In the Zoo Study Guide

In the Zoo by Jean Stafford

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Introduction

Jean Stafford was a post—World War II American author whose fiction remained within the realist and symbolist traditions dating back to the nineteenth century. Influential in the high literary society of her time, Stafford was married to the poet Robert Lowell for six years and then married to two other men. She never forgot her rural Western roots and difficult childhood, however, and themes from her younger life continually reappear in her writings. One such story, entitled "In the Zoo," is a psychological portrait of two orphans remembering their traumatic childhood in a small Rocky Mountain town.

Stafford published "In the Zoo" in 1953, as the most active years of her career as a fiction writer were drawing to a close. Two years later, the story won the O. Henry Memorial Award for best short story of the year. One reason for the story's success is its rich characterization, through which Stafford creates memorable characters such as Gran, the manipulative and cruel foster mother of the girls, and Mr. Murphy, a jobless, alcoholic Irishman who treats the sisters with kindness and love. The story is also compelling because of its sophisticated use of symbolism□particularly the animals that represent various people and themes from the sisters' childhood□and its striking, moving climax, which occurs when Gran turns the sisters' puppy into an attack dog and lets it kill Mr. Murphy's monkey. Through these techniques, Stafford comments on themes of psychological trauma, confinement, and the nature of love and companionship. "In the Zoo" is now available in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* (1969), which won a Pulitzer Prize in 1970.

Author Biography

Born in the rural Californian town of Covina in 1915, Stafford was the youngest child of four. Her father was a fiction writer who lost his fortune in the stock market while living in San Diego in 1920, at which point the family moved to Colorado and struggled to live on the income from the children's jobs, allowances from their family, and the income Stafford's mother collected from taking sorority girls as boarders in their home. Stafford attended the University of Colorado on a scholarship, where her roommates introduced her to drinking and sexual experimentation until one of them committed suicide in her presence, an event which deeply affected Stafford and her writing. After graduating with a degree in English, Stafford traveled to Europe on a fellowship from the German government to study philology at the University of Heidelberg.

At the Boulder Writers' Conference in the summer of 1937, Stafford met the poet Robert Lowell, with whom she was in a car accident that left her with serious and disfiguring injuries. They were married in 1940, but divorced six turbulent years later, after Stafford had begun a career as a novelist and had published the bestseller *Boston Adventure* (1944). In 1947, Stafford published *The Mountain Lion*, which did not sell as well as her previous novel. After her divorce from Lowell, Stafford began to publish short stories in the *New Yorker* magazine. In 1950 she married Oliver Jenson, a staff photographer at *Life* magazine. She divorced him in 1953, after she published her third novel, *The Catherine Wheel* (1952), which is about an aristocratic Bostonian woman and the twelve-year-old boy who is in her charge.

Stafford continued to publish short stories, including "In the Zoo," through the mid-1950s, in magazines and collections. From 1959 until his death in 1963, she was married to the *New Yorker* columnist A. J. Liebling. In 1969, she published *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford*, which won a Pulitzer Prize. By this time, however, she had stopped writing fiction, concentrating instead on reviews, articles, and essays. Biographers have speculated a variety of reasons for this shift, ranging from Stafford's health problems and heavy drinking to her desire to keep to the realistic style of writing that was no longer the dominant form in the 1960s. Stafford spent the final fifteen years of her life in relative seclusion at her home in eastern Long Island, dying of complications following a stroke in 1979 and leaving her estate to her housekeeper.

Plot Summary

Sitting in a zoo in Denver, Colorado, two sisters eat popcorn while watching a blind polar bear, a family of grizzlies, a black bear, and a group of monkeys. The narrator's sister Daisy is accustomed to seeing off her sister in Denver every other year, while the narrator is on her way back east. Daisy comments that the polar bear reminds her of someone named Mr. Murphy. This comment sets the sisters to thinking about their childhood in Adams, a small town fifty miles north of Denver. Orphaned at eight and ten, the sisters grew up there with a foster mother unrelated to them called Mrs. Placer, or Gran, who ran a boarding house in which, like her, all of the boarders complained and gossiped about the rest of the town.

Mr. Murphy was a gentle, jobless Irishman who spent his time drinking, playing cards, and enjoying all of his animals, which ranged from a parrot that spoke Parisian French to two small, "sad and sweet" capuchin monkeys. Before they reached adolescence, the girls loved him and his monkeys, thinking of them like "husbands and fathers and brothers." One day Mr. Murphy gives them a present of a half-collie, half-Labrador retriever puppy. At first, Gran would not hear of keeping him, imagining all of the horrible things he would do, but she agrees after she hears that the puppy would make a good watchdog.

The puppy, whom the girls named Laddy, made a great mess at first but learned quickly and soon Laddy became a charming dog, escorting them to school and enjoying himself with hunting weekends in the mountains. Gran became angry after one of these long weekends, however, and decided to train Laddy herself, renaming him "Caesar" and taking him away from the girls. By disciplining him with a chain and occasional cuffs on the ears, Gran changed the Caesar into a powerful attack dog. The police demanded that he be muzzled after he began biting and harassing strangers at the house, but Gran largely ignored them.

Upset, the girls did not tell Mr. Murphy what was wrong because they knew, from the time a boy squirted his skunk with a water pistol and Mr. Murphy responded by throwing a rock at the boy's back, that he could become dangerously angry. However, Mr. Murphy heard about the dog's transformation anyway and determined, enraged, to confront Gran. When Mr. Murphy arrived outside of Gran's house with the eldest of his monkeys on his shoulder, Gran released Caesar, who pounced on the monkey and killed it. Mr. Murphy began sobbing; very early the next morning he poisoned Caesar's meat, killing him.

When the sisters saw the dog dying, they ran into the mountains wishing they could flee the town. The police arrested Mr. Murphy while he was giving the monkey a solemn requiem mass, but no one felt sorry for Gran, and he was released. Mr. Murphy withdrew even more from society, giving his monkey a daily requiem, and the sisters could never visit him again. Gran continued to manipulate the girls, undermining the narrator's relationship with a boyfriend and ruining her pleasure from being cast in a play.

At the zoo, the sisters discuss why they never ran away, and while Daisy cites the difficulties of the Great Depression, the sisters agree that the real problem was the guilt that Gran made them feel. The narrator muses about the long-term effects of the years with Gran, and the sisters rush to catch a cab so Daisy can take her adrenaline injection for asthma. They both feel overwhelmed and affected by the experience, but as they board the train they gossip about the porter in a manner similar to that of Gran and the boarders. The narrator writes Daisy a letter from the train about how nothing can be as bad now that Gran is dead, while a Roman Catholic priest waits for the writing table. The narrator then breaks out in an "unholy giggle," picking up a gossip column to disguise the real reason for her laughter, whatever it may be.

Summary

"In the Zoo" is a short story about two orphaned sisters forced to live with a family friend who teaches them lessons of negativity, suffering, and cruelty. The perseverance and hope at the core of the sisters allows them to rise above their situation, although they bear the scars of their childhood forever.

As the story begins, two sisters - the narrator, and the other named Daisy - sit on a bench at the Denver Zoo and watch a blind polar bear, a rambunctious black bear, some grizzly bears, and a group of monkeys. The sisters meet every other year as the narrator visits Daisy who then accompanies her to Denver to wait for her train back East.

As the sisters watch the antics of the animals, they are struck by the resemblance of the polar bear to a man named Mr. Murphy from their childhood. The mention of Mr. Murphy's name sends each sister into a private reverie about the childhood spent in the small town of Adams, Colorado about an hour's drive north of Denver.

The sisters were orphaned at the ages of eight and ten and were placed in the care of a woman named Mrs. Placer, who was a friend of their grandmother. All the girls have when their father dies is a small life insurance policy, but Mrs. Placer takes the girls in because she had been widowed and needs the money to supplement her income running a boardinghouse. Mrs. Placer insists the girls call her Gran although they are not related to her and she shows no particular fondness or kindness toward the girls.

Surrounded only by the sad, lonely residents of the boardinghouse, the sisters do their chores and schoolwork with no encouragement, only punishment and belittling behavior, and they seek the company of Mr. Murphy, a kind, unemployed Irishman who lives by the railroad tracks. Mr. Murphy has a small zoo of animals in his care, including a French-speaking parrot and two capuchin monkeys.

The girls grow to love Mr. Murphy and consider him and his little menagerie as their own family. Mr. Murphy receives a half-collie/ half-Labrador puppy one day and offers it to the girls who are amazed when Gran lets them bring the puppy home. Gran weighs the pros and cons of bringing a dog into the house but decides affirmatively when the concept of the dog being a good watchdog is presented.

The sisters revel in their new pet named Laddy who learns quickly, walks the girls to school, and enjoys himself on hunting weekends with one of his own dog buddies. Gran does not approve of Laddy's behavior when he returns from his weekend adventures and decides to re-train the dog to be more disciplined. Gran changes Laddy's name to Caesar and makes the dog sleep on the floor in her bedroom every night now instead of letting him sleep with the sisters.

Gran's disciplinary actions soon turn the once lovable Laddy into a ferocious attack dog who continually bites and growls at strangers and neighbors alike. The police demand

that Caesar be muzzled and Gran accommodates the order only when Caesar's growls warn her that the police are coming toward the house.

The sisters continue to visit Mr. Murphy and tell him that Laddy is fine even though nothing could be further from the truth. Mr. Murphy's legendary bad temper is easily roused and the girls want to avoid any potential problems should Mr. Murphy find out what has happened to Laddy.

The girls' ruse does not fool Mr. Murphy very long because word of Caesar's behavior has spread around town. One day Mr. Murphy accompanies the sisters home to speak to Gran about the dog's treatment and newly vicious behavior. Mr. Murphy arrives at Gran's house carrying his monkey, Shannon, on his shoulders.

At the sight of the unusual visitors, Gran releases Caesar who immediately leaps up at the monkey, killing it in just a few shakes. Gran half-heartedly reprimands Caesar and Mr. Murphy takes the lifeless body of the monkey away from the house. The very next day Caesar dies after eating some poisoned meat left at the house by the distraught Mr. Murphy. The sisters cannot bear to watch the final jerking movements of the dog and run away to hide in the mountains. Mr. Murphy is arrested for the crime just as he is in the middle of a requiem mass for his monkey but is released because no one in the town can blame him for retribution.

After Shannon's death, Mr. Murphy becomes even more reclusive and the sisters are forbidden to spend any more time with him. Gran becomes even crueler with age and belittles every thing the girls want to do, which includes dating boys and taking part in school plays. The sisters end their reverie and talk about why they did not ever try to escape from Gran's house. The practical reasons of their ages and no possibility of employment due to the Great Depression at the time seem to pale when compared to the dysfunctional lives they lived in Gran's house. The girls sold Gran's house upon her death and never returned to the town.

Daisy suddenly experiences an asthma attack and the sisters find a cab and move toward the train station as Daisy takes her adrenaline injection. Both young women are glad to have Daisy's asthma to distract them from reliving the past one more time. At the train station, the sisters comment on some of the passengers and subtly project that the porter will misplace the narrator's luggage because he knows there is a twenty-dollar gold piece packed inside.

The sisters say their goodbyes and the narrator intercepts a Catholic priest for the writing table in the train car and writes a letter to Daisy confirming her love for her and how much better life is now that Gran is dead. The narrator finishes her letter, relinquishes the writing table to the priest, and moves to a seat by the window where she watches the fields of alfalfa, which she is convinced are covers for marijuana crops. The narrator begins to laugh and cannot stop herself even after conjuring up the memory of the blind polar bear in the zoo and finally picks up the newspaper so that she can hide behind the gossip column.

Analysis

The author uses the zoo to symbolize the cages in which all living creatures must exist to some degree. The zoo animals are kept on display for the entertainment and amusement of people even though it is a completely unnatural environment for them. People too are caged by circumstances beyond their control as in the case of the two sisters who are forced to live in a loveless household when they are orphaned at early ages. The sisters, just like the zoo animals, are forced to rely on the care of others who have no real love for them or their well-being. The author draws a comparison between the blind polar bear and Mr. Murphy as wounded creatures that are mostly gentle until they are attacked in some way. Clearly Mr. Murphy had a tremendous impact on the sisters who still remember him easily many years since he had been a part of their childhood.

The sisters finally escape Gran's grasp when the woman dies but her influence remains on the girls even to the present day as evidenced by their catty remarks about the people at the train station and the mistrust of the porter. The narrator even suspects that the fields of alfalfa are hiding huge growths of marijuana the thought of which sends her into hysterical laughter. It is ironic that the gossip the sisters hated hearing in Gran's boardinghouse is the thing found in the newspaper column that finally calms the narrator from her laughing fit. The impact of a child's environment is huge on the psyche of the adult he or she becomes and, although the sisters escape the physical cage of their childhood the mental and emotional confines persist with unperceived impact.

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Characters

Mr. Beaver

One of Gran's boarders, Mr. Beaver leaves for the Y. M. C. A. after Caesar attacks him in the dining room.

Blind Polar Bear

The blind polar bear at the zoo reminds the sisters of Mr. Murphy and inspires their reminiscences. "Patient and despairing," he is an object of scorn, called a "'back number,'" or something out-of-date, by a farmer and the monkeys across from him. Why the polar bear reminds them of Mr. Murphy, aside from the fact that he is scorned by the gossiping society of monkeys, is one of the intriguing aspects of the story.

Caesar

When he is a puppy, before Gran changes his name to Caesar and makes him an attack dog, Laddy is a genial and charming puppy. The sisters received him as a present from Mr. Murphy, and they treat him with love, pampering him and allowing him to go away for long hunting weekends. After Gran takes charge of him, however, chaining him to the house and cuffing him on the ears when he misbehaves, the dog rapidly becomes an "overbearing, military, efficient, loud-voiced Teuton," which is like a description of a German soldier. Gran's philosophy with Caesar is that, "A dog can have morals like a human," but his morals rapidly become nothing but viciousness and ruthlessness.

Clancy

The black bear in the zoo is "a rough-and-tumble, brawling blowhard," whose roaring bravado would make him a man of action were he a human.

Daisy

Two years older than her sister the narrator, Daisy "lives with a happy husband and two happy sons" in a town two hundred miles west of Denver. The girls had moved there to work at a dude camp, or a ranch that city people visit, after Grandma died; Daisy presumably stayed there while her sister went east. Clumsy and awkward as a child, Daisy is asthmatic as an adult and needs to carry around injections of adrenaline. She is extremely close to her sister despite the fact that they see each other very infrequently, and they share the bond of helping each other through the "terror and humiliation" of their childhood. When the time comes to leave her sister at the end of the

story, Daisy reveals how much she cares about her sister by clinging to her on the train platform.

Jimmy Gilmore

Jimmy is a boyfriend of the narrator's, but Gran makes the narrator uncomfortable about the relationship, and it ends soon afterwards.

Gran

Gran, which is what Mrs. Placer asks the girls to call her, is the sisters' foster mother, whom the narrator describes as "possessive, unloving, scornful, complacent." A childhood friend of their grandmother, she takes in the orphaned sisters and becomes the beneficiary of their parents' life insurance policy, which the girls have been told is quite meager. Gran is a childless widow who moved to Colorado for the sake of her dying, tubercular husband, and she spends her time gossiping about the people of Adams. An extremely powerful and effective manipulator, Gran surrounds herself with people loyal to her by making them feel that she is a good-hearted and self-sacrificing person. Her main method of keeping the girls under her thumb is to make them feel guilty, convincing them that they owe her for the sacrifice she has made in taking care of them.

The narrator provides a one-sided evaluation of Gran, and neither she nor Daisy acknowledges any gratitude to her for bringing them up. Although a reader might decide that Gran is at least somewhat generous and motherly, the narrator makes a strong case for her foster mother's basic cruelty by providing numerous examples of her slyness and hypocrisy. Gran constantly urges her foster daughters and her boarders to resent others. She gets what she wants by tricking and deceiving those around her. Her only motivation for doing any good deeds is money (although the sisters' parents' life insurance policy is apparently a pittance) and an excuse to feel self-righteous. The most horrific example of Gran's pitiless nature, however, comes at the dramatic moment when she allows Caesar to kill Mr. Murphy's monkey. The fact that none of the townspeople have any sympathy for Gran after Mr. Murphy kills Caesar reveals that they, like the narrator, believe her to have purposefully killed the monkey. This episode serves to illustrate the most damning flaws of her character.

Laddy

See Caesar

Mr. Murphy

A "gentle alcoholic ne'er-do-well," Mr. Murphy is the girls' close friend and a fellow victim of Gran's cruelty. Gran calls him "black Irish," which refers to Irish people with dark hair

but has a vague connotation of Spanish roots. She is right that he has very heavy drinking habits, since he is drunk nearly all of his waking hours. He loves his animals very deeply and protectively, but his brand of love is not possessive or demanding, which is why the girls think of him and his monkeys as representing the idealized male figures in their lives. On the other hand, however, Mr. Murphy has the capacity to become quite violent when he is angry, and he is antisocial to the point that he is unable to function.

The sisters have difficulty telling him much or confiding in him, for example, about Gran's transformation of Laddy, because of this unpredictable side, and because they cannot find a way to speak directly or earnestly to him. Their idealization of Mr. Murphy is not solely the result of having no other male figures in their lives, however, and the story reveals a great admiration for his kindness and sweet nature. Whatever his faults and peculiarities, he is a kind and generous man who cares about them. He is the right kind of figure to balance with the part of their lives dominated by Gran, and he is vital to the girls' difficult struggle to grow up healthily and independently.

Narrator

The unnamed narrator of the story is a humorous and affable but socially awkward woman who is still attempting to escape her difficult childhood in rural Colorado. She is similar in character and temperament to her sister Daisy, and they have an extremely strong bond stretching back to their traumatic childhood. However, while Daisy has stayed west of Denver and started a family where the sisters had worked after Gran died, the narrator has moved east where she is a "spinster," or an older unmarried woman.

Pondering why they stayed in Adams so long, the narrator and Daisy decide that it was partly due to the financial hardships of the Great Depression, but chiefly because Gran connived to make them feel guilty and trapped. There is occasionally a sense that the narrator is biased and perhaps somewhat bitter in her recollections of Gran, but this bitterness is grounded in numerous examples of Gran's cruel parenting style. The only provocations the sisters seem to have given her were their lack of social graces and awkwardness, which the narrator and her sister retain to some degree in their middle age, and these traits are due in large part to the guilt and insecurity that Gran made them feel. When she criticizes the train porter and mocks the Roman Catholic priest at the end of the story, the narrator reveals that she has absorbed a number of Gran's personality traits, and that the difficulties of her childhood still haunt her.

Pastor

The pastor of the sisters' church tries to raise their spirits about going to live with Mrs. Placer, candidly stressing her Christian goodness and "sacrifice" in taking care of the girls.

Mrs. Placer

See Gran

Shannon

Shannon is Mr. Murphy's elder capuchin monkey, the one that Caesar kills when Mr. Murphy is about to confront Gran. "Serious and humanized, so small and sad and sweet," the two monkeys are touching and gentle creatures that the sisters consider like the male figures of their childhood.

Themes

Childhood Trauma

Daisy and the narrator's psychological trauma, stemming from their childhood with Gran, is not confined to their flashback, and it does not end with Gran's death. In fact, it continues to trouble them into their middle age, as is clear from the immediate urgency of the sisters' memories when Daisy mentions Mr. Murphy, from the intensity of their emotional farewell, and from the earnest letter that the narrator writes to her sister from the train. The sisters are no longer traumatized and defenseless orphans, but they are still attempting to deal with the "terror and humiliation" of their childhood.

The sisters' close relationship with each other and their abilities to build new lives for themselves suggest some hope in their attempt to move beyond their earlier psychological trauma. However, there are a number of clues at the end of the story to suggest that the narrator and her sister have not emerged from their difficult childhood at all. The sisters' somewhat snide comments about the porter at the end of the story, which sound very much like the reaction that Gran and her boarders might have to the situation, support this reading of the story, as does the narrator's final laugh, if one takes its "unholy giggle" to be similar to Gran's.

Confinement and Control

Confinement and control, including power over those who have been excluded and shunned from society, are common themes in Stafford's short story. Mr. Murphy, his animals, the animals in the zoo, Daisy, and the narrator have all been terrorized with harassment and scorn and confined in various kinds of cages. Their personality types are part of the reason for their separation from those around them. Mr. Murphy is a good example of an outcast with little desire to integrate himself into normal society. However, Stafford emphasizes that it is mainly due to society's manipulative cruelty that confined characters feel too guilty and insecure to escape from their tormentors. Gran and her boarders, like the monkeys in the zoo, represent the subtle and possessive nature of the social structures that confine people into obedience and rob them of their independent joys.

However, the themes of confinement and control in Stafford's story are more complex than a straightforward tale of two orphans struggling against an oppressive society represented by Gran and her gossiping boarders. Characters in the story such as Laddy and the girls tend to internalize their own confinement until they actually believe that it is right and proper. This is why Caesar can gradually become such a vicious dog, and why there is the suggestion that the sisters have internalized some of Gran's habits. For Stafford, the controlling mindset is like a disease, capable of spreading into the psychology of the animal or person being confined and making it very difficult for them to escape even from themselves.

Love and Companionship

Related to the themes of confinement and control, discussed above, is Stafford's commentary on love and companionship, of which the most important examples are the girls' relationship to Mr. Murphy, their relationship to Gran, and their relationship with each other. Everyone in the story, but particularly those confined by or excluded from society, needs some kind of love and companionship, but Stafford stresses that there are two very different ways that people and animals can provide this for each other. The first is the possessive form of companionship, which the narrator calls "unloving," represented by Gran. This is a protective, but also stifling and manipulative, type of love that leads to sickening guilt and even, as with Caesar, horrible violence. The second type of companionship is that which Mr. Murphy shares with the girls, and the narrator thinks of this type of love as an idealized way of getting along with "no strings attached."

Stafford uses these various types of companionship to comment on the true nature of love and its different forms. The downsides of the undemanding form of love, which the narrator associates with all of the male figures missing from her life, are its danger of disappearing and its potential for loneliness. Although Mr. Murphy is a kind and loving companion, he is isolated from society and the girls cannot depend on him. Gran's more constant form of love, however, is so self-serving and manipulative as to not really be love at all, although she does take care of the girls throughout their youth. The strongest loving connection in the story is that between Daisy and her sister. Although they see each other quite infrequently and their relationship is undemanding, theirs is a lifelong and dependable connection that seems to have been more vital than anything else in their struggles to be happy and healthy people.

Style

Realism

With its attention to detail, its logical narrative, and its realistic psychological character portraits, "In the Zoo" can be considered a work of realism, a type of literature that stresses accurate representations corresponding to real life. Many writers were beginning to focus on alternative modes of storytelling when "In the Zoo" was published in 1953, but Stafford remained within a tradition of short fiction dating back to the nineteenth century. The signs of Stafford's realism include her specific description of animals such as the blind polar bear, her descriptive characterizations of unique personalities like those of Mr. Murphy and Gran, and her extended descriptions of the landscape, such as that of the mountainous town of Adams.

Symbolism

One of the most important techniques through which Stafford is able to develop her themes and bring to life the story of the sisters' childhood is her sophisticated use of symbolism. There are a number of examples of an object or event that suggests or represents something else in the story, including Stafford's use of the animals in the Denver Zoo to symbolize Mr. Murphy and Gran. The characteristics of these symbols allow Stafford to comment on what the symbolic objects represent in the girls' lives and in the themes of the story; it is significant, for example, that the symbols for the figures from their childhood are caged in a zoo, because this suggests that their childhood is somewhat contained and caged in their minds.

Stafford uses animals as symbols throughout the flashback to the sisters' childhood as well. Mr. Murphy's monkey Shannon seems to symbolize some "small and sad and sweet" aspect of the girls' childhood which is murdered by Gran and Caesar, while Laddy's transformation into Caesar symbolizes the manner in which Gran manipulates and changes people. Stafford's symbolism is often quite complex, however, and many of her symbols have multiple meanings. Thus, for example, Gran's training of Laddy could also symbolize, in a more abstract way, the violence that results from inhibiting and controlling a natural personality. One of the benefits of Stafford's sophisticated use of symbolism is its ability to portray the subtlety of such themes.

Historical Context

America in the 1950s

The cultural environment in the United States during the 1950s, the era of the "baby-boomers," or sons and daughters of World War II veterans, was relatively conservative. War hero Dwight D. Eisenhower was president for most of the decade, and he was very popular due in large part to the economic prosperity of the period. Set against the complacency and consumerism characteristic of the conservative mainstream, however, was an environment of racial tension and a battle for civil rights. Moreover, exciting innovations in the arts, including rock and roll music, bebop jazz, "Beat" literature, and abstract impressionism in the fine arts, took hold among the younger generation and the various groups of people dissatisfied with mainstream culture.

Like the country itself, literature enthusiasts were divided between conservative and liberal tendencies. Some American writers and readers became involved in innovative movements occurring in Europe, and some forged the new and uniquely American style known as Beat literature, in which new spiritual philosophies and technical experimentation produced daring poetry and fiction. Allen Ginsberg, a brilliant poet and critic, became known as a spokesperson for the Beat movement, while the Beat novelist Jack Kerouac wrote influential and widely-read novels about a defiant younger generation. While new views of literature were being formed and writers were experimenting with different styles, some preferred to continue the realist tradition stretching back to nineteenth-century authors Gustave Flaubert and Henry James. Stafford was one of these authors, producing realistic short stories and novels in a traditional style.

Small Town America during the late 1920s and the Great Depression

In the United States, the decade following the Allied victory in World War I was characterized by a prosperous economy and an increase in conservatism, although there were also a number of breakthroughs in women's rights. Alcohol was prohibited between 1920 and 1933, which led to a large illegal racketeering network. The nineteenth amendment gave women the right to vote for the first time in 1920. Women's rights, prohibition, and economic prosperity were not as central to life in rural America, however, as they were in big cities. A small town in rural Colorado, like Adams in "In the Zoo," would have been slower to see the effects of these changes, and it would not have felt the effect of the stock market crash of 1929 as rapidly as big cities full of stockholders.

When the effects of the Great Depression of the 1930s were felt in rural and small town America, however, they were often very severe. Prices, values, and incomes dropped throughout the country, and although a great proportion of working class jobs remained

stable, many farmers and low-income workers found themselves out of work and/or extremely poor for many years at a time. Although President Franklin Roosevelt instituted a variety of reforms meant to create new jobs and expand social services, it was not until the United States entered World War II in 1941 that it recovered from the economic downturn. Small town residents would often be forced to make sacrifices and work long, difficult hours to make ends meet. The situation was perhaps worst for ethnic minority groups, particularly African Americans, who encountered widespread oppression and racism.

Critical Overview

Critical reactions to Stafford's writings have been largely favorable, although Stafford's novels have been criticized for their lack of distance from autobiographical material and their tendency to be overwritten. Joyce Carol Oates applies this criticism to Stafford's short stories in her 1979 essay "The Interior Castle: The Art of Jean Stafford's Short Fiction," in which she wrote, "Some of the stories, it must be admitted, are marred by an arch, over-written self-consciousness, too elaborate, too artificial, to have arisen naturally from the fable at hand." However, Stafford's short stories from the mid-1950s were generally reviewed very positively, and *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* won a Pulitzer Prize in 1970. "In the Zoo" won the O. Henry Memorial Award for best short story of the year in 1955, and Oates cites its climax as a brilliant moment from one of Stafford's finest "[s]ubdued and analytical and beautifully-constructed" stories.

Critics consider Stafford a realist writer, and, as Jeanette W. Mann writes in her 1996 *Dictionary of Literary Biography* entry on Stafford: "The critical response to Stafford's fiction has also been within the conventions of the realistic tradition; the standard critical readings of her work are historical and biographical." Criticism that specifically discusses "In the Zoo" tends to take the position that the sisters have not escaped the traumatic events of their childhood. In her *The Interior Castle: The Art and Life of Jean Stafford* (1992), Ann Hulbert writes that the story centers around "an insidious destruction of spirit that rendered her characters . . . anxious souls ill equipped to face the world." Similarly, Mary Ann Wilson argues in *Jean Stafford: A Study of the Short Fiction* (1996):

As the story moves toward its bitter conclusion, Stafford makes it clear that while the sisters may have separated themselves geographically from their nightmarish childhood, emotionally they are still trapped there□to an extent even they do not realize.

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1

Critical Essay #1

Trudell is an independent scholar with a bachelor's degree in English literature. In the following essay, Trudell explores the feminist implications of Stafford's short story, arguing that it retains a traditional understanding of gender roles.

"In the Zoo" is a story about confinement and oppression, and a number of characters including Laddy, Mr. Murphy, and the sisters find their spirits constricted and their joys inhibited. Laddy is denied his weekend hunting trips and freedom of movement, Mr. Murphy is robbed of his pet monkey and his sense of justice, and the girls are made to feel guilty about a wide variety of pleasures ranging from maintaining friendships to dating to acting in plays. The elements that are confined and suppressed in the story share a common characteristic, however: they are very often related to masculinity. Stafford dramatizes the control and suppression of elements she associates with men and manliness, a practice that raises questions about her views on gender relations and feminism. A close reading of "In the Zoo" reveals that, although masculine symbols and characters are thoroughly suppressed, Stafford's story is not at all a feminist text, and it actually treats freedom and joy as exclusively masculine ideas.

The clearest example of manliness being suppressed, controlled, and denied comes when Gran takes charge of Laddy. Before his transformation, Laddy is a portrait of masculine virtue; he is "exceptionally handsome" and charming, he escorts the sisters to school and protects them, he has no feminine "spherical softness," and he even has an "aristocratically long" nose, which is a symbol signifying a long penis. He has a "bronzy, lustrous black" coat and his swaggering style as a chaperone for the girls makes him sound almost like a man of state, although he is also a strong and slightly wild dog of action able to make friends easily. He finds a hunting companion in the firemen's dog Mess, a red beast as unruly as his name implies, and comes back from his hunting trips "spent and filthy." These excursions, which Stafford calls "randy, manly holidays," enrage Gran enough to change Laddy's name and transform him into a cruel-tempered attack dog.

Laddy's alter ego Caesar, while not virtuous, kind, or charming, is also an embodiment of masculinity in its most vicious and violent sense. He becomes a "military" male, "overbearing . . . efficient, loud-voiced," constantly harassing and attacking other men. Stafford is careful to emphasize Caesar's human qualities, describing him as "dismayingly intelligent and a shade smart-alecky," and citing Gran's declaration, "A dog can have morals like a human," as the motivation behind her training him. Laddy is also "intelligent," however, and Caesar is not particularly more "human" than Laddy except in the sense that he denies his natural pleasures. Both alter egos are expressions of human masculinity, and both take on men's roles in the girls' lives.

Caesar and Laddy are not the principle men in the girls' lives, however; Mr. Murphy and his two capuchin monkeys are the chief male figures that Daisy and the narrator think of as their "husbands and fathers and brothers." As the narrator points out, before she and Daisy reached puberty, "We loved [Mr. Murphy] and we hoped to marry him when we

grew up." Theirs is a hearty and undemanding love, "jocose and forthright, [with] no strings attached," and the girls feel the same romantic way about the monkeys, which fascinate them and draw their deepest affections. Calling them and Mr. Murphy "three little, ugly, dark, secret men," the narrator emphasizes that they are the opposite of Gran since they "minded their own business and let us mind ours." This darkness, ugliness, and secretiveness also seems tied to their masculinity. Like Laddy/Caesar, Mr. Murphy has a dark and violent side that comes out when he encounters cruelty; after Laddy is transformed into Caesar, Mr. Murphy becomes something of a dark masculine "hero" in the sisters' lives when he kills Caesar after Caesar kills the monkey.

There are a number of reasons why Stafford emphasizes the influence, both symbolic and actual, of masculinity in the girls' lives. Partly it is a technique to make their psychological portrait more accurate and compelling, since they are orphans with no father figure and no constant and supportive male figure in their lives. Mr. Murphy's "noncommittal" and undemanding role, as well as the violence and abruptness of the masculine forces in the story, seem appropriate to girls unused to any committed male presence, and Stafford is aware of this as she depicts their personalities. The sisters' view of masculinity as something inconstant also helps to explain why the narrator cannot maintain a long-term sexual relationship, either with her adolescent boyfriend Jimmy Gilmore or, seemingly, with anyone in her middle age.

What is perhaps most interesting about Stafford's treatment of gender in the story, however, is that she consistently uses examples and symbols of masculinity to represent freedom and joy. When she first introduces him, the narrator describes her and Daisy's relationship with Mr. Murphy, the only loving male in their lives, as the "one thin filament of instinct" they have left. She goes on to tell the story of the one present he gave them, their beloved Laddy□a name that suggests the dog's boyish, "sanguine" wildness□is duly transformed by Gran and killed along with their favorite monkey, leaving them deprived of their full-blooded escape to freedom and joy. Like Caesar, they are chained to Gran's boarding house by their feelings of guilt and inadequacy. They see the mountains not as signs of freedom but as imposing, massive cages that confine them, and when they hike up to them after Caesar's death, it becomes clear that their own freedom has died as well; Daisy feels powerless and confined enough to wail: "If only we were something besides kids! Besides girls!"

It should come as no surprise that Daisy wishes she were a boy here, since Stafford has persistently associated instinct, pleasure, and freedom with masculinity. In fact, the author begins to establish this association in the opening images of the story, before she introduces the narrator and Daisy, with her description of the "blustery, scoundrelly, half-likable bravado" of Clancy the black bear. The only zoo animal approaching mightiness and freedom, he releases "Vesuvian" roars at "his audience of children and mothers." Stafford writes, "If he were to be reincarnated in human form, he would be a man of action, possibly a football coach, probably a politician." Clancy could never be symbolized as a woman of action in the symbolism of "In the Zoo" because this kind of active, instinctive freedom is reserved for masculine symbols and male characters.

Since it is related to instinct and viciousness as well as freedom, masculinity is naturally also associated with the greatest displays of power in the story, which is why Caesar is the instrument of the most terrifying moment in the girls' childhood. However, it is only through Gran's elaborate training that Caesar is capable of murdering Shannon the capuchin monkey, and, like Mr. Murphy, Caesar's vicious side only emerges when he is subjected to cruelty. Mr. Murphy, meanwhile, is rather harsh in throwing a rock into a boy's back and poisoning Caesar, but these actions are not displays of power; Mr. Murphy is no match for Gran, and like his monkeys, he is actually extremely vulnerable. Indeed, masculine violence is generally not a source of power in Stafford's story. Manly characters become violent when they are oppressed or confined, but they are mainly locked in a cage, isolated from society, or killed off by the end of the story.

In fact, almost all of the masculine symbols and characters in the story are conquered and confined by the manipulative feminine power represented by Gran. The story's all-knowing, self-martyred matriarch, Gran is like a great mother bird, and her house is like a big nest, except that Gran controls and punishes her nestlings, making them "trod on eggs that a little bird had told them were bad." The problem is that this power is not really power at all, just as Gran's love for the girls is not really love at all. It is an inhibiting and self-defeating need to manipulate others that leads to none of the joy and freedom that is associated with masculine power. The fact that maleness tends to be oppressed and caged in the story, therefore, does not imply any triumph of feminine power. Instead, it suggests that the female characters in the story have trapped their own freedom and joy, which is why the sisters, too, are animals in the zoo, being watched and ridiculed by the gossiping monkeys.

Few critics would call Stafford a feminist, and in her later years Stafford was actually critical of the women's movement, arguing against the concept of "women's writing." In her fiction, Stafford not only remained within the male-dominated realist and symbolist traditions, but frequently portrayed women as weak, insecure, and powerless. In her 1987 book *Innocence and Estrangement in the Fiction of Jean Stafford*, Maureen Ryan argues that Stafford tends use women as symbols for the loneliness, alienation, and insecurity throughout her fiction. Therefore, one might expect a short story about two middle aged women revisiting their childhoods to be full of confined and oppressed freedoms and joys. What is surprising about "In the Zoo," however, is that it refuses to envision instinctive, independent joys as attainable or even remotely possible for feminine characters. Like its main characters, the story is trapped inside a convention in which freedom and joy are exclusively associated with men and masculinity.

Source: Scott Trudell, Critical Essay on "In the Zoo," in *Short Stories for Students*, Thomson Gale, 2005.

Topics for Further Study

Research the economic and social conditions of the Great Depression, focusing on its effects on small towns in the American West. What lifestyle changes were necessary for widows like Gran, or orphans like Daisy and the narrator? How did those unable to find work survive? How desperate were conditions for various types of people in a town like Adams? Discuss the defining elements of this period and the effects that its economic troubles might have had on young women like the sisters of "In the Zoo."

There is some ambiguity in Stafford's story over whether Daisy and the narrator manage to emerge from the psychological difficulties of their childhood, or whether they continue to be traumatized in their middle age. How do you feel about the sisters' ability to deal with their childhood in later life? Describe how each sister has reacted to growing up with Gran and discuss how this experience continues to shade their later lives. What is Stafford implying about the effects of childhood trauma? How does she address the difficulties of overcoming a childhood characterized by an oppressive and manipulative caretaker?

Animals are important symbols in Stafford's story, expressing the main themes and bringing their meaning to life. Using a dictionary of "archetypes," or universal symbols, explore the associations of the animals of "In the Zoo." Then, discuss what the various animals represent in Stafford's story and why you think she uses each animal for that role. How do the archetypical meanings of these animals compare and contrast to their functions in Stafford's story? What other symbols does Stafford use in her story, and how do they relate to universal archetypes?

Many of Stafford's short stories explore a difficult childhood, often from the standpoint of an adult dealing with traumatic memories. Read several of her other stories, available in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford*, such as "The Liberation,""The Tea Time of Stouthearted Ladies,""The Philosophy Lesson," and "The Mountain Day." Discuss these stories in relation to "In the Zoo." How do they compare in style and technique? How are their themes similar; how are they different? How does Stafford treat childhood trauma in each story? How do the female characters differ in their ability to cope with this trauma and move past it?

Stafford often uses events from her own life directly or indirectly in her fiction. Read about Stafford's life in a source such as David Roberts's *Jean Stafford: A Biography* (1988), and speculate about the ways in which "In the Zoo" may be autobiographical. How do you think Stafford's own childhood affected her treatment of the events of the story? What new insight about the story do you gain from what you read in Stafford's biography? Discuss how the autobiographical elements of "In the Zoo" enhance or detract from the quality of the story.

Compare and Contrast

1930s: The Great Depression is in full swing and millions of Americans struggle to keep their finances under control.

1950s: The booming postwar economy of the 1950s is encouraging many middle class families to move to the suburbs, although economic conditions remain difficult for many lower class families.

Today: The United States is the only economic and military superpower, and a large segment of the population continues to enjoy a prosperous economic environment despite the downturns in the economy following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

1930s: Racism and racial oppression is widespread and the Ku Klux Klan is actively lynching African Americans.

1950s: There is a great deal of racism in the United States, but the Civil Rights movement is beginning to win major legal breakthroughs, including the Supreme Court decision in 1954 to integrate all schools.

Today: All races are equal under the law but there is still economic and social inequity among the races in the United States. Affirmative action legislation encouraging integration in the workplace and schools is one way that politicians and activists are addressing the issue.

1930s: There is considerable anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment in the United States. Large numbers of Irish people had immigrated during the Irish potato famine of 1845 to 1921, and many of these immigrants suffer discrimination, resentment, and unemployment during the Great Depression.

1950s: Anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment is somewhat less pronounced than it was before World War II, but it will continue to be a major issue when the first Irish Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, is elected in 1960.

Today: Forty-four million Americans identify themselves as having some Irish heritage, and anti-Irish, anti-Catholic feelings are nowhere near as widespread as they were in the 1930s or 1950s.

What Do I Read Next?

Generally recognized as Stafford's finest novel, *The Mountain Lion* (1947) is the story of a lonely girl who writes fiction and poetry that no one else understands, following her experiences growing up with her brother in California and Colorado.

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) is a classic of Beat literature that follows the radical Dean Moriarty on his quest for thrilling adventures. It was written only five years after "In the Zoo," but it is vastly different in style, theme, and content.

"The Jolly Corner" (1908), by Henry James, is a classic short story of American realism in which a middle-aged man visits his childhood home in New York City after living abroad for many years, finding himself haunted by his past and by what might have been.

Jennifer J. Freyd's *Betrayal Trauma: The Logic of Forgetting Childhood Abuse* (1996) is a learned psychological study of the ways that abuse victims are able to access their childhood memories as adults.

Stafford's short story "The Liberation" (1953), available in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* (1969), focuses on Polly Bay, a thirty-year-old unmarried woman who lives with her aunt and uncle in Adams, Colorado, until she moves east in hopes of escaping from her troubled past.

Further Study

Avila, Wanda, *Jean Stafford: A Comprehensive Bibliography*, Garland Publishing, 1983.

This book lists Stafford's complete writings and cites, with annotations, sources of criticism and biography on the author and her works.

Hassan, Ihab H., "Jean Stafford: The Expense of Style and the Scope of Sensibility," in *Western Review*, Vol. 19, Spring 1955, pp. 185—203.

Hassan's essay discusses Stafford's works with particular attention to the themes of age and childhood.

Jenson, Sid, "The Noble Wicked West of Jean Stafford," in *Western American Literature*, Vol. 7, Winter 1973, pp. 261—70.

Jenson's article argues that Stafford wishes to civilize the American West with East Coast values.

Roberts, David, *Jean Stafford: A Biography*, Little, Brown, 1988.

Roberts's book provides a thorough and definitive biography of Stafford.

Walsh, Mary Ellen Williams, "The Young Girl in the West: Disenchantment in Jean Stafford's Short Fiction," in *Women and Western American Literature*, edited by Helen Winter Stauffer and Susan J. Rosowski, Whitston Publishing, 1982, pp. 230—42.

This article analyzes the Western stories in *The Collected Stories of Jean Stafford* in terms of how they relate to the Western tradition.

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Mann, Jeanette W., "Jean Stafford," in *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 173, *American Novelists Since World War II, Fifth Series*, edited by James R. Giles and Wanda H. Giles, Gale Research, 1996, pp. 260—70.

Oates, Joyce Carol, "The Interior Castle: The Art of Jean Stafford's Short Fiction," in *Jean Stafford: A Study of the Short Fiction*, by Mary Ann Wilson, Twayne Publishers, 1996, pp. 136—39; originally published in *Shenandoah*, Vol. 30, Winter 1979, pp. 61—64.

Ryan, Maureen, *Innocence and Estrangement in the Fiction of Jean Stafford*, Louisiana State University Press, 1987, p. 9.

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Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Short Stories for Students (SSfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, SSfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of SSfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of SSfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in SSfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by SSfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

SSfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Short Stories for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the SSfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Short Stories for Students

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□Night.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from SSfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Short Stories for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Short Stories for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of SSfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Short Stories for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

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