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The Corn Maiden: And Other Nightmares

Von Joyce Carol Oates
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Von Joyce Carol Oates : The Corn Maiden: And Other Nightmares before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Corn Maiden: And Other Nightmares:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.

"shuddering fall" Von Joel, HoldenThe Corn Maiden and Other Nightmares is very well written. None of the stories are especially nightmarish or memorable, save one. I've read all of her work since college. I have championed her and been devoted to it. The last story Hole in the Head, is the nightmarish one because of the facts on trepanning. So if

you're going in for brain surgery anytime, I recommend you read this first. And send a copy of it to everybody you know. And any kind of surgery actually. Her stories here are a half-hearted performance. We go to her writing, because it's enjoyable to read and challenging. I think many of us also read her because we are in pain. She writes about that so eloquently, mystically. Her book to writers is *Faith of a Writer*. It gives us everything, especially beginning writers, need of comfort and wisdom. But....there's this JCO which she uses in her fiction. And in public appearances and finds it amusing that we think of her a certain way, dark, alone, mysterious, awkward and shy, of course it is because she paints herself that way in everything in fiction she writes, for instance, the cameo of her in her novel *Them*. In non-fiction she is herself. If this is an act, who is she in *A Widow's Story*? The tragic horrible death of her husband and how she survives is a cataclysmic thing, a study in sadness and bravery epic. I lost my deepest friend two weeks before I read this book. It saved my life. Unfortunately. Cold comfort. However, I can't tell her JCO character from Rosamund Smith, a pen name or others. Perhaps she does not know this is really her. Another writer I love did this sometime ago. He wrote a passage of such sadness and then told us cold bloodedly how he made us feel what we did, as I was weeping over it. I felt like I had been hit in the stomach by a trusted friend. I don't trust him anymore. So yes in writing there are gimmicks. Sadly writers can be very cruel. But if a minute of a lasting joke can tear a career apart, I don't care. In one of her stories the first line is a huge profanity. It was so funny and shocking. In the novella *Corn Maiden*, there is another opening of profanity. This time it's not funny. It's just tiresome. Some writers you entrust with your heart. She writes deeply and complexly. And some of it is absolutely transcendent. But I approach it with a distance now. Writers owe us nothing. Not even their words. The pressure she faces, the hard work must be immense. The vastness of it. The intense fearless writer of her. It's just that when a person you admire has told you a story that seems as though (s)he wrote it inside your bones, then turns around and laughs in your face, I'm sorry, but then they do owe you something. Nobody likes to get screwed over. Not by anyone. A person can be a fine writer. Period. Watch your step, though. Read her journal for how far in depth she goes for one novel. Her Smith persona writes mystery novels about twins, so maybe like all of us, she is not sure most understandably who she is and is only playing games in her own expensive mind.

Kurzbeschreibung One day an 11-year-old girl disappears. She was playing with friends from school. The crop is strengthened by her blood... Marissa is an innocent girl, with hair the colour of corn-silk. She does not hold others in strange thrall, as some young women do, she obeys her parents, she does not stay late after school, lingering on her walk through the swaying heads of maize. She is the perfect sacrifice... In Joyce Carol Oates' nightmarish world, teenaged girls are empowered by ritual killing, plastic surgeons perform bloodcurdling operations and birthdays rip families apart. Compulsively readable, told in razor-sharp prose, *The Corn Maiden and Other Nightmares* is the brilliant new offspring of one of America's most terrifying imaginations. **Pressestimmen** From Publishers Weekly: The seven stories in this stellar collection from the prolific Oates (*Give Me Your Heart*) may prompt the reader to turn on all the lights or jump at imagined noises. In the excruciating title tale, a novella subtitled *A Love Story*, an adolescent girl leads two of her friends in the kidnapping of 11-year old Marissa Bantry to enact the ritual sacrifice of the Corn Maiden as performed by the Onigara Indians. Children or childhood traumas play significant roles in *Beersheba*, in which a mans past catches up to him, and *Nobody Knows My Name*, in which the birth of a sibling turns nine-year-old Jessicas world upside down. Twins figure in both the eerie *Fossil-Figures* and the harrowing *Death-Cup* with its sly allusions to Edgar Allan Poes William Wilson. In *A Hole in the Head*, a plastic surgeon succumbs to a patients request for an unusual operation with unexpected results. This volume burnishes Oates reputation as a master of psychological dread. **From Kirkus s:** Seven nightmarish tales written over a 15-year period. The first and longest story is the title novella, about Jude Trahern, a precocious and evil eighth-grader who abducts a fellow classmate, Marissa, to enact a ritual human sacrifice. Brilliant, charismatic and severely disturbed, Jude chooses Marissa because of the latters status as an outsider, both new to the school and set apart by her intellectual slowness. Jude enlists two of her friends in the elaborately planned ceremony, but their enthusiasm begins to wane as things start to get spookier and it becomes clear that Jude is serious about following through on the ritual. Meanwhile, Marissas mother, Leah, becomes frantic about her missing daughter and starts to believe in the guilt of Mikal Zallman, a part-time employee at the school whom Jude has cleverly implicated. The story ends on a jarring and somewhat surreal note as Leah and Mikal develop a romantic attachment. Throughout this collection Oates is fascinated by the idea of doubling, for example in *Death-Cup*, in which Lyle King tries to poison his evil twin Alastor with Amanita mushroom soup. Alastor is the evil brother, successful on the outside but unscrupulous within, and Lyle finds out that ultimately they can never be separated. (Its no coincidence that Lyle is designing a new edition, with hand-sewn pages and letterpress printing, of Poes William Wilson.) Similarly, in *Fossil-Figures*, brothers Edgar and Edward Waldman mirror opposing sides of the self, while in the masterful *Beersheba* womanizer Brad gets his comeuppance at the hands of Stacy Lynn, who at first comes on to him seductively and then exacts a terrible revenge. While the shadows of Poe and Hitchcock loom over these tales, its clear that Oates herself is a master at creeping out her readers. **Praise for Joyce Carol Oates:** "Oates is just

a fearless writer ... with her brave heart and her impossibly lush and dead-on imaginative powers." Los Angeles Times "If the phrase 'woman of letters' existed, Joyce Carol Oates would be, foremost in this country, entitled to it." John Updike "What keeps us coming back to Oates country is her uncanny gift of making the page a window, with something happening on the other side that we'd swear was life itself." The New York Times Book "Her genius happens to be giant." The Washington Post Book World "No living American writer echoes the chord of dread plucked by Edgar Allen Poe quite like Joyce Carol Oates." The Plain Dealer (Cleveland)