



Expensive People

Joyce Carol Oates

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Joyce Carol Oates's *Wonderland Quartet* comprises four remarkable novels that explore social class in America and the inner lives of young Americans. In *Expensive People*, Oates takes a provocative and suspenseful look at the roiling secrets of America's affluent suburbs. Set in the late 1960s, this first-person confession is narrated by Richard Everett, a precocious and obese boy who sees himself as a minor character in the alarming drama unfolding around him.

Fascinated by yet alienated from his attractive, self-absorbed parents and the privileged world they inhabit, Richard incisively analyzes his own mismanaged childhood, his pretentious private schooling, his "successful-executive" father, and his elusive mother. In an act of defiance and desperation, eleven-year-old Richard strikes out in a way that presages the violence of ever-younger Americans in the turbulent decades to come.

A National Book Award finalist, *Expensive People* is a stunning combination of social satire and gothic horror. "You cannot put this novel away after you have opened it," said *The Detroit News*. "This is that kind of book—hypnotic, fascinating, and electrifying."

Expensive People is the second novel in the *Wonderland Quartet*. The books that complete this acclaimed series, *A Garden of Earthly Delights*, *them*, and *Wonderland*, are also available from the Modern Library.

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