

# Complete Novels: The Heart is a Lonely Hunter/Reflections in a Golden Eye/The Ballad of the Sad Cafe/The Member of the Wedding/The Clock Without Hands (Library of America)

Carson McCullers

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Complete Novels: The Heart is a Lonely Hunter/Reflections in a Golden Eye/The Ballad of the Sad Cafe/The Member of the Wedding/The Clock Without Hands (Library of America) Carson McCullers When *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter* was published in 1940, Carson McCullers was instantly recognized as one of the most promising writers of her generation. The novels that followed established her as a master of Southern Gothic.

"McCullers' gift," writes Joyce Carol Oates, "was to evoke, through an accumulation of images and musically repeated phrases, the singularity of experience, not to pass judgment on it." McCullers effortlessly conveyed the raw anguish of her characters and the weird beauty of their perceptions. Set in small Georgia towns that are at once precisely observed and mythically resonant, McCullers' novels explore the strange, sometimes grotesque inner lives of characters who are often marginal and misunderstood. Above all, McCullers possessed an unmatched ability to capture the bewilderment and fragile wonder of adolescence.

In *The Heart Is a Lonely Hunter*, an enigmatic deaf-mute draws out the haunted confessions of an itinerant worker, a young girl, a black doctor, and the widowed owner of a small-town café. Two shorter works, *Reflections in a Golden Eye* (1941) and *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1943), use melodramatic scenarios and freakish characters to explore the disfiguring violence of desire. *The Member of the Wedding* (1946), on which the play and film were based, tells of a young girl's fascination with her brother's wedding and is perhaps McCullers' most moving and accomplished novel. *In Clock Without Hands* (1960), the story of a terminally ill druggist, McCullers produces some of her most forceful and indignant social criticism.

Edited by Carlos Dews.



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