear woman. Isobel refuses to leave. While the two elderly cousins converse, Lily's thoughts drift to where her day would have placed her had she not had to make this visit and the means by which Isobel used to live in a wondrous house on the North Shore. Listening to a radio on a nearby stand, Lilly Holmes is reminded that life is no abyss, and there is happiness to be found everywhere.

Cousin Isobel begins to ask Lily what had been left to her by her dearly departed father, whom Isobel liked. After the exposure to the elderly cousins and the widespread family preponderance for position and things, Lily proudly proclaims that her father left her nothing. Isobel is astounded and in disbelief. A young nurse enters to say it is Miss Carpenter's suppertime. Augusta claims Isobel is in the poorhouse as Will Hamilton's punishment. Isobel agrees and admits that is her revenge; it is what gives her purpose, and it is all she has left.

Part 2, Chapter 7 Analysis

Cousin Lily is proud to be the poor relation to cousins Will, Isobel, and Augusta. Having been left nothing by her near penniless father, she is working for a living and independent. While the ward of Cousin Will Hamilton, who is left a pittance for her care from her father's insurance, Lily works as his secretary. Lily is not happy in the fact these relatives feel it is appropriate to impose upon her. Lily is the victor in the end, however, when the author uses the poor relation, Cousin Lily, to suggest that true love is felt by those who have nothing to give and nothing to gain, unlike the self-interested, callous individuals of her cousin's social group.

Part 2, Chapter 8

Part 2, Chapter 8 Summary

Miss Rhoda Bellamy is eighty-two years old. Miss Bellamy lay beneath a quilt that was removed from her hope chest. Rhoda Bellamy had never married. Laying quietly, she spies a Christmas wreath hanging on the wall across from her bed. In a moment, her maid Belle will arrive. Miss Bellamy is outraged that, sometime in the night, Belle had placed the wreath there. The old woman realizes that she is a contrary person and it is her nature that has caused her to remain a spinster. Miss Bellamy begins to remember her childhood and she remembers, the night before that it was she, and not Belle, that had hung the wreath.

Miss Bellamy's debut, the formal introduction of a young girl to polite society, had been a debacle. It shamed her parents to the point the family had to move from Boston to Maine. The father remained there with his daughter after the death of Miss Bellamy's mother, who went into a decline and never recovered from the family's shame. Miss Bellamy's memory of her childhood changes to the memory of the previous night. A youth had come offering the wreath for sale. The salesman that he is, he recognizes the woman for what she is and plays to her pride when he mentions all of the other ladies who might buy the wreath if she does not. Miss Bellamy agrees to purchase the thing in exchange for the princely sum of twenty-five cents and a kiss. Hearing Belle approach, Miss Bellamy's thoughts return to the present and the bad-tempered discourse that she feels obliged to give the servant.

Part 2, Chapter 8 Analysis

The hope chest of Rhoda Bellamy symbolizes the opportunities lost to this elderly spinster. The cantankerous, derogatory attitude and callousness are not because she is very old. Miss Bellamy was afflicted with these from her youth. Miss Bellamy's debacle of a debut was inflicted upon her family, and they suffered her bad manners until their deaths. Never married and having experienced little love, Miss Rhoda Bellamy recognizes the weakness of character in herself. Miss Bellamy knows her opportunities are lost, but for the kindness to a child.

Part 2, Chapter 9

Part 2, Chapter 9 Summary

Mrs. Wainright-Lowe is entertaining Mrs. Margaret Heath. Mrs. Heath and her husband are writers and neighbors to Mrs. Wainright-Lowe. They are having tea and a light repast. Mrs. Wainright-Lowe is the mother of eleven children. One of her daughters, Eve, is home for the day and enjoying the tea with her mother and Mrs. Heath. Mrs. Heath does not consider the invitation or the tea an enjoyment. The visitor sees this as a duty to be endured. Mrs. Heath and her husband have been successfully avoiding duties such as this since their arrival in town. With the gregarious Wainright-Lowes and interposing business owners about town, there had been many invitations. The Heaths prefer more academic pursuits, which they desire to accomplish either alone, or with each other, but not with the rest of the town.

Sister Evelyn, an Anglican nun, joins them. An invitation to pick lettuce is issued to Mrs. Heath, not one that can be easily refused. Mrs. Wainright-Lowe, Eve, and Sister Evelyn continue the conversation, sharing gossip and news of the happenings about town. Eve's mother is enterprising enough to solicit the Heaths' assistance with youth activities, overseen by Sister Evelyn's church. Margaret agilely evades the commitment and the attempts by the others to include the two writers in the Wainright-Lowe clique. With an unfeigned apathy toward the conversation in general, and the people specifically, Mrs. Margaret Heath listens to the gossip and litany of Wainright-Lowe tales until half past six. Mrs. Heath announces she has to make dinner for Tommy and makes her escape.

Part 2, Chapter 9 Analysis

The sagacious Mrs. Margaret Heath has avoided the tea and company of Mrs. Wainright-Lowe, until now. Having discussed the invitation with her husband, Tom, at length, Mrs. Heath recognizes it is futile to resist on this particular afternoon. Bracing herself, she quickly enters into the exchange and skillfully sidesteps further commitment to the gossipy and gregarious woman.

Margaret Heath and her husband are writers. The Wainright-Lowes, while highly educated, look upon writing outside of academia as a hobby, at best, the very idea of which offends the Heaths. The family of Wainright-Lowes is large, fun loving, and socially prominent. They are the Heaths' neighbors. Any exposure to them warrants evaluation, judgment, and a determination of acceptance. Once entrance to the socially correct circles is acknowledged, expectations of further involvement in the community and its events, is strictly controlled by Mrs. Wainright-Lowe. Tom and Margaret Heath rail against this fate.

Part 2, Chapter 10

Part 2, Chapter 10 Summary

May and Daniel moved to the North at the request of Daniel's doctor, Doctor Tellenbach. Viewing through their front window of their new home, this husband and wife spy an antique sleigh covered in the winter snow. They do not speak and, for this, May is uncomfortable. They had arrived in the summer. After the seclusion of her husband in a sanitarium for nearly a year, their arrival in this Northern climate at their new house had been like a second honeymoon. May and Daniel took long walks together, talked, and rowed together on the lake.

Fall limited some of their entertainment. Daniel's illness returns and May is nearly inconsolable when her husband begins to ignore her. They talk little, and then not at all. May approaches Daniel about a walk, and he snappishly returns that he could not. Their altercation ends when he demands that she leave him alone. In this new place, in the silence of winter, May is alone and lonely. May begins to imagine a lover. May's imaginings place in this imaginary lover all the things she had previously admired in her husband, to whom she no longer speaks except to quarrel. May has lost interest in the house. Looking at the sleigh from the front window of their house, Daniel and May are silent. May is contemplative in the symbolism of the antique sleigh and a means of escape, of leaving, and of being anywhere but beside Daniel. That night in her dream, May's imaginary lover takes on shape, and she views him sitting upon the seat of the sleigh speaking to her. This imaginary man claims that she must forgive the hallucinations of her husband, and then disappears. Awake now, she rises and escapes to the seat of the sleigh and cries for her loss.

Part 2, Chapter 10 Analysis

May and Daniel have been instructed to move north by Daniel's doctor. In the summer, they experience a renewal of love between them. They take long walks, sail on the lake, and enjoy each other's company and being outdoors. When winter sets in, Daniel's sickness returns in full force, and he pushes May away. May is in the north, far from friends and family, homesick and alone after her husband's rejection. May seeks and finds her own salvation from Daniel's illness. May creates an imaginary lover that sustains her throughout the cold months of winter. An antique sleigh in the front yard of their home represents the desire May has for a method of escape from the reality that has become her life. When winter ends, she does not welcome the return of Daniel's awareness of her or the loss of her imaginary lover.

Part 2, Chapter 11

Part 2, Chapter 11 Summary

In New England, a young Mexican girl finds work as the secretary to the headmistress of a girl's college. Rose Fabrizio has come from the west and poverty to make a new life among the genteel folk. In Rose's opinion, New Englanders are clean, educated, and moral. The mostly Mexican population of her hometown she remembers being squalid, and the people are mostly illiterate. Rose is ashamed that her father could not have been in a position to provide her the wherewithal to live like the genteel folk of New England. Rose determines that it need not always be this way and sets out to find a New England foster-father. Rose has a likely candidate picked out from her many ventures into the library. This man is also often in the library, and she has had many chances to observe him. In an attempt not to disclose her purpose, Rose made it her practice never to see what the gentleman was reading, to see him leave, or to see where he lived. Rose attempted to make no untoward moves in his direction. The more she attempted to avoid him outside the library, the more Rose secluded herself from her normal haunts and entertainment. Rose eventually finds herself entirely withdrawn and confined within her apartment. Rose begins finding her little apartment less than ideal when noises from her neighbor become intrusive. At least one of those living in the apartment next door is ill.

Mrs. Talmadge asks Rose to run an errand for the school. Rose is to deliver a potted plant, a Bleeding Heart, to a former matron. Believing the request to be convenient, Mrs. Talmadge points out that the matron lives very near where Rose herself lives. Rose discovers that it is the gentleman from the library and his mother who are her neighbors. When the gentleman escorts Rose toward his mother's room, he speaks to her in a manner that indicates his interest in Rose. Rose Fabrizio, who had been looking upon the gentleman in a fatherly way, is taken aback and uncomfortable. Rose is invited to tea and not offered the option of declining. After several nudges, looks, and comments made by the son, Rose desperately wants to leave. While making her escape, he introduces himself as Lucius Benson and indicates that he will be calling on her tomorrow.

Unable to remain in her room that evening, Rose sets out for the library on foot. Lucius Benson pulls his car alongside where Rose is walking and opens the passenger door, directing her to get in the car. Rose makes it understood that she is not afraid of him, but she is mightily displeased by his actions. Leaving him standing on the sidewalk, asking for her pity, she tells him good-bye.

Part 2, Chapter 11 Analysis

Rose Fabrizio is viewing New England and its inhabitants through the rose-colored classes of youth. Rose's resentment of her father and her passionate dislike of a home

life she perceives as squalid prevents her from appreciating what she has. Seeking his replacement, Rose finds more than she bargained for in a man she meets from the library, who is also her next-door neighbor. Seeing him as a father figure, Rose is unprepared for the mature interest he shows in her. An older man taking up with a younger woman is not what Rose had in mind for this gentlemanly man. The man is not so much the gentleman with his nudges and inferences. Taken aback by the unattractive attributes of him, she is dissuaded from her course of being fostered by him in the ways of the genteel folk of New England.

Part 2, Chapter 12

Part 2, Chapter 12 Summary

Mr. Oliphant, a devout horticulturist, and a woman in dress and stockings are seeking arbutus at Deer Lick. Caring baskets, they observe that hogs had rooted up most of the trailing vines and only parts of the blossoms were left strewn about the muddy ground. The woman, who had moved from California, is reminded of Lippia by the crushed arbutus blossoms. While Mr. Oliphant complains about the damage the hogs had done, the woman remembers her childhood. It was a childhood made real by the particular flora that was relative to the memory. Specific incidents and episodes were not remembered as clearly as the plants, trees, or shrubs that are present while the memory is being made.

Briefly mentioning his pioneering ancestors, Mr. Oliphant returns the conversation to the arbutus. An offer is made to acquire it for him from a difficult location on the ridge. After receiving directions, the woman sets out. The way is difficult, acquiring the arbutus impossible. The arbutus is found, and the attempt made to remove a piece. The woman discovers that the plant is hardy and will not be easily removed from its location. The woman determines that she has not the strength, nor the determination, to remove the arbutus. The woman knows too that Mr. Oliphant, at his advancing age, will not come to this spot to acquire it. The woman returns to the horticulturist with the claim that the arbutus is not where he has claimed to have seen it. Blaming the hogs again for the lack of arbutus, Mr. Oliphant becomes outraged. When he calms, he is grateful for the memory of it and leads the way on the return.

Part 2, Chapter 12 Analysis

The woman accompanying Mr. Oliphant admires and respects the old man. Mr. Oliphant represents a character of strength, willing and able to help when needed. Mr. Oliphant has strong feelings about nature and the care given to living things. His age shows when he frets that someone is not doing all they could be or taking care of all they should to protect nature. The woman, also the narrator, proves not to have the strength of character exhibited by Mr. Oliphant. The woman is tasked with retrieving a piece of arbutus for the old gentleman to transplant. Unable to venture to its location, he relies on her to aid him in its recovery. The woman determines that the task is too difficult and lies to him, claiming the arbutus is not present there any longer. Mr. Oliphant mistakenly lays blame instead on the hapless hogs that had destroyed other flora. The woman allows this misjudgment on Mr. Oliphant's part.

Part 2, Chapter 13

Part 2, Chapter 13 Summary

Pansy Vanneman, while riding in a cab, is involved in an accident. Six weeks later, she awakes in the hospital on the day she is to undergo surgery to repair her nose. It is facial reconstructive surgery, and her nose has actually been destroyed in the accident. Pansy has entered a deeply depressive state since awaking in the hospital and being told of the accident. The nurses claim she is the lucky one; the cab driver had died. Pansy is uncaring of the momentousness of the day. There is speculation whether she will emotionally recover enough to care what is happening to her, or even feel the pain. Pansy Vanneman has earned a reputation among the staff as being a cold person who has a great tolerance for pain. Six weeks in a hospital bed and the scenery is constant, inside and out.

The weather outside has presented very little change to the view seen from Pansy's hospital window. Pansy's room has changed even less. Pansy's entire world has narrowed to the inside of her own mind, where she spends most of her time. Pansy is constantly visualizing her brain as the seat of her consciousness and her interior castle. Pansy's brain becomes the most important thing to her. The color pink, though, causes her some distress. Pansy Vanneman wonders why. Pansy also takes pleasure in her ability to confound her nurses and the other members of the staff. The more they try to get her attention, the more she withdraws inside herself.

Doctor Nichols arrives at nine that morning to prepare for Pansy's surgery. In the pre-operation procedures, he jokes with her that his car wouldn't start and he had had to take a cab to get to the hospital. Pansy hates him and imagines his demise. Pansy Vanneman is not concerned about her nose. Pansy worries that Doctor Nichols will injure her brain -her treasure. It is her acknowledgement that to re-enter society, she must be able to breathe that allows Pansy Vanneman to continue through two surgeries, not just one.

Part 2, Chapter 13 Analysis

The most painful of Jean Stafford's collected stories is *The Interior Castle* and its description of Pansy Vanneman's operation, and the *pain* the woman must feel, because the procedure is described in detail. Pansy Vanneman is a woman who must be in a deep state of depression and suffering from shock after an automobile accident that nearly destroys her face. After her accident, she cares little for anyone or anything, save the treasure in her head, her brain. What pleasure she takes is in stymieing the nurses and staff when they try to help her. They have shown her in a mirror her appearance. They should be despised in this attempt to garner a reaction from the injured woman. It isn't until the end of her first surgery, and Doctor Nichols has asked to do the second, that Pansy must acknowledge her predicament will come to an end.

Part 3, Chapter 14

Part 3, Chapter 14 Summary

Jessie and her mother moved to Adams, Colorado in 1924. Jessie was eight years old and her father had just died. Most of the inhabitants in Adams were transplants, many because they are ill or a relative of the ill and have been rejected by genteel society. Jessie's mother's services were in high demand. Jessie's mother is employed as a nurse and companion to these people who are alone and lonely for their old way of life. Jessie is finding it difficult to fit in. Though exposed to all of the ill and illness through her mother's work, Jessie is never ill. This is a young lady who is at the age where being different is difficult. Jessie wonders why she can't be ill too.

Mrs. Butler, Grandmother Butler, suffers from senility and arthritis. Jessie's mother's services are secured for her. Jessie is strongly encouraged by her mother to befriend two of Mrs. Butler's grandchildren, Laura and Ada. The two grandchildren are both peculiar girls, arrogant and terse with the other children. They are not well liked. Mrs. Butler pays Jessie's mother well. For fear of costing her mother her position, Jessie will do as her mother asks. Laura and Ada recognize Jessie's position and don't hesitate to point out the different distinctions in class. Laura and Ada suffer from an affliction, and, it is this, that raises Jessie in status, not money, or position. Jessie is the healthiest girl in town.

Part 3, Chapter 14 Analysis

Jessie is young and doesn't realize the tremendous advantage she has over others, adults and children alike. In Adams, Colorado, the majority of people are not there by choice. They are ill and have been rejected by polite society. They have been snubbed and forced to remove themselves from all that is familiar. By being the healthiest girl in town, Jessie will have choices. Jessie's will be the choice to stay or to go. This is not so for the others who abide there. Jessie's mother is there by choice and for the opportunity to work and provide for her daughter. Fortunately, Jessie understands this, while her mother provides dance lessons the Jessie craves. In the end, Jessie's health will make her the happiest girl in town.

Part 3, Chapter 15

Part 3, Chapter 15 Summary

Kitty Winstanley's mother's friends had come from other places, with more social yclat, than that of Adams, Colorado. They had snobbish airs and high-stepping ways. Adams is full of members from those polite societies. These displaced members are persons who have been rejected by those arrogant and lofty people whom they had previously called friends, because they, or a member of their family, has fallen ill. The Depression has struck, and fathers have been driven out of work. Wives have opened their homes to boarders to make ends meet. These new working women besmirch the names of other's and gossip about things they know nothing about. These older, matronly women affect the airs and speech patterns of their younger female boarders.

Kitty is a student of Nevilles College, works part time at the Caribou Ranch as a maid and waitress, and helps her mother at the boarding house. Kitty observes that her mother does not give up her social ideals, even while Mrs. Winstanley has not the money to secure her position. Kitty's mother has made it a habit to encourage these congregations of other women, also owners of boarding houses for college students, to tea.

Working in her mother's boarding house has it owns problems for the daughter. Kitty is often faced with serving the very college students that she sees in class every day. The young Miss Winstanley is impatient to be done with her work at home. At the Caribou Ranch, she is anonymous. There is no judgment from her coworkers that Kitty will have to carry over into the classroom. Unbeknownst to Mrs. Winstanley, her daughter has made arrangements to move away from Adams immediately upon her graduation.

Part 3, Chapter 15 Analysis

Kitty Winstanley is a forward thinking girl. Kitty is becoming educated and has learned to be independent. Had Mrs. Winstanley possessed more of the social yclat she perceived for herself, Kitty would have grown up as the young ladies staying in the boarding house had. Kitty would have had anything she could have asked for, but would she have had her freedom? Family expectations would have been different, certainly social expectations would have held sway. Kitty is plotting her freedom upon her graduation from college. Kitty's leaving town would have not been possible had she had all that her mother presumed.

Part 3, Chapter 16

Part 3, Chapter 16 Summary

A Mountain Day is a day in the Grayson family's summer trip to Colorado. In the winter months, the wealthy Grayson family stays in New York. Camilla Grayson, the eldest child, has become engaged to a Yale man. This summer, Judy, the Grayson's middle child, becomes engaged to Rod Stephansson on the latest summer trip to visit her grandmother in the mountains of Colorado. Rod attends Harvard. The two young Grayson daughters viewed these trips to Colorado more as duty than pleasure. Many of the family's situations are contrived through habit and have become boring.

Judy, Camilla, and their beaux will take a day trip onto the mountain. It is Sunday, and they will travel on horseback. There will be lunch at the summit. Before the trip, Judy travels across the lake from her parent's cabin to her grandmother's home. Judy's grandmother was not spending her life in less than an appropriate style, regardless of the rural location. Judy has a beautiful home and is accompanied by two maids, Mary and Eileen. This Sunday, like other Sundays, the two maids are preparing the elderly woman's breakfast. After the breakfast preparations, they are not required to attend to their charge until later in the day, and the two women are making plans for a picnic by the lake. The trip into the mountains is beautiful, and Judy believes she has never been happier.

Returning, the four are approached by the anxious grandmother. The two maids never returned from their picnic. Upon searching the surrounding area, the men begin to search the lake. Neither of the maids could swim. A grisly discovery is made. The two young women had taken out a boat that had capsized on them. They had both drowned. Judy realizes the truth of her love for Rod when she recognizes and wishes to relieve his distress of finding the two dead women. Judy wishes for the happiness experienced early on the mountain.

Part 3, Chapter 16 Analysis

Judy Grayson is young and in love. Judy's happiest day is the day on the mountain with her fiancy, Rob. Finding the two young women marred the outcome, but the result is recognition of true love for the man she will marry. A person of her social standing, with her family's wealth and acknowledgements, Judy Grayson is not required to love someone to make a good marriage. Love might even be considered an inconvenience. The social elite appreciate their contretemps, but love would mar their perceptions of themselves, where self-interest is of singular importance.

Part 3, Chapter 17

Part 3, Chapter 17 Summary

Ella is hired by the Temple family to care for their children while the parents went out. The young girl is pressed into the work by her family, because the Temple's had provided her brother, Fred, the means to hunt and put food on the table. It is night and Ella is preparing her horse, Squaw, for the trip to the Temples' ranch house.

The young girl is most comfortable outside, on her horse. Alone, inside the Temple house, she dreads the encroaching dark. Ella is afraid of the dark. Ella has taken to sitting, quiet and still, in a pink armchair in the Temple's parlor. Ella's anxiety is heightened by the night noises of the farm. Ella counts in order to focus her concentration elsewhere. The noises distract her and she realizes the Temples' horses have taken after her little paint, Squaw. Ella runs from the house and recovers Squaw from the corner the other horses had forced her to, with Squaw preparing to kick. Tying Squaw to a post near the front door, Ella returns to the house. Before entering, she discovers the moon disappearing. Moving inside, she watches the darkening of the moon from a front hall window. Suddenly, the night is silent. When the Temple adults return, Ella runs to the front porch, hoping the night will hide the sign of tears she has shed from her fear. When Ella was climbing onto her horse, Ella hears Mrs. Temple ask if the girl had seen the moon's eclipse. After Ella's acknowledgement of the phenomenon, she rides for home for all she's worth.

Part 3, Chapter 17 Analysis

Ella is afraid of the dark, at least, the dark that she cannot see. Outside in the dark, she enjoys the night sounds and is familiar enough with them to acknowledge their creators. Inside, where she is most uncomfortable, she cannot picture what she hears without doubt. To her, the darkening moon represents a punishment. There is fear that there is an ill will against her. Unwilling to admit her fear to the Temples, it is with little relief that Ella learns the darkening moon is a lunar eclipse.

Part 3, Chapter 18

Part 3, Chapter 18 Summary

A young girl with bad manners, Emily Vanderpool, takes up with a delinquent youth who has entered Emily's house for nefarious purposes. Striking up a conversation, the friendless Emily arranges to meet Lottie Jump later in the week. Unbeknownst to Emily, Lottie has taken the opportunity during their meeting to walk through the house and remove a perfume bottle that belongs to Emily's mother and a new cake on the kitchen windowsill. Lottie offers to teach Emily the art of shoplifting.

They get caught, and the expert, Lottie, is able to turn the attention and responsibility toward young Emily Vanderpool. Emily's parents are shamed in the eyes of their peers by their daughter's actions. Wanting social acceptance, they seek spiritual redemption for Emily. Emily learns from her mistake and is able to make friends by learning when to keep her mouth shut and not verbalizing every thought.

Part 3, Chapter 18 Analysis

Emily Vanderpool is a young product of her environment. Emily has probably been exposed to the social gossip and harangues of her mother and her mother's peers. Seeking to express herself, she has not learned that bad manners are best kept for polite society conversations where the outcome is meaningless unless there is singular self-interest involved. At her age, Emily must learn to express herself as a child who desires to make and keep friends would. Emily Vanderpool must learn when to keep her mouth shut.

Part 3, Chapter 19

Part 3, Chapter 19 Summary

In the Zoo is the story of Daisy and her sister who are visiting the Denver Zoo and reminiscing. They make comparisons between the zoo's inhabitants and the people of Adams, Colorado. The two women were only small children when their parents died and Mrs. Placer took them in. Mrs. Placer has been a friend of their grandmother and the recipient of their father's insurance. The insurance benefit is a condition of fostering the two parentless children. Mrs. Placer was not well liked by the community and many considered her heartless.

The children befriended one of the community's alcoholics, Mr. Murphy. The man had a menagerie of animals that interested and entertained the two young girls. Mr. Murphy gave the girls a gift of a dog, after Mrs. Placer is convinced of the benefits of having the animal as a pet. The dog follows the girls everywhere and is enjoyed by the many children and adults in the area. Mrs. Placer takes over the discipline of the animal for the attention and increased status the animal gives her with her friends. The animal becomes a beast. The community begins to complain, and the dog is required to be leashed at all times, because it had bitten several people. Mr. Murphy discovered the situation and went to visit the woman. When he arrives, his companion, a monkey named Shannon, is set upon and killed by the dog. Mr. Murphy is devastated and leaves before speaking with Mrs. Placer. The dog is later poisoned and dies. Mr. Murphy is suspected, but the community is too grateful to blame him for a misdeed. The children never forgive Mrs. Placer, but they do not leave her either. Daisy and her sister remain in Adams, in the home of Mrs. Placer, until the old lady dies. The house is quickly sold, and neither girl remains in the community.

The memories the zoo evokes, leave the two women heartbroken and angry. They quickly quit the place. Daisy returns to her husband and children, after placing her sister upon the train. They had begun to find humor in silly things to dispel the unpleasant memories and intangible concerns.

Part 3, Chapter 19 Analysis

The story *In the Zoo* is the perfect depiction of two young women. Daisy, being the older of the two, had more time with her parents and a more solid foundation than her younger sister. Being married, with two children of her own, Daisy presents the case of someone who has overcome her childhood to be a success. Daisy's younger sister, the more closely followed of the two in this story, appears to have been less successful. Both find the reminiscing painful and use laughter as the final release of tension, stress, and painful memories.

Part 3, Chapter 20

Part 3, Chapter 20 Summary

Polly Bay is engaged. Living in the house of her Uncle Francis and Aunt Jane, Polly is unclear whether she truly loves the man or is merely using him to escape her family and her present life. The man's name is Robert Fair; he lives in New England. Polly has been engaged for five months, and she hasn't told her Uncle or Aunt. Polly is the only member of her generation to have remained living in the family home in Adams, Colorado. There is great tradition in the generations of Bays that have been born and grown here. All of Polly's cousins and siblings are experiencing the unfettered lifestyle that exists outside of Adams. Family piety is expected of Polly Bay.

In a week, Polly will leave town for New England. Polly has bought new clothes, packed, and given notice at work. It only remains to inform her uncle and aunt of the deed. The night before she is to leave, Polly endures the guilty and angered pleadings of her relatives while they insist that she not leave for this marriage. The two elder Bays verbally arrange Polly's life and marriage around remaining in Adams, over the young woman's attempts to denounce that course and claims that she will be leaving. In the middle of these discussions, Polly receives a call from her sister, who informs her that Polly's fiancy has died. Seeing this as the answer to justify keeping Polly from leaving, Uncle Francis and Aunt Jane implore the young woman to stay. Polly is in shock; nonetheless, she admonishes them for their contretemps and self-interest. Polly retreats to her room where she gathers what money she has and her jacket. When accomplished, she leaves the house, her elderly uncle and aunt, and the town for good.

Part 3, Chapter 20 Analysis

If the reader is looking for a happy ending in this collection of stories by Jean Stafford, *The Liberation* is the closest thing the reader is likely to find. In the case of Polly Bay, her family's piety in the face of her good news is a dreadful exhibition of self-interest and personal gain. After discovering the death of her fiancy, even Polly agrees that her aunt and uncle have acted despicably. There is value in the fact that Polly acknowledges to herself the love she felt for Robert Fair was not all for the escape awaiting her. Polly's resolution to leave, despite his death, especially in the face of her relatives' hypocrisy, is representative of her tremendous personal character.

Part 3, Chapter 21

Part 3, Chapter 21 Summary

Young Emily Vanderpool is again the subject of Jean Stafford's collection. In *A Reading Problem*, Emily is faced with the problem of locating a quiet and uninterruptible place to read. Each location is an experience in itself. Emily finds herself exposed to all manner of questions and situations upon sitting down to read in a public location. Finding the visiting area of the jail to be the most suitable location, because folks do not generally come by there to visit or stay to talk, Emily has discovered a solution to her reading problem. When the sheriff gets a rowdy group of prisoners in, he asks Emily to find another location for the day. Thus, she retreats to the riverside. Upon a rock and engrossed in the books of the Bible that she has to memorize to win a prize at Sunday school, Emily is confronted by a traveling evangelist and his daughter. Emily does not consider herself a spiritually pious person and finds these two individuals odd but interesting.

Before the evangelist, Gerlash, and his daughter, Opal, can guilt or threaten Emily to provide money or food for their cause, the local sheriff and another man drive up. The other man is a deputy from a nearby town that had already expelled the two evangelists and had warned them not to return. Apparently, the two evangelists are frequently in trouble with the law. Evangelist Gerlash and Opal are directed, again, to pack their things and leave town before seeing any more trouble. The notoriety Emily's involvement gained her, increased her difficulty in finding a quiet reading spot. People would flock to the jail to speak with Emily. The sheriff had to ask her not to read there anymore. Emily is successful in locating another reading spot, possibly the only place where people go out of their way to avoid, the cemetery. Emily is quite happy to use this quiet location as the solution to her reading problem.

Part 3, Chapter 21 Analysis

Emily Vanderpool is once again the primary character of a tale by Jean Stafford. Emily has a reading problem. The problem isn't in the reading itself, but rather in finding a place to read at all. Every place she finds has its own peculiar circumstances for being a problem, from the visitor's waiting room in the jail, to the riverside, to the cemetery, Emily eventually finds the solution to her problem. Along the way, there are the town folk who tease the young lady about her reading. Education didn't seem to be a priority for these people, especially not for a young woman. The spiritual evangelists are not presented in a good light and it is apparent the author didn't mean them to be. After receiving some notoriety, and an increase in her social status from her involvement in the eviction of the two evangelists, Emily finds it more difficult than ever to find a quiet place to read.

Part 3, Chapter 22

Part 3, Chapter 22 Summary

Young Jim Littlefield is orphaned as a child. Placed aboard a train, he is in route to a children's home for orphan Indian children. Jim's heritage is unclear, and he is too young to know for sure, but it is suspected that he is, at least partially, Cherokee. Mr. Wilkins, a preacher, has placed him on the train. Exiting the train at the station, there is not a soul around and only the chatter of the telegraph to be heard. The eight-year-old boy imagines the telegraph is just waiting for someone to read it and say a mistake has been made, and that a relative and home has been found for young Jim Littlefield. Two people arrive at the station in an automobile that identifies them as representatives from the Department of the Interior, Indian Services.

Jim Littlefield is loaded into the car. The three travel through a town and arrive at the boys' school. It is a desolate place and in the heat of the day, an unfriendly one. It appears deserted. Upon entering the building, Jim is introduced to a woman by the name of Miss Dreadfulwater. Jim learns that many of the school's children are sick and abed. Left to his own devices, the young man is permitted to go into the yard, where he meets another boy who is wearing a red sash. Jim Littlefield is told the red sash indicates the boy has been in trouble. The two young men speculate on the history of the town, the school, and the possibility of escape. The heat and trauma of the day are wearing on Jim. Jim's plans for escape will have to wait another day. Unwilling to fall asleep with the other boy there, it isn't until the boy in the red sash goes off into the trees when young Jim Littlefield allows himself to succumb to the tiredness of his experience.

Part 3, Chapter 22 Analysis

Jim Littlefield is an Indian and an orphan. The author introduces the position of the government, Uncle Sam, in the scheme of life in Adams, Colorado. Not granting the government a romantic place in this tale, *A Summer Day* is the story of the young orphan who will be placed under government care. The boys' school is not a place where a pleasant life can be expected. Not even the employees appear to care for the establishment. In references to Uncle Sam, the comments are sarcastic and the laughs are snide. The boy falls asleep plotting his escape and there is a feeling the orphan Jim Littlefield will die in this place.

Part 3, Chapter 23

Part 3, Chapter 23 Summary

A student and still life model at Nevilles College, Cora Savage is the student of philosophy in *The Philosophy Lesson*. It is winter and Cora is mimicking a particularly difficult pose during that day's Life Class. Cora observes the advent of a snowstorm, which the other students in the dedication to their art are oblivious to. The uncomfortable positions she is often required to place herself into did not permit fantasizing or reminiscing. Cora's concentration is almost total to the task at hand. Cora spent the occasion processing a highly developed sense of timing. There is little to contemplate, other than the view from the classroom windows. Cora is very aware of each twig and texture on the trees within her view, so narrow is her vision during this time.

A classmate of Cora's entered the Life Class. The classmate is not a member of this particular class, and he proclaimed that a youth from the school has committed suicide. The event has taken place a short time ago and occurred at the nearby train crossing. Upon hearing the poor soul's name, Cora realizes that she knew the young man. Cora's body's familiarity with the required task enables her to remain frozen, while her brain frantically seeks a reason for the death. The students of the Life Class have moved to surround the bearer of the news and speculation about the dead boy's motive is rampant. A female in the art class claims familiarity with the dead boy. When the class bells tolls, the youth are jarred back to the realization of Cora's existence. Cora's body acknowledges the time and comes free from the pose with a clatter of a prop to the floor. Cora has, herself, been speculating on the young student's demise amidst wondering at her own purpose and evaluating her own life.

Part 3, Chapter 23 Analysis

Cora Savage philosophically views the death of her student friend. From her vantage point of anonymity on the dais of the Life Class, she observes the reactions of her fellow students to the news of the young man's suicide. Cora contemplates her own demise, and wonders at the purpose of his. Cora, forced into silence and contemplation by her work as a still life model, is able to view the reactions of the students somewhat dispassionately. The students are free to express themselves, like they do in their art, without judgment, except by the viewer. Cora judges that each will feel the death of the young man differently.

Part 4, Chapter 24

Part 4, Chapter 24 Summary

Emma is an educated young miss from a rural town who moves to New York to experience an intellectual life. Emma's experience with the social set of intellectuals has not prepared her for their awareness of all things symbolic to their purpose and self-interest. Emma is rejected as a rube, so she secludes herself. After months of self-confinement to her rooms, Emma chooses to venture out. Emma chooses a Sunday and selects the Metropolitan Museum of Art. When she spies a member of the intellectual set, Albert Eisenberg, she attempts to quickly return the way she came. Emma does not believe her confinement has lasted long enough, because she is still afraid of rejection. Emma wanders through the Museum, avoiding all of the areas that Alfred might seek out. All the while, she castigates herself for her dismal failure in her debut.

It is while she is moving from room to room in the Museum that Emma remembers her first meeting with Alfred. It was a brief flirtation at a party an extraordinary party. An extraordinary experience, because Emma could no longer contemplate herself as an intellectual. Emma remembers hearing, before her debacle, that Alfred is rumored to have lost his job, his funds, and his wife. This being the case, he is humiliated and also has cause to avoid the intellectuals. Upon reaching the exit of the Museum, Alfred and Emma see and recognize in each other their shared status as children who have achieved their release from the distinction of their class. They are aware of no one but each other.

Part 4, Chapter 24 Analysis

Emma has come to the big city with big expectations for her debut into the intellectual set. She is unprepared for these people's shared history. They are a close-nit group. The intellectuals travel in the same circles but are an entirely separate entity from the social elite. Both groups share some common traits. They are accepted within their own group. There are shared expectations in behavior. There is symbolism to their perceptions and a shared awareness of their members' inherent positions within the set. Emma is immediately recognized as one who does not belong. Emma has independence and an awareness of self, without being completely self-interested. Emma, with her expectations, may never realize the truth of this. Emma's goal is to be an intellectual; failing that, she has classified herself as a rube and made it impossible to achieve her goal by her own deprecating manner.

Part 4, Chapter 25

Part 4, Chapter 25 Summary

Beatrice Trueblood's Story is the tale of a young woman, who, on the eve of her second marriage, is afflicted with total deafness. Beatrice and her fiancy and friends have spent the night at the home of her girlfriend, Mrs. Onslager. One night, Mrs. Onslager's husband observes Beatrice Trueblood and her fiancy, Marten ten Brink having an argument. The next morning, Beatrice, thinking a great joke is being played on her, is shocked and scared to discover she has gone completely deaf. Beatrice immediately calls off the wedding. Marten ten Brink leaves. Everyone, except Mr. Onslager who witnessed their fight, suspects Mr. ten Brink of having little character when he doesn't stay and help Beatrice overcome her circumstance. It is Mrs. Onslager who tells the guests that this is one more unfortunate event in Beatrice Trueblood's life. The friend explains that Beatrice had a terribly unfortunate childhood, where her mother was the drunk and her father the nagger. Beatrice's first husband, Tom Trueblood, had turned out to be a worse drunk than Beatrice's mother.

Beatrice sees many specialists, all who claim there is nothing physically wrong with the woman to have caused the deafness. Mr. Onslager's wife imposes upon her husband to visit Beatrice. Mr. Onslager's goal is to convince her to see a psychiatrist. Beatrice assures him she is prepared to attempt this course of action. Beatrice explains her reticence for discord in a relationship and the claim by Mrs. Trueblood, which Mr. Onslager had witnessed during the argument he overheard, that she desired never to hear again. Beatrice had not expected her wish to be answered and not so finally as total deafness. Mrs. Trueblood did not isolate herself from society during her illness, and her friends admired her for her diligence.

More than a year passes before Beatrice regains her hearing and again becomes engaged to a man. The man's name is Arthur Talbot. It was on the beach that Mr. Onslager witnessed Mr. Talbot maligning his new wife, and he was left with the bland visage of the new Mrs. Talbot in the look they exchange.

Part 4, Chapter 25 Analysis

The Onslagers find in Beatrice Trueblood a beautiful person and a true spirit. Beatrice has risen from a traumatic childhood, hoping for a happy married life. Beatrice envisions for herself a life without argument or recrimination. Beatrice's expectations prove to be too much for reality, because she finds herself susceptible to the angst of two separate people. Beatrice's deafness is psychosomatic. After the marriage has been cancelled, and the stress has worn off, Beatrice Trueblood regains her hearing. Beatrice is then engaged to another. Mr. Onslager witnesses discord between the two, shortly after the marriage. A happily married couple, the Onslagers recognize that marriage takes work

and both parties trying to stay happy and keep the other happy, will at times, experience discord.

Part 4, Chapter 26

Part 4, Chapter 26 Summary

A woman traveling between the porch and the altar on this first day of Lent makes the payment of penance. With a quarter and two dimes in the pocket of her coat, the woman starts out for church on foot. The Jesuit church is just down the road, and it is a cold day in February. The woman has no transportation and little means of support. A drunken beggar accosts her along the way, asking for a handout. The quarter is for the poor box. The two dimes are for the candle offering. One is for the memory of her mother, the other for two friends held captive in China. Considering the circumstances for which she has planned to make her offerings, she leaves the quarter and one of the dimes with the beggar man.

The woman enters the church. Judging herself imperfect, she prays for guidance and direction after she receives communion. Upon the altar, she discovers there is not a candle to be lit that is not already burning. With just a one dime in her pocket, the woman observes another woman she recognizes as a beggar approach. Determined to make her offering, the woman listens while the beggar makes her appeal. Feeling guilty and ashamed of her judgment, the dime is placed in the beggar woman's hand. Running from the church, the woman returns home and washes the ash from her brow, acknowledging her penance.

Part 4, Chapter 26 Analysis

The penance of a woman is paid on her way to church on Ash Wednesday. Praying for guidance and direction after receiving communion, the woman recognizes that her charity toward the beggars *Between the Porch and the Altar* was what her penance required of her. The woman's quarter and two dimes do not serve the purpose for which she intended, but circumstances worked out that they served their spiritual purpose. The woman's mother has passed, and her soul has already moved to its anointed place. The woman's two friends, imprisoned in China, are beyond anything but her prayers. The woman helps those who are in need to which she can directly contribute.

Part 4, Chapter 27

Part 4, Chapter 27 Summary

A spinster living in the tenements observes the writing upon the walk, 'I Love Someone.' Considering this an artful confession, the woman ponders the meaning while alone in her abode. The woman's friends have left the city when the summer begins to wind down, and she is alone, and a little lonely. The woman hears the playing children exclaim when the evening approaches, wishing she had made arrangements for company that evening.

One of her best friends, Marigold Trask, had, just that day, been buried. Marigold had committed suicide. Remembering the day, the woman acknowledges that she alone is unattached and, had she been the one they had been viewing, none would have concerned themselves. Being single, and unencumbered by attachments, she would have been missed, but that was all. The woman has no fancies, no purposes, and her conscious is clear.

Hearing an argument being played out in the area below the sill and discovering a group of boys surrounding something she cannot see, she leans out the window. The woman observes that the boys are watching a fight between two young men. The fight is advanced enough that one is on the ground, being pummeled by another who is sitting on top of him. The fight is decided, and the victor spies the woman leaning out the window. The woman leaves the apartment to seek out the contenders and to understand their energy, where she feels only apathy. There is no one around and only the sign upon the ground, 'I Love Someone', is there to greet her. The woman no longer questions why someone wrote it, understanding that someone did is enough. The woman returns to her apartment.

Part 4, Chapter 27 Analysis

A woman living in a tenement is alone and lonely on this day. Spying the words 'I Love Someone' scrawled inside a heart drawn on the ground, the woman ponders the purpose behind the message. The anonymity of the message brings greater purpose to the message, because it makes her wonder and consider why someone would write it just that way. At the end of the tale, she understands that someone cares. Love or hate, a living person is experiencing emotion. The woman's apathy to her life is discharged with her recognition of the simple nature of the message and a realization of the profoundness of its meaning.

Part 4, Chapter 28

Part 4, Chapter 28 Summary

Hannah Talmadge is only five years old when her father takes her to have her hair cut. This is not an unforeseen occurrence for a father and daughter day trip. Unfortunately, it comes in the middle of an argument with the child's mother. The father, in his vindictiveness, has the child's hair shorn from her head in the manner of a boy's cut. Hannah's beautiful tresses, so like her mother's, are gone. The child is desolate at the loss of her hair and has tears in her eyes. Hannah's mother fears her young daughter is going mental from the trauma.

Hannah overhears her mother complaining to the child's aunt about the father's actions. Hannah is confused and ashamed. Awash in tears, the young child only knows that her older siblings tease her about the cut, and the mother's self-interest doesn't acknowledge the comfort the daughter needs.

Part 4, Chapter 28 Analysis

Young Hannah Talmadge is the tool by which her parents have chosen to express their animosity toward one another. The father's viciousness is direct and meaningful only for his wife, to whom it was directed. For five-year-old Hannah, it is her punishment, pure and simple. Hannah isn't sure what she has done to deserve the punishment but believes that both her parents have rejected her. Hannah's father's rejection is expressed in the cutting of her hair; the mother's is in her inability to comfort her child after the deed is done. Hannah's tears are representative of the deep emotional impact her parent's actions have had on her. Neither parent can see beyond their own desire to hurt the other, or see the blow they have dealt the child.

Part 4, Chapter 29

Part 4, Chapter 29 Summary

Not a pretty woman, or one of means, Mrs. Ramsey is acknowledged for as hostess with social yclat and decorum. Mrs. Ramsey is writing letters to soldiers, boys who group up in the neighborhood and are off to war. Mrs. Ramsey's grandson, Captain Arthur Cousins, is among them and is her favorite of her many grandchildren. The women with whom she keeps company, her many visitors, and even her family acknowledge that Mrs. Ramsey is a woman pure of heart and of purpose. Their claim is that she is not even aware there is a war going on. Mrs. Ramsey is expecting company.

At a knock upon her door, she quickly moves to appoint herself appropriately for company, believing her company has arrived early. Mrs. Ramsey is informed that a package has arrived for her. The package is from Captain Cousins. Anxious to see what her grandson has sent, he sends many things and from all over the world, she decides her friends will wait. Preparing to open the package, she remembers her daughter's concern that her son has not seemed himself lately. The Captain's letters had all been a bit off and not like Arthur Cousins at all. Arthur's grandmother did not pursue the subject. Opening the package, Mrs. Ramsey discovers a golden braid of hair. From the nape of the hair to the tie, it was easily the length of her arm. Taken aback, Arthur's grandmother hears a reminder in her grandson's voice that there is a war going on.

Part 4, Chapter 29 Analysis

Mrs. Ramsey is an old woman who was raised in a different generation with different expectations than the one she currently inhabits. Mrs. Ramsey's position is secured by her ability to provide succor to others. Mrs. Ramsey's grandson, Captain Arthur Cousins, is younger and changed by the war. Arthur's gift is in poor taste but represents the warrior he sees himself to be. Arthur is counting coup and is paying tribute to his grandmother by showering her with her with this gift of his war prize. Mrs. Ramsey does not recognize this, for the gift is meaningless without an understanding of the symbolism inferred.

Part 4, Chapter 30

Part 4, Chapter 30 Summary

A woman renowned for her beauty is an acknowledged accompaniment to any party or group. In the social set of Angelica Early, she is just such a woman. Mrs. Early's husband is often at every end of the world hunting; he is a big game huntsman. Mrs. Early allows others to entertain her, and she is always favored with the most lavish invitations. No one knows Angelica Early, not even the lady herself. Every year, Angelica travels to France to partake of the fountain of youth of medical science. Plastic surgery keeps her beautiful for decades. Angelica's friends suspect of her haring off to parts unknown for an illicit rendezvous. Other than a personal maid, no one, family or friend, suspects differently.

Angelica's age eventually takes its toll. Mysteries of medical science could not prevent the aging of her hands. Overhearing the conversation of two men speculating on her visage, one on her face, the other her hands, Angelica realizes the truth of her predicament. Angelica's beauty will not last forever. Angelica's position in society is in doubt. Angelica goes into a decline and uses the excuse of illness to remain secluded. Hearing the rumors of Angelica's illness, her aunt rushes to her side. Finding the truth of the matter, the aunt is shocked and ashamed of the pedestal upon which they had all placed Angelica. The younger woman believes her sole purpose is predisposed to her beauty. As her purpose fades, so too does her life.

Part 4, Chapter 30 Analysis

The *End of a Career* is the perfect ending to the tales in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford*. Each story has introduced a person who is the product of their environment, but none so well as the story of Angelica Early. Angelica's beauty is her sole purpose, and when that leaves her, so does her reason for living. Angelica is placed on a pedestal, and her peers, who do not deign to know her or acknowledge her for anything but her beauty, are not cognizant of what they are creating. Angelica Early's aunt realizes the ramifications of the family's, friends,' and husband's actions, but by then, it is too late. Angelica Early dies before learning that she could be more than just a pretty face.

Characters

Maggie Meriwether

A young woman abroad for the first time, Maggie Meriwether is on vacation in Europe. Maggie has spent time in Paris and has been invited by a young Englishman and student of Harrow University, Tippy Akenside, to Chantilly, France. The invitation is to attend an outdoor party of upper-crust English folks. Maggie's family home is in Nashville, Tennessee, and she is a student of the women's college of Sweet Briar, in Virginia. Maggie is the only American present. Fluent in French, Maggie finds herself dumbstruck in the face of these new experiences. Maggie appears a gauche schoolgirl of unacceptable social yclat by the other members of the party.

Abby Reynolds

Abby Reynolds is a recent widow in her early forties. Abby's husband, John, dies nearly a year before she finds herself in Knokke-le-Zoute, a Belgium gambling establishment. Abby has traveled to Europe to escape the pity for her situation that is expressed by family and members of her class, who look upon loneliness as "inadmissible and a little disgraceful." Hugh Nicholson currently escorts her. Hugh is estranged from his wife and at loose ends in Europe himself. Abby Reynolds, who believes she requires a gentleman companion to be complete, finds herself falling in love with Hugh Nicholson.

Sue Ledbetter

A shy, introverted, young woman in her early twenties, Sue Ledbetter attends Heidelberg University in Germany. Sue is staying at the Pension Kirchenheim, and it is the winter before the war. Sue Ledbetter's father is a clergyman. Not much is said of her mother, except to imply that Sue's mother lives in the father's shadow. Sue befriends another young woman, Ramona Dunn who is twenty-one years of age.

Ramona Dunn

Age twenty-one, Ramona Dunn is the daughter of a rich American family. Ramona's father, mother, and three brothers, Justin, Daniel, and Robert live in Italy. Ramona also attends Heidelberg University. Ramona is very physically daunting as a very short, severely obese young woman with an eccentric wardrobe. Ramona considers herself a bluestocking and is extremely vain about her intellect. Claiming to have a twin sister named Martha, it is Ramona's American friend, Sue Ledbetter, who discovers Martha exists only in Ramona's mind. Ramona attends the University, all the while under the care and supervision of a Dr. Fruedenberg.

Evan Leckie

In Heidelberg, Germany, a month after leaving Nuremberg, American journalist Evan Leckie attends a party with both Germans and Americans. Being a new bachelor, because Virginia, Evan's wife, had left him a month previously after his service at Nuremberg, makes him especially aware of the verbal *on dits* from fellow guests at this gathering. As a journalist, Evan is an observant gentleman. At the party, following so quickly after the end of the war, Evan is an interested observer in the interaction between the quests, who represent both the victors and the vanquished.

Mrs. Otis

Mrs. Otis is a woman in exile. Being a divorcee, her social class dictum is a six-week exile to a foreign location. In this instance, Mrs. Otis is in the Caribbean and in her fifth week of exile. A gathering of islanders and visitors is occurring at the house of Captain Sundstrom. Being so far into her exile and removed from her usual haunts, Mrs. Otis is experiencing apathy toward her situation and her upcoming re-entrance to polite society. Mrs. Otis sits apart from the larger group, eavesdropping on their conversation, and she remains to watch the byplay of local children on the beach.

Victoria

Victoria is a young woman, newly employed by the Alma Hettrick College for Girls. Victoria is described in a manner that indicates she is refined and modest. Victoria is twenty-two years old, blonde, and penniless. Victoria is engaged. A recent Master's Degree graduate with a specialization of the sixteenth century, she aspires to higher academic ideals for her students than is encouraged by her new employer. Because she is disillusioned by the first address of the school president to the faculty at the onset of the school term, Virginia consciously sets about disobeying the rules. Virginia's accomplice and compatriot in this endeavor is Malcolm, another newly hired professor. Before the end of the term and the conclusion of the tale, Victoria and Malcolm discover they are in love. Ending her engagement, Victoria contrives with Malcolm a manner in which they can keep the nosy and intrusive faculty from the Alma Hettrick College for Girls from interposing.

Malcolm

A recent Master's Degree graduate of Philosophy, Malcolm has come to the Alma Hettrick College for Girls. Malcolm is twenty-three and an idealist. Malcolm is engaged. Malcolm meets Victoria on the first day of the term in September. Victoria is another newly hired instructor. These two young people consciously set about to sabotage the curriculum in their respective courses of instruction. Their meetings and complicity is overwrought by the recognition of the love that has grown between them. Malcolm calls off his engagement to another and professes his affections for Victoria.

Cousin Lily Holmes

Young Cousin Lily Holmes is Cousin Will Hamilton's ambassador on this day's trip to visit Cousin Isobel Carpenter in the poorhouse. A young woman of twenty years and dreadfully in love with a gentleman named Tucky Havermeyer, Lily is ward and secretary to Cousin Will. Will is abed with bronchitis and, of course, cannot make the trip himself. Will places this responsibility on Lily, because he can and must, since he is responsible for losing all of Cousin Isobel's money in the market. Lily is imposed upon to renege on plans to meet Tucky that day. Lily and Tucky have a row about her change in plans, making Lily even more resentful to be sent on this errand. Lily, Will, Isobel, and a great many other characters are distant cousins. Lily Holmes has no immediate family still living. Lily's father, Matthew Holmes, leaves nothing for Lily upon his death. Lily is very prideful of this fact. Lily is loath to the thought of finding herself entrenched in the snobbish ways of her many cousins.

Rhoda Bellamy

Rhoda Bellamy is an eighty-two year old woman who is lonely and makes a habit of complaining into a way of life. Rhoda is a contrary woman, in her thoughts and to others. Rhoda's nature has been the blow to her happiness and her father's hope that she will make a good marriage. Rhoda is rude and openly hostile, particularly to the serving class. As a result, Miss Bellamy's debut is infamous and the cause of her and her parents exile to Maine from Boston. Rhoda's mother never recovers from the cut by society and dies. *Rhoda's Hope Chest* is the representation of possibilities and opportunities Miss Bellamy misses and the disappointment she and her father live with. Rhoda Bellamy is forever a spinster.

Mrs. Margaret Heath

Margaret Heath and her husband, Tommy, are writers. Having adroitly sidestepped many of this society's entertainments, Margaret Heath reluctantly agrees to a visit with Mrs. Wainright-Lowe, her neighbor and the harbinger of polite society. Mrs. Heath has previously refused to cave to pressure. Mrs. Heath has refused to involve herself, or her husband, in the local festivities and gossip that would require they expose themselves to these people, whom she is now predisposed to listen - required by accepting the invitation to Mrs. Wainright-Lowe's house for tea. Mrs. Heath is at loggerheads to make polite conversation with these people, whom had nothing better to do than rumormongering. Margaret Heath believes herself to be someone with a purpose, and things such as her writing are above such things.

Rose Fabrizio

A twenty-one year old Mexican girl, Rose Fabrizio moves east in search of work. Rose finds herself in New England as secretary to the headmistress of a girl's boarding

school. Rose is resentful, in the face of these genteel women, of her father's inability to provide for her in a way that would accommodate a better lifestyle. Rose seeks to replace him in her affections with a New England foster-father. Rose's decision is based on her perception that New Englanders are moral, literate, and clean. Rose's hometown, with its largely Mexican population, is filled with squalidness and populated with not very smart or refined people. Rose Fabrizio is mesmerized the idea of New Englanders and their lives. Rose is taken aback by the less than perfect life of her neighbors. Rose's disillusionment is almost complete when the father figure she has chosen ends up being her less than perfect, and possibly dangerous, neighbor's son.

Mr. Oliphant

Mr. Oliphant is a horticulturist, more than seventy years in age, whose influence on the narrator of *The Lippia Lawn* is that of friend and mentor. Seeking the arbutus at Deer Lick, the narrator wordlessly reminisces from earliest memory to the present, and the plants, trees, and shrubs ground every experience. Minor details are forgotten, but not the flora. Mr. Oliphant is a bachelor with many interests. Mr. Oliphant's friends and acquaintances do not pity, and if they did, it would not concern him in the least. When asked how he spends his time, he looks a bit bewildered when he responds that he does not know, but there never seems to be enough of it.

Mr. Oliphant does not hunt animals, and he is always looking for good flora specimens to transplant. Mr. Oliphant paints, for his own amusement, oils and watercolors. Mr. Oliphant works on his own house, has plans for his walkways, and grows the herbs he uses in his cooking.

Pansy Vanneman

A woman of intense moral fortitude and a tremendous capacity for pain, Pansy Vanneman is in the hospital after being severely injured in an automobile accident. Pansy's face has been destroyed in the accident and she is preparing to undergo reconstructive surgery. The young woman, unable to cope with the trauma and the pain in the aftermath of the accident, finds refuge within her own mind. Pansy exhibits a strong will and tolerance to pain. The nurses try to goad a reaction from her. Pansy has entered a deep depression and retreats there rather than respond. Pansy pictures her brain as her jewel and romanticizes it in her own mind. The type of injury Pansy has received is closely related to that of the author, who herself underwent reconstructive facial surgery after an auto accident.

Jessie

Jessie is *The Healthiest Girl in Town*. After Jessie's father's death in 1924, the eight year old girl and her mother move to a western town from Ohio. Although it is unclear where in the West they are, the author's proclivity is to use the fictitious town of Adams, Colorado. Jessie's mother is an aid to the elderly and infirm in and about the town.

Through her mother's employer, Jessie is impressed to companion the woman's two granddaughters, Laura and Ada Butler. The two young Butler girls are not well liked at school, due to their arrogance, and both are predisposed to frequent illnesses. Jessie is always healthy, and in this town overwhelmingly populated by the ill and the dying, the young girl believes herself an oddity and sometimes wishes to be ill herself to fit in. After prolonged exposure to the Butler children's lofty and self-important behaviors, Jessie feels herself to be the better of the three girls and is again happy to be healthy.

Kitty Winstanley

Mrs. Winstanley, Kitty's mother, runs a boarding house. Mrs. Winstanely's father lost his job during the Depression, and the family has fallen on hard times, until the boarders come. Kitty is home from Nevilles College for the day and eavesdrops on the teatime of her mother and her mother's gossipy friends. The young lady feels ashamed of her mother. Kitty works at her mother's boarding house, as well as working as a chambermaid and a waitress at the Caribous Ranch in order to pay her way through college. At the boarding house, Kitty must serve many of the well-to-do young girls whom she has in her college classes. Kitty's shame is caused by the fact that her mother's life at the house is a lie and Kitty must a live a double life there. Kitty is judged by the young female boarders and her mother's friends, judged and found wanting as a member of the working class.

Judy Grayson

Young Judy Grayson has, only the night before, become engaged to Rod Stephanson. Innocent, Judy spends a majority of time involved in mental self-interest and self-conceit. Judy has a sister, Camilla, who is two years older than she and also engaged, to a Yale man. The Grayson family has a fortune and Judy spends the winters in New York, spends the summers in the Colorado Mountains at her grandmother's house, and is a student at Bryn Mawr. Rod has never been out west, and Judy, who is a regular visitor, acts as his guide. Judy considers her father to be an intellectual and educated man. From him, she receives the self-respect and confidence to expect mutual respect and admiration from her future husband. Spending a day in the mountains, Judy believes the day to be her happiest day.

Ella

Ella is a young girl, almost twelve years old. Ella is a babysitter for Mr. and Mrs. Temple's children. Ella's mother and brother, Fred, watch out for her. Ella's father has died. This leaves Fred as the man-in-charge. The young sister is afraid of the dark. If she is out riding on her horse, Squaw, she is confident and unafraid. Ella's fear starts when she is by herself in the dark and inside the Temples' house.

Emily Vanderpool

As a young child, Emily Vanderpool faces many trials, most of them caused by her own bad manners. Emily lives in Adams, Colorado with her parents and siblings. Making friends does not seem to be a problem for her but keeping them is near impossible. Emily will inevitably speak her mind, saying something vicious and untoward to the other child that they will leave her immediately and on bad terms. Emily knowingly does these things, and makes excuses to herself, saying she wants to be alone. A young female hoodlum befriends Emily. Emily is caught shoplifting. Emily's parents, ashamed by their daughter's behavior and concerned for their place in the closed-minded community, take the young girls to see the pastor. Emily claims she has learned from her experience and she develops the instincts to determine when to keep her mouth shut. While she grows, Emily becomes an avid reader and isn't one to be easily taken in by charlatans.

Mrs. Placer

Mrs. Placer is the reluctant foster mother to two young and orphaned girls, Daisy and her sister. A childhood friend of the their grandmother, and the recipient of the girls' father's insurance, Mrs. Placer is committed to their care after the deaths of the children's parents. Mrs. Placer has moved with her husband to the Rocky Mountains, when her husband becomes ill. To provide for the family after his death, because Mr. Placer had nothing of value to leave her, Mrs. Placer runs a boarding house. Their foster mother is not a very nice person, and the children are never permitted to forget the sacrifice Mrs. Placer is making to rear the two orphans. Mrs. Placer requires the children to call her *Gran*.

Mrs. Placer's acquaintances, for Mrs. Placer has no friends, are cantankerous, gossipy, and unpleasant. When another adult gives a dog to Daisy and her sister, it is not long before Mrs. Placer takes over its care and discipline. The dog becomes bad-tempered and dangerous, biting several people. Unable to leave her, first because of their youth and later due to the Depression, Daisy and her sister wait for Mrs. Placer to die. Mrs. Placer's house is then sold, the two girls are off, and the inhabitants of Adams, Colorado, when remembering Mrs. Placer, she remains the lady without a heart.

Polly Bay

Nearly thirty, Polly Bay is living with her Uncle Francis, and his sister, her Aunt Jane in Adams, Colorado. It is expected. The Bay family is affluent and many generations have been raised in Adams, Colorado. All of Polly's siblings and cousins have managed to escape the familial pressure and expectations of the aunt and uncle to move away. Polly is the last of her generation to remain. Polly Bay is a teacher at Nevilles College and, unbeknownst to her aunt and uncle, she has become engaged to an Easterner on one her trips to visit her sister in Boston. Polly has been engaged for five months to Robert Fair. Polly's ring is kept hidden in her desk at work. Robert dies before they can

be married, even before Polly is able to leave Adams. Although distraught over her fiancy's death, Polly is as upset that her aunt and uncle attempt to use her loss to guilt her into staying. Polly takes her coat and money and leaves their home and all of her other belongings for good.

Cora Savage

Cora Savage is a student, and still-life subject in Life Class, at a college in Adams, Colorado. Originally from Missouri, her father, mother, Cora, and her three siblings, Randall, Abigail, and Evangeline move to Adams. Cora considers herself a tomboy and disdains the pursuits of her older sisters for the fun and romp her brother enjoys. When presented with the suicide death of a fellow student and personal acquaintance, Cora is still in the still-life pose and unable to react. Cora is introspective.

Emma

As a young woman of twenty years of age, Emma moves from the rural west to the city of New York. Possessing a college education, she considers herself an intellectual. In the urbane society of New York, she is rejected for her lack of the social awareness required of the intellectual set. Emma does not look for the hidden meanings and symbolism of their entertainment and mannerisms. This inherent awareness and discussion is necessary to be considered acceptable within this genteel group. After her rejection, the young woman secludes herself. Venturing forth to the Metropolitan Museum, lonely after months of exile, Emma discovers another person with whom she is familiar with, and who has also been cast out. They conjoin to form a friendship, and possibly more.

Beatrice Trueblood

Miss Trueblood experiences a shock when she discovers she has become deaf overnight. On the eve of her wedding to Marten ten Brink, a rather rich young man, the two have an argument that results in Bea, as she was more commonly known, to wish to not hear anymore. Beatrice's deafness is absolute and all manner of doctors are unable to cure her. Bea has immediately called off her wedding upon the discovery of her condition and later admits that she desires to have a union where there are no altercations, such as the one she experienced. Beatrice has had a hard life to that point. Being from a dysfunctional family, the mother a drunk and the father a nagger, she is always exposed to disagreements that are loud and long. Bea's first marriage to Tom Trueblood is another episode in which she is confronted with disagreeable situations. Tom had been a more disagreeable drunk than her mother and a known, blatant adulterer. Beatrice recovers from her deafness after about a year, with the help of a psychiatrist. Bea marries a poor man, a research chemist, named Arthur Talbot. Arthur is heard to say to Beatrice, "He wanted life his way," and, "any dedicated scientist was bad-tempered."

Hannah Talmadge

Hannah is five years old when she loses her hair to her father's vindictiveness toward his wife. The youngest of five children, her family calls her Baby. Hannah names her siblings: Janie, Andy, Johnny, and Hughie. Hannah's hair is very like her mother's beautiful tresses. The young girl, with a child's innocent perception, has believed the fascination her family has with her hair, so like the mother's, is her only contribution to the family. The child so desperately needs someone to hold her and tell her that she is loved, regardless of her hair.

Mrs. Chester Ramsey

A General's widow, Mrs. Chester Ramsey, lives in the slums on Manhattan Island. Mrs. Ramsey has one of the only private houses in the area, and it has been condemned by the fire department. Mrs. Ramsey refuses to leave. Mrs. Ramsey has children and grandchildren. Mrs. Chester Ramsey is considered a consummate hostess, regardless of the location and condition of her home. Society flocks to her door. Mrs. Ramsey is not beautiful, not even pretty. Mrs. Ramsey spends her spare time writing to boys who have gone off to war. Mrs. Ramsey sends gifts and notes to remind them that they are thought of. Mrs. Ramsey is pure of heart in all of her dealings. Mrs. Chester Ramsey is the quintessential optimist and believer of good and harmony in life. Mrs. Ramsey remains innocent, even into this late hour of her life.

Angelica Early

Married to the Major Clayton Early, Angelica Early is internationally recognized for her beauty. At more than fifty-years of age, she has nothing else to recommend her. Angelica has no social yclat. She is not educated, nor is her conversation memorable. Angelica's beauty is her sole entrye into genteel society. She graces the most lavish parties, and she is invited out by the extremely rich to yachts and chateaux, for her beauty alone. No one, except a personal maid, is permitted to know the cost of her beauty. Mrs. Early travels annually to France for the assistance of medical science to retain her beauty. Angelica's acquaintances believe she is involved in an illicit affair, so little did they know of her personally. No one ever questions her or looks beyond her beauty. Angelica's face redone, her hands could not be renewed. Angelica Early begins to show her age in her hands. Distraught, for she has no purpose in life other than to be beautiful, she dies when her hands prove her purpose false.

Objects/Places

Covina, California

Covina, California is the birthplace of the author, Jean Stafford. Mentioned in more than one of these stories, Covina represents the place where illusions are lost and innocence is left behind.

Adams, Colorado

The town of Adams, Colorado is a semi-fictitious town the author created. Located approximately 15 miles north of Denver, the town of Adams is described as the location to which many of polite society's rejects have fled. The population of Adams, Colorado carries its own societal norms and spiritual overtones, many of which are reflections of the author's views upon her own childhood. It is this town that is the location used in the majority of Jean Stafford's collection.

Heidelberg, Germany

Jean Stafford left the United States and headed east. Germany became one of her many haunts. The University of Heidelberg is one of her favorites and the location of a couple of her stories. *The Echo and the Nemesis* presents a notable depiction of college life and the separations of social class at the University there. *The Maiden* presents Heidelberg as the demarcation between the Germans and their victors.

Boston

Jean Stafford depicts Boston, and the greater part of New England, as being the last bastion of civilization. Boston is a place where gentlefolk are the polite society and established norms and expectations are understood. Snobbery is de rigueur and anything less than complete confidence in oneself and one's standing in that society is considered an insult to the gentlefolk and deserving to be ostracized and persecuted.

Georges Duval's Mill

L'Hotel Dauphin is the meeting place of Victoria and Malcolm in the town of Georges Duval's Mill. The town is the antithesis of the Alma Hettrick College for Girls.

Themes

Self-Discovery

Self-discovery is a predominant theme amidst the turmoil and angst of persecution in Jean Stafford's collection. Persecution is derived from failure in meeting perceived expectations: societal, familial, and spiritual. There is self-discovery amongst the women and children who represent the main characters. The women have been shunned by polite society for divorce, widowhood, and having less than society deems acceptable. Less can mean money, intelligence, or traceable genealogy. The children are required to ascribe to similar judgment. Jean Stafford depicts children who have been orphaned and children who less, due to circumstances beyond their control. In the case of Emily Vanderpool in *Bad Characters*, it is the child's own willfulness that has cost her and her family acceptance from the local pastor.

These women and children are pushed from a comfort zone created by the snobbery of polite society. In the scandal of their situations, they discover hidden strengths of character. It is self-discovery that leads to a comfort with themselves, regardless of expectations. There is a rare occurrence of 'happy endings' in the stories of Jean Stafford's collection. Stafford's words, meanings, and presentation are often darkly disturbing, leaving one seeking an understanding of what is read. The lack of a happy ending leads the reader from assuming an ending to experiencing his or her own sense of self-discovery in the story's interpretation.

The Happy Ending

Jean Stafford doesn't make any excuses. The idea of the happy ending, in her life and in her literature, is a rare one. It was late in her life that it is believed Jean personally experiences her happiest moments. The author's mood and outlook are reflected in her writing. In *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* the idea of something good coming from the life's lessons is a guardedly optimistic one. Yet, there is enough evidence amongst her stories that good will overcome to merit further reading.

Bad Characters, The Healthiest Girl in Town, and *The Liberation* are the most obvious representations of the happy ending. In each, the protagonist is bombarded with the vilification of polite society and spiritual consequence. A choice is made and the character moves into a period of self-discovery, allowing her to overcome society's plague of moral defeatism for those who have been determined socially unacceptable. Regardless of the lack of the happy ending, Jean Stafford's tales offer wonderful imagery and evoke emotions to keep the reader enthralled.

A Place for Women and Children in Society

Prior to women in the workforce, women had to fight for their right to have any place in society; equality is a foreign concept. The women of Jean Stafford's stories are evidence of the changing thought on women and women's rights in the twentieth century. Women move out of the home and into the workplace. A woman could move about freely, unescorted. Women now travel abroad for pleasure and not for penance. A woman's contributions can be valued for their existence and not because it is the dictum of society.

A child has many expectations placed upon them. This is part of following the rules. In this collection of stories, the children are put upon to conform to exacting standards. The youth of yesterday don't hold to the freedom of children today. There is a necessity today for many households to have both parents working outside the home. This necessity exists because the classes of the latter twentieth and early twenty-first centuries are more clearly defined by those who 'have' and those who 'have not.' Whether a nicer car or a bigger house, the actual account of financial copiousness is unclear and all too often unnecessary. It is the visual impact of a person's means to the observer that elevates one to a higher status.

Naivety

The predicaments of Jean Stafford's characters conjure disbelief and beg the question how the person's naivety can be so great as to find oneself in that situation to begin with. Understanding anthropology and the nature of man gives evidence to Jean Stafford's discourse. The ideals of social or family acceptance impose tremendous influence on the character to cave to the pressure of expectations. Socially prominent young women and girls are kept secluded in refinement, pending an appropriate marriage. When women gain their majority, well into the mid-twentieth century, along with their right to vote, own property, and be treated as equals, the gender becomes less napve and more exposed and aware of what was happening around them.

Innocence Lost

There is innocence, yes, and naivety in these collected stories. The loss of innocence can be, at times, humorous, and others times, a very serious matter, indeed. The artlessness of losing one's innocence, demonstrated by the characters in this collection, is tragic. Beyond the character's control, a societal dictum is going to determine the outcome. Once rejected by society, Jean Stafford's characters become social outcasts. Social rejection is a situation from which the child described here might recover, but, as the author demonstrates, from which the adult may very well die.

The children and the adult women are crucified by the so-called polite society. Outcasts, entire families, are forced to relocate. The children will harbor bitterness and anger toward their parents, because the young do not understand the strict doctrine being

imposed. The judgment might be based on societal, familial, or spiritual edict. The child will not care, but she will learn, and in learning, she will lose some of her innocence. The adult female, depending on her level of societal conditioning, may reject the judgment. More often than not, the conditioning and traditions are too deeply entrenched in the woman's behavior to be overcome. In this case, the woman will suffer great mental and physical anguish. In literature, suicide by a socially rejected young woman is not an uncommon occurrence.

A Long and Happy Marriage

When leaving youth behind, a young woman will gain her majority. During the period covered by the stories related in this collection, a young woman's entire purpose resides in marrying and, if possible, marrying well. In two of the stories, women were sent into exile, because one has been widowed and another divorced. It is never mentioned that the same had occurred to, or was expected of, the newly divorced man. Actually, historical literature suggests that the man is expected to get right back into the swing of a single man's life and another round at the marriage market. The woman is expected to wait an appropriate amount of time, in social exile - usually a year.

A good marriage is considered key to attaining social acceptance for a woman, and it may have been the only way, if the woman has not been at least pretty or well connected. Until the mid-twentieth century, it is scandalous for a woman to have property. A woman with financial means is often put upon to marry, so the husband can control the funds. It has been suggested in literature that the dowry paid to the woman's father by the affianced man is akin to the gentleman buying a chattel. This was the marriage etiquette of genteel society.

Beauty is in the Eye of the Beholder

In Manhattan Island, beauty is the distinguishing factor in acceptance by family and society, perceived by the main character. The main character in one is a child, in another, a grown woman. The parents in *Cops and Robbers* influence the child's perception of beauty and acceptance. In *The End of a Career*, a woman has devoted her entire life to present an image to her friends and family. The woman believes her image is her only contribution and being beautiful is society's highest expectation of her.

From references of Regency England in literature to the supermodel Twiggy in the twentieth century, beauty has forever been a factor in determining a woman's place in society. Beauty may be beheld by the masses, but it is the observer's reaction to it that drives a woman to maintain that standard - even to the detriment of her health. Beauty and fashion are big business. Fad diets and haute couture exist to perpetuate the need to be beautiful. They enhance a woman's own beauty, and when that woman is only pretty, the diets become more radical and the clothes more expensive, in the hope that beauty can be attained. Beautiful women are perceived to have everything: men, money, and fame.

Style

Style

Points of View

The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford by Jean Stafford is a collection of thirty stories told in the first person point of view of the main character, usually in a narrative. This collection is speculated to be autobiographical and may relate relevant experiences of Jean Stafford's own life using fictional characters. These are tales of women and children. Each is an experience in coming of age, innocence, and a struggle with expectations and class.

The first person point of view is the most common used in literature. From this point of view, the struggle is more traumatic and the characters' turmoil more intense. Jean Stafford conveys a depth and strength of emotion that is appropriate for the messages and themes. The reader is seeing the world like Jean Stafford wants them to see it. This is a story of emotional and physical trauma, and the importance of social class, its acceptance and rejection, on the characters. Speaking in the first person, the author evokes feelings in the reader, all the while, his characters are living and feeling them.

Setting

Jean Stafford evokes emotion, from love to hate and fear to triumph, in these beautifully crafted tales. From Covina, California to Heidelberg, Germany, by way of the semi-fictitious town of Adams, Colorado, Jean Stafford pulls on the heartstrings in these stories of triumph and tragedy over persecution and self-doubt. Jean's stories are written over a period of twenty years, and the timeframe of each tale is woven from the events and popular expectations demanded by civilized society. Few of the stories provide an exact date from which the tale is told. Every story in this collection is set from the twentieth century. From the 1920s through the second World War, each protagonist is a product of her environment.

The main characters are women and children. These characters are placed in positions deemed appropriate by their financial or genealogical status. That status is determined by the dictates of a society that are judged to be acceptable. The judgment in these stories is, of course, the character is found wanting or flawed in some manner. Often, changing attitudes or financial concerns is not sufficient for acceptance. The character, and even her entire family, is sometimes forced to relocate themselves, because they are physically rejected from polite society.

Language and Meaning

The language of Jean Stafford in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* is highly civil, dictated by the period covered in the stories' telling. With few exceptions, the exact date is not identified in the tale, yet the explanation of events and character interaction narrow it down somewhat. Many of the collection are told from the viewpoint of the early twentieth century and others are somewhat later - such as *The Maiden*, which takes place after the second World War. Stafford is a highly educated and very well read woman. Stafford's experience and education are obvious in the telling of her stories, as is their autobiographical nature. Each story relates some viewpoint or simile of childhood experience of Jean Stafford.

Jean Stafford was a deeply troubled child and that affected her in adulthood. Fighting alcoholism and depression, she writes from a perspective that is both haunting and enthralling. In her somewhat autobiographical tales and in her life, she speaks of her move from California to Colorado as one of which she is extremely ashamed. Jean is only five at the time of the move, but it is something for which she never forgave her parents. Stafford claims in her Author's Note, "As soon as I could I hotfooted it across the Rocky Mountains and across the Atlantic Ocean." *The Liberation* is an example of what Stafford might have felt when she left Colorado to travel east. Stafford's character, Polly Bay, has familial expectations to contend with, but Polly is not planning on coming back until her aunt and uncle are dead.

Structure

These stories of Jean Stafford's have been collected over her lifetime and published by the author in this, *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford*. They are separated into four sections. There are thirty stories in all. Each section is titled, and it suggests a commonality of theme among the stories contained in the collection. Every story is a disturbing tale of expectations and acceptance. Some are humorous; most are not. The happy ending is apparently not a prerequisite for Stafford's effort. The first section is called *The Innocents Abroad*. In historical regency literature, Innocents is used to connote virginal or napve persons. This grouping of stories is, in fact, a collection relating the tales of individuals who have traveled away from home, and who are placed amongst individuals most jaded and cynical. Thus, these homeless characters are considered the Innocents of this cast.

In the second section titled *The Bostonians, and other Manifestations of the American Scene*, there are stories illustrating what polite society is considered to be and what it is not. The main characters are confronted with societal, familial, and spiritual expectations. If they fail to measure up, as the stories suggest, the protagonist is considered unacceptable and is subjected to vilifications, calumny, and persecution. The section called *Cowboys, Indians, and Magic Mountains* is the one most densely populated. This is also the section that the most hope for a happy ending is found. In stories reminiscent of the western genre her father was known for, Stafford writes mostly of the characters living in the semi-fictitious town of Adams, Colorado.

The author's final section in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* is called *Manhattan Island*. This grouping of stories is also scattered about the twentieth century. They introduce protagonists affected by beauty.

While Stafford has written and published three novels during her lifetime, there is a fourth that had been started and was discovered incomplete upon her death in 1979. There are two complete sections that are later made into shorter stories, and they are contained in that format in this collection.

Quotes

"They had had a long ramble, for these guests knew the way to their host's heart; they had seen everything, including the bees, including the Baron's mother and uncle, who were swindling each other and drinking Jamaica rum out of minute silver goblets." Chapter 1, page 7

"They hid their humiliating condition - for they tend to look on loneliness as inadmissible and a little disgraceful." Chapter 2, page 22

"She was the sort of person who seemed, at twenty-one, to have fought all her battles and survived to enjoy the quiet of her unendangered ivory tower." Chapter 3, page 37

"The serenity she emanated touched him so warmly and so deeply that he almost loved her, and upon the recognition of his feeling he was seized with loneliness and with a sort of homesickness that he felt sure she would understand - a longing, it was, for the places that *she* would remember." Chapter 4, page 57-58

"It was fitting, she concluded, that one come to such a place as this to repudiate struggle and to resume the earlier, easier indolence of lovelessness." Chapter 5, page 68

"The altitude of their academic ideals had not begun to dwindle yet and they shivered and shook in the alien air that hovered over the pretty campus of this finishing school, whose frankly stated aim was 'to turn out the wives and mothers of tomorrow.'" Chapter 6, page 75

"The lack of money is the eternal punishment." Chapter 7, page 110

"It had, indeed, been a miscarriage so sensational that she had forced her parents to move north, into Maine, where her mother soon had died and where she and her father dwelt together in their angry disappointment." Chapter 8, page 113

"Indeed, they seldom stirred farther than the lake behind their house, or the general store, and the gentry (and especially the Wainright-Lowes), who had done so much to make then feel "at home" in the town, did not know whether they were abnormal or stuck-up." Chapter 9, page 122

"A long illness removes a thoughtful man from his fellow beings." Chapter 10, page 135

"If my father had not been a low person and if he had loved me, I would not have grown up in poverty and I would not have hated him so much that I had to go away from home to the first job that came along, this mean one that pays so little that I must live in a dark, depressing room where walls are so thin that the sound of sickness comes through and for no reason at all I am laughed at by a cruel person who does not even know me." Chapter 11, page 157

"He was such a terrible mixture of unattractive qualities that she did not know how his face managed to be so aristocratically handsome." Chapter 11, page 167

"I envied him the clarity of his vision. I envied him his past when, pacified for a moment, he said gently, 'Anyhow, a man can call the old things to mind.'" Chapter 12, page 178

"The rest of the memory was trivial, for she knew that she could never again love anything as ecstatically as she loved the spirit of Pansy Vanneman, enclosed within her head." Chapter 13, page 183

"Like all committed people, whether they are committed to school or to jail, to war or to disease, there was among them a good-natured camaraderie that arose out of a need to vary the tedium of a life circumscribed by rules." Chapter 14, page 199

"In one way or another, they had all 'come down in the world,' but they had descended from a stratum so middling, so snobbish, and so uncertain of itself that it had looked on penury as a disgrace and to have joked about it would have been as alien to their upright natures as it would have been to say aloud the name of a venereal disease." Chapter 15, page 221

"My heart was the Orient, and the sun rose from it; I could have picked the starts from the sky." Chapter 16, page 236

"I wanted him to be as happy as he had been before we had started our search for the girls, and I thought, Love, real love, is just that: it is wanting the beloved to be happy." Chapter 16, page 249

"So long as she was outdoors, she was not afraid at night." Chapter 17, page 254

"Why, listen, if I'd rooted out all the badness in me, there wouldn't have been anything left of me." Chapter 18, page 282

"...we know that we magnified its ugliness because we looked upon it as the extension of the possessive, unloving, scornful, complacent foster mother, Mrs. Placer, to whom, at the death of our parents within a month of each other, we were sent like Dickensian grotesqueries - cowardly, weak-stomached, given to tears, backward in school." Chapter 19, page 285

"The vigilantes patrolled our town by day, and by night returned to lay their goodies at their priestess's feet and wait for her oracular interpretation of the innards of the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the soda jerk's girl, and the barber's unnatural deaf white cat." Chapter 19, page 288

"Nothing can more totally subdue the passions that familial piety." Chapter 20, page 310

"She felt chewed and mauled by the niggling hypochondriacs she had left behind, who had fussily tried to appropriate even her own tragedy. She felt sullied by their disrespect and greed." Chapter 20, page 322

"If you want company on the streetcar or the bus or the interurban, open a book and you're all set." Chapter 21, page 325

"He wore hot blue serge knickerbockers and a striped green shirt, but he had no shoes and he had no hat and the only things in his pants pockets were a handkerchief that was dirty now, and a white pencil from the Matchless Lumber Company, and a card with Mr. Wilkins' name printed on it and his own, Jim Littlefield, written on below the printing, and a little aspirin box." Chapter 22, page 345

"Rich, privileged, in love, he and his girl had seemed the very paradigm of joy. Why had he done it? And yet, why not? Why did not she, who was seldom happy, do it herself?" Chapter 23, page 369

"But the most surprising thing of all about these parties was that every now and again, in the middle of the urgent, general conversation, this cream of the enlightened was horribly curdled, and an argument would end, quite literally, in a bloody nose or a black eye." Chapter 24, page 375

"Although she was no longer mutilated, she was still unkempt; her pretensions needed brushing; her ambiguities needed to be cleaned; her evasions would have to be completely overhauled before she could face again the terrifying learning of someone like Alfred Eisenburg, a learning whose components cohered into a central personality that was called 'intellectual.'" Chapter 24, page 377

"...they had pretended that the neighborhood was bourgeois and there was no seamy side, and they had commemorated their swindle in a big facsimile of rectitude." Chapter 25, page 398

"Not hearing makes one helplessly egocentric." Chapter 25, page 401

"So uncluttered are the streets, so starkly direct is the walk of the people that anyone whose custom it is to get up much later, at the normal hour, feels when he goes out that he intrudes upon a scene of bare but important privacy." Chapter 26, page 407

"And still, discomforting as it was, she took a certain pleasure in her uneasiness, feeling that even the most accidental castigation was excellent at the beginning of Lent." Chapter 26, page 408

"I have lived the whole of it in the half-world of brief flirtations (some that have lasted no longer than the time it takes to smoke a cigarette under the marquee of a theater between the acts), of friendships that have perished of the cold or have hung on, desiccated, outliving their meaning and never once realizing the possibility of love." Chapter 27, page 419

"I cannot believe that criminals are any more ingenious than wives and husbands when their marriages are turning sour." Chapter 28, page 432

"Mothers of the soldiers are overjoyed: she is their link with the courtly past, she is Mrs. Wharton at first hand." Chapter 29, page 442

"...they, with their constant and superlative praise of her looks, had added to her burden, had forced her into so conventual a life that she had been removed from most of experience." Chapter 30, page 462

Topics for Discussion

Explain the significance in the grouping of the stories and of the group titles in this collection.

Discuss the significance of the author's choice in using Adams, Colorado. Could the same have been true had Jean Stafford chosen a more urban setting?

Discuss the influence of Jean Stafford's life on her writing.

Do you feel the author has overstated the affects of class distinction? Why do you feel this way?

Discuss the inclusion of Jim Littlefield's story to this collection. Why is this story different than the others, and what does this signify?

In *The End of a Career*, is there significance in Angelica Early's death?

In the Author's Note, is it important that Jean Stafford mentions her father's writing did not influence her?

The author's choice of women and children as the main characters is significant. Why is that?

Had Jean Stafford been born in a later generation, the 1950s or 1960s, how might the outlook of the stories changed? Would the settings have changed?