



# Them

*Joyce Carol Oates , Elaine Showalter (Introduction)*

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From the 1930s through the race riots of 1967, the members of the Wendall family, living in inner-city Detroit, struggle to understand the obscure forces constantly tearing at their lives and happiness. Winner of the National Book Award.

'When Miss Oates' potent, lifegripping imagination and her skill at narrative are conjoined, as they are pre-eminently in THEM, she is a prodigious writer.' -The Nation

## Them Details

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# From Reader Review Them for online ebook

## Ann Duddy says

I thought it only fair that since I have read a gazillion books in my life time, it would make sense to finally get around to reading Joyce Carol Oates, who has written a gazillion books. So I thought I would start with "Them", which won the National Book Award in the early 70s. (Not to be confused with the movie about giant killer ants of the same name.) Plus, I found this at a local used book store for a dollar and I just couldn't pass up that cover!

Well, let's just say that a)the National Book Awards must have had different standards in those days, or not much to choose from and b) the killer ants would have been more interesting and realistic.

The story centers around a poor family in Detroit who experience hardship and are victimized by the society they live in, the society they want to be in, each other and themselves. The span is about 20 years, beginning in the late 40s or early 50s and ending in the late 60s. I don't want to go into too much detail about the plot, but want to focus more on what Oates was trying to convey, because I'm not sure I know what it was. The characters, every single one of them, are repulsive, the men being downright creepy, especially the main male character Jules and how he treats women he is attracted to. Okay, so not all characters have to be sympathetic, but I never understood what motivated them to act the way they did. Oates seems to have contempt for everyone in the book, especially blacks and it was unclear if her bias was reflective of her characters' fear of them or her own. Characters appeared, playing major roles in the plot and then inexplicably disappear, as if she didn't need them anymore so she just dispatched with them.

Frankly, the only reason I finished this was to see if there was any redemption in the end.

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## Megan Blood says

I made it about 200 pages into this sucker (it's a big book). Her writing is beautiful, which is why I was determined to keep reading. But then I was forced to put the book down for an entire (crazy) weekend, and by Monday I realized that I just didn't care. I had no emotional attachment to any of the characters (who are all incredibly dysfunctional). I just can't see what would possibly be in the next hundreds of pages except more pointless dysfunction and strangely stoic sexual encounters. Not worth it.

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## Tom says

As a stranger in the World According to Joyce Carol Oates, I established one essential fact in reading *them*: The woman is indeed a superb writer. From page one, this novel (published when Oates was 31), pulls you in with its confident rhythms, sharp dialogue, and natural storytelling ease. It's the sordid and surreal chronicle of a "white trash" family in Detroit, spanning the years 1937 to 1967. Loretta Wendall is the family's crude, optimistic matriarch; her children Maureen and Jules struggle to fashion lives for themselves, against the odds, in a rapidly changing America.

*them* is not a for readers seeking warm, sympathetic characters or spiritual uplift; it's quite an ugly book,

though a fascinating and compelling one. You never exactly *care* for Loretta, Maureen, or Jules, but you sure want to see what happens to them.

And oh the things that happen. In the first 60 pages Loretta loses her virginity, wakes up to find her boyfriend shot by her brother, and marries a policeman who helps cover up the crime. There are plane crashes, fires, prostitution, rapes, throat-slittings, mental breakdowns, shootings, and, in a bravura set-piece finale, the '67 Detroit race riots. It's a catalogue of modern Gothic horrors that grows increasingly bizarre as the story progresses.

Not all of it works. A sequence where Jules drives to Texas with Nadine, an upper-middle-class teenager from the suburb of Grosse Pointe, bogs down in the psychodynamics of their twisted relationship. The portrait of '60s campus revolutionaries feels like social parody long past its expiry date. But Oates taps into so many highly charged currents—the violence of American life, the powerlessness of women in society, the inevitable disillusionments of growing up—that the reader can never quite write *them* off as just a crackpot soap opera. The book is disturbing, and it's unforgettable.

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### **Ron Grunberg says**

What can you say about JCO? The most prolific great novelist of our times. She's written probably over a hundred books, all illustrating her depth and wisdom as a writer. She's taken modern icons and major headlines, from the life of Marilyn Monroe and Ted Kennedy to the race riots of the sixties, but mainly she's gone behind the scenes of peoples' private lives, to illustrate through literally hundreds of short stories and dozens of novels her breadth and scope of knowledge and attention to the most important issues, public and private, of our times.

This book stands out among the many I've read. It's a personal mystery, also a public drama, in that the story takes place around Detroit in the late sixties, where it happened Miss Oates was a teacher of literature at a night school.

I've read her books including this one a while back, so I can't recall the plot details, but I remember being quite stoked while reading it, for the personal drama between a wife and the husband with whom she was unfaithful...and of the portrait inside the mind of a crazy man with a gun...

In any event, she writes fluidly. You might think, with her astounding number of publications, some under pseudonyms (she also writes mysteries and books for young adults and children!) that her attention might flag, that she might get sloppy.

No, never. Amazing attention. A greatly trained mind. A pleasure to sit with her...

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### **Greg Stratman says**

A startling book in its lack of plot cohesion, but offering some really powerful sections on life, love, and family.

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## **Mickey says**

One of those books that literally changed the way I saw the world, at least for a little while, maybe longer (and I mean literally - I looked at everything differently with my eyeballs, with different care and intent). After I put it down, I had to pick up a friend at the bus depot. We were using the bus because we were poor college students, but our lives were going to be pretty good. I found myself really noticing everyone else around me, and thinking about them, and understanding how specific markers of their appearances could be tweaked and would completely alter my perception of whether or not they were good looking or smart or someone I wanted to be around. Class, baby. We are not in a classless society. It's something I KNEW, but I didn't FEEL it until I read this book. Of course, I'm probably someone else's faded metal concert T wearing, bad haircut sporting, imperfect teeth chomping, poor unfortunate soul. Weird.

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## **Kimber says**

For a woman who only lived in Detroit for a few years, it's breathtaking how well she evokes this city. Everything feels real to me--and that's saying a lot since these characters are so hard to believe, extremely dysfunctional, sociopaths, even crazy. Oates is able to get into their skin, totally feeling every terrible thought and terrible deed. Yes, it's startlingly violent and as implausible as the characters seem they are true to their actions. Oates never flinches, she never explains or judges them. As she says there are myriad ways of interpreting a story and each reader takes with them what they may.

On the first reading, I was riveted by her authenticity and violence but also shocked by it.

On the second reading, I appreciated more of the characters and who they were and who they were was so intertwined with the world they came from. Oates allows them to be as they are without setting about to reform them, or impose a moral framework on this story. Despite its darkness and its bleakness and its crazyness, I discovered on this reading that when the shock wears off you can see tiny shafts of light in this dark portrait Oates has painted. It came to me as a tragic story illuminated.

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## **Jean says**

This is the 3rd novel in the quartet of the Wonderland Series, and not having read the other books, I was unsure as to whether I would be able to pick this up and "catch on". Never fear...Joyce Carol Oates does it right. You can read this book and not have ever even heard of the others and still enjoy it on its own! She takes you back to the 50's in Detroit and lets you see and feel how it was to be poor and struggling in those days. It's about race, class, family, love, urban life, marriage, women, the shebang! As always, I loved it. There is something about her writing that just pulls me in and makes me identify with her women characters. Somehow she seems to know everyone would feel, from the young child who is terrified of her father to the abused teenager who wants to get away and be a good mother...

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## **Jackson says**

This is probably the best book I've ever read. The book is long (508 pages) and the story is thick. The lives of Loretta, Maureen, and Jules all take unexpected, yet somewhat expected turns throughout their trying lives. It can be depressing at times but there is always hope for redemption, even though it's unclear what, if any, comes. You won't be disappointed with "Them" and I can't wait to read more of her books.

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## **Paul Bryant says**

Around page 260, I stopped wanting to find out what happened to this miserable crew. I didn't mind if they all ended up going to Woodstock and scoring bad acid and drowning in one of those photogenic mudbaths. In fact - yay, way to go. It had been something of a struggle to bother about these people to begin with. The novel is based on the life of the Maureen character.

Maureen was a real person. JCO met her round about 1962, she was a student in JCO's evening class at the University of Detroit. JCO discovered Maureen's "terrible obsession with her personal history" and JCO became fascinated herself and had a lightbulb-over-head moment and wrote the whole thing out in her greatly detailed patented helter-skelter deadpan and then and then and then style. So it's a non-fiction novel, or whatever these things are called. The trouble is that many of the extraordinary twists which happen to the three main characters Loretta and her children Jules and Maureen are unexplained, maybe inexplicable. They zap right on like a drive by shooting. JCO is a drive by writer. For instance Maureen at age 16, having had NO boyfriends and ZERO sexual experience, becomes a kind of hooker for a while, accepting lifts from guys and sleeping with them for money in motels. Huh? So, er, why did she do it? Did she think of the first guy as a boyfriend? Seems that her entire motivation was to get money to enable her to leave an oppressive family household where she was treated like a skivvy. Would a girl in 1954 really do this? Out of the blue start sleeping with guys for money, and all her own idea? It didn't seem real at all, but of course the point of "them" the novel is that it's not actually fiction, it's all entirely true. The truth is stranger than fiction, JCO may say, but I think it is incumbent on JCO to offer SOME interpretation instead of just kind of shrugging and moving on breathlessly to the next weird thing.

Anyway after 260 pages I couldn't take any more of this endless stream of banality invigorated by the odd jolt of unexplained violence. This was an early JCO - much much much better was to come.

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## **Sherry says**

A friend gave me this book when I took my first college position at a community College. It's a very insightful book about those we seek to educate.

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## **emily says**

I honestly don't get it.

This is a book in which every character, all the time, is confused. At first, I thought maybe Ms Oates was not quite so sympathetic an observer as she thinks she is and that she may just think that her poor characters are poor because they're dumb. But no! The non-poor characters are just as befuddled. I have no idea how they

get through their days. These people are constantly surrounded by a world that mystifies them, and they seem unable to remember things like where they were earlier in the day, who they are talking to, or (hilariously) how to park a car (as we see Jules "manage" to park a car a dozen or more times, each time referred to with the verb "manage"). I have no idea how they get through the day. Can they remember to brush their teeth? Do they remember that they HAVE teeth?

This is the kind of book that has passages (my own, invented) like this: "She heard him saying something to her and strained to listen, listening through the hazy shapes she saw surrounding him. 'What were you doing today,' he was asking. 'I don't remember,' she said, dully. 'I don't remember anything.'"

If only a single damn character could remember anything he'd been doing the day before, or could just muster up the energy to grab a strong cup of coffee or a decent nap, we could have cut the whole book down to a short story.

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### **Robert says**

I thought this book was great... at first. The further in I got, the less I could stand it. It just became more and more dull and predictable. Even the characters seem to grow weary of it, muddling through their adult lives in a total stupor. At about page 245 things took a turn for the worse. Yet somehow I managed to slog through it - until chapter 12. Who wants to read page after page of two boring, half-asleep characters going through mysterious '60s-style sex scenes? What's so interesting about these people anyway? I struggled through 30 or so pages of utter crap just to see if there was a light at the end of the tunnel. Nope, there isn't. Why did I read so much of this book?

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### **Nic says**

It was a relief to reach the end of this based-in-fact novel of Detroit poverty and violence. Them spans two generations of a family who longs for better things, but can't make a more peaceful, healthy, affluent life happen. Oates starts with Loretta as an optimistic teen stuck caring for her alcoholic father and older brother, working at a dry cleaners. She really breaks your heart by getting you to feel her young character's yearning for a better life, then showing how they get sucked into prostitution, pimping, drug use, abusive relationships, and have no mentors to show them how to break free of this cycle. Actually, one character is able to eventually "rise above" but it's a hollow victory that demands she completely detach from her family and her deny past. What kept me engaged through this tough story was Oates' elegant writing. She changes point of view, deftly moves through time in a way that surprises the reader, and draws you into a dreamy state of her character's consciousness. I understand why she is such an admired writer, but hope the next novel of hers I choose isn't so depressing.

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### **Jake Goretzki says**

[Having recently picked up a predictable, ambulance-chasing fascination with Detroit, post the Mark Binelli Detroit book – me and several million others – I came to this as an important 'Detroit Novel']

Superb. Besides its Great American scale and its big bag of gritty themes (female disempowerment, racism,

poverty, urban breakdown, violence, the American Dream, etc), here are some exceptionally fine portrayals of seduction, lust and love. The characters are very much alive and real - not so much because they are well drawn, but because they are so mercurial, elusive and – frankly – nuts (which gives them a very human unknowability and unpredictability). As an example, when Nadine (who's pretty darn hot, right) does what she does (plot spoiler), I was as shocked as our hero was and had no idea it was coming, really. Which is a fine thing.

I'd say this also has the finest and most chilling little vignette of racism I think have ever come across in fiction. That scene where Jules goes to a gas station; a cop and the store owner are laughing with an older black guy who has a facial scar, caused by his wife throwing a boiling pan of water at him with sugar in it. They're laughing with him about how it happened, and he's explaining that she put the sugar in so it would burn more – and he's laughing too. It's kind of brilliantly insidious: superficially we're seeing fraternising of white cop and a poor black man, but we're really seeing a victim, with no dignity, being laughed at. That is my 'eel in a horse's head / Tin Drum' moment in the novel.

It's clever, too. I really like the scrutiny that fiction is put under, through Maureen's dismissal of the 'fictional' Joyce Carol Oates' view that 'fiction gives life form' and of her own past fondness for Jane Austen. The afterthought and forward is also interesting in what it's trying to do (now looking a little clunky). This was the first time I'd read a modern –ish novel starring the author and didn't feel that it was a bit of a stunt (cf Paul Auster).

This is the first of hers I've read. Turns out its part of a bigger series. All to look forward to.

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## **Andrew Fairweather says**

### Spoilers

Joyce Carol Oates' 'Them' is a dark yet beautiful piece of work. At times, it reminds me of Flannery O'Connor, or McCullers southern gothic style—'Them', although considered a work of 'realistic fiction', is just slightly insane, like someone chatty Cathy waiting at a lonely bus stop with you at 2am. Its imbalance is betrayed rather in the lines of its face than any suspect reasoning.

This story runs across two generations in a white working class family. 'Them's characters carry all the acrid prejudice one may have towards a world which, while providing a standard of living never known before, is crumbling at their feet. As we read through this 540-odd pages book, we see the younger generation as it fights to adapt to the demands of their ever-changing circumstances--in this case, adaptation means a complete reinvention.

'[...] and the essence of it was that they had all come very close to the edge of something, their parents especially, and some of the older people had breathed this in and turned terrified and helpless for life, but they, the young, they with their new babies and their new husbands were on their way up and never would the bottom fall out again. The government in Washington was like a net set up not ten feet below them, to save them.'



By and large, Jules and Maureen are symbols of the male-female dichotomy of 40s-60s America. Jules mind is constantly going back to the broad plains of his early youth which yawned with possibilities.

"Someday I will change all this [thought Jules]

He thought of a wilderness, land out West; a golden sky or perhaps a golden field of wheat... mountains... rivers... something unmapped...'

Detroit offers Jules no solace in this regard. His aggressive response? Let 'fire do its duty' and burn the whole lot! Start over, and forget the past with it. Jules is a character constantly reinventing himself (much like his namesake, Julien Sorel, of *The Red and the Black*) but Detroit can only offer so much... his striving to do right by people, to fulfill the roles passed down to the American male only provide for troubles. And America's role models? Movie actors, gangsters, and sorry saps like Bernard, the strange nouveau riche poser.

Maureen is takes a different tack to reinvention. She, like Jules, is absolute in her determination to forget her past. But rather than loudly drown out the past with fire she wishes to silence it, to stifle it. She wants nothing more than security, peace and quiet, everything that was lacking in the noisy Wendell household (the Library is her only escape...). She wants nothing more than a comfortable seat safe from the hardship of her youth, the abyss of the lower classes. Her paranoia on this count ran deep...

'She would not grow up to into a normal woman:something would catch her and hold her back, some snag, some failure to have dreamed her way out of childhood.'

Maureen makes a symbolic decision to enter into prostitution--there is no love in the life of Maureen, only security. She sells her body for the dull comforts of mere mental well-being. This well being comes in only one form, money. When beaten by her stepfather for taking money for sex, her crusade becomes a sentient one. She becomes the famle archetype, waiting to be rescued from her 'situation'.

'We are the ones who leaf through magazines with colored pictures and spend long heavy hours sunk in our bodies, thinking, remembering dreaming, waiting for something to come to us and give a shape to so much pain.'

While Jules and Maureen wish to accomplish similar goals, that is, to reinvent themselves, Jules is the more obviously aggressive approach. But the particular violence of Maureens approach was incredibly interesting. Not only does she do violence to herself, but she bears a hatred for disorder. She imagines her attitude towards what might one day be her children when thinking on her rambunctious younger sister, Betty...

'As she walked she muttered to herself about what she would do if she was old enough to be a mother: how she would take care of all those kids, punish them when they needed it, give them a good slap and a good spanking even, for the worst of her kids like her sister Betty, find some dark wet place—the "dungeon" under the veranda and nail her up into it until she was good.'

Who is Betty? The criminal younger sister. The 'youth'. Oates pays less attention to Betty, and in effect she remains a sort of newspaper headline--\*YOUTH ROBS ELDERLY\* type thing.

Jules' salvation eventually comes by way of removing himself from Detroit and reinventing himself completely in California under the wing of someone else's revolution. Maureen's comes from marriage (what else?) to a married man. In both cases, they persevered, in both cases, their success to escape their past resulted in a life that was somewhat not their own...

I'm not going to be able to convince you of this book's brilliance in a simple little review, so just read the damn thing! That's good enough for now. I highly highly highly recommend this book!

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## **Northpapers says**

Joyce Carol Oates is the Tom Waits of highbrow pulp fiction.

My friend Jonathan Kotulski made the above statement, mostly in jest I think, during a recent phone conversation.

We had been talking about Kafka, Musil, Borges, and David Foster Wallace, then I mentioned that I was still feverishly reading novels and short stories by Joyce Carol Oates, and that I didn't completely understand why. The Tom Waits comparison came from the fact that she has produced a huge catalog, and managed to stay consistently challenging over the course of several decades.

My most recent JCO book is actually one of her earlier works. As illustrated boldly in the picture above, it is named *Them*. The title, which actually does help in the interpretation of the book, does very little to tell you what you are about to read. Nor does the illustration. Nor do maybe the first 400 pages, over the course of which a quarreling, unlikable family staggers through two generations of rapes, murders, beatings, racism, domestic violence, abandonment, bereavement, rebellion, infidelity, alcoholism, obesity, and cancer.

In general, I found the book to be melodramatic, overdrawn, miserable, and taxing. However, there are two tricks JCO pulls, which although they struck me as a little cheap at the time, in retrospect help to tie the thing together and make its reading worthwhile.

The first trick she plays twice. In her intro, she bills the story "a work of history in fictional form." Later in the novel, she prints several letters written by one of the protagonists to herself. She artfully pleads with her readers to accept that, "This is the only kind of fiction that is real."

The second trick, which is complicated by the first, is a bit of a deus ex machina, but in my opinion, it works. The history of the minor characters in the novel is, without much set-up or warning, suddenly linked to major historical events, and everything changes. Which I guess is how major historical events interact with the urban poor, striking without warning. The whole book, the characters seem like anonymous cogs in a big, crushing wheel, then without much warning or setup, the axle breaks.

So at the end of *Them*, readers are confronted with a story that seems too bad to be true, with a twist that seems too big to be true, yet the author repeatedly claims that the badness and bigness are both historical fact.

As a reader, I love stuff like this. It places me on a precipice. I am cynical, but as P.T. Anderson reminds pomo cynics in *Magnolia*, "These things happen."

I rarely encounter books that engage me in a struggle, that effectively prod me to reframe, or restate, how I think about the world, its workings, and my connection to them, but *Them* is one such book. And that doesn't mean I like all the grand gestures, the melodramatic sexual drama, the barrage of tragedies, or the absorption with violence and tension, but like they do in all JCO books, these things fill a space worth exploring, even if they leave me feeling ambivalent and more than a little disturbed.

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## **Katy says**

The first book I read by Joyce Carol Oates was "*Blonde*," a book told from the point of view of Marilyn Monroe. I read it in eighth grade. Unfortunately, it was extremely violent and sexually graphic, and I was very put off and disturbed by it. However, I did notice Oates' sparse, emotional prose, and was fascinated by it. I've put quite a few of Oates' novels on my "to-read" shelf and have been waiting to read one. "*them*" was the one that I picked up.

My favorite part of the book was the beginning. Loretta is sixteen, and idealistic. In the space of a few hours (and less than fifty pages!), Loretta loses her virginity to her crush, deals with the trauma of said crush being shot by her brother, and then is raped (?) by a policeman, who becomes her husband. She then pops out three kids within a few hundred more pages. It's almost astounding what Oates does with this character.

Well, it doesn't last. As the book progresses, the action slows down. Toward the middle of the book, the plot spikes when Maureen, Loretta's daughter and a victimized female character, discovers the value of money, and, frustrated by her own family's lack of it, takes up prostitution. This is her way of trying to move up in the world. However, her stepfather sees her being picked up one day and beats her within an inch of her life. She spends awhile in bed, refusing to get up or respond to anyone. This is the last exciting part in the book.

Jules is the hero, or anti-hero, rather, of the book. Oates clearly focuses on him as the main character, not by mentioning him more or going into more detail about him, but by elevating him. Through Loretta, she describes his maturity and bright personality as a child, and through Loretta, his responsibility as a breadwinner and loyalty to his sister. However, Jules presents the biggest disappointment of the entire book. Oates builds him up as a character with the potential to rise above her terrible image of Detroit's poverty...and then lets us down by letting him fail, again and again.

Jules almost loses his life because of love. By far the most bizarre sequences in the novel are the ones where he interacts with the love of his life, Nadine. They have an abnormal relationship, to say the least. Jules notices her through a business venture, and creeps into her house. He convinces her to come with him and drives her far away. However, she abandons him when he falls ill, a strange twist of events after both express their sudden, passionate love for each other. They meet again within a few years, but Nadine is married. Nadine makes plans to leave her husband, and even rents an apartment for she and Jules to share. However, after the two make love for several hours (without stopping), she shoots him and almost kills him, and then shoots herself. The reader isn't sure whether she survived, though at the end of the book, Jules says that he is going to marry Nadine. However, at this point, I am pretty sure that Jules is deranged, if not for believing her to be alive, then merely for the fact that he insists on pursuing a relationship with a psychopath like Nadine.

This is very contemporary literature. Maybe I just don't "get it." But my complaints are much more numerous

than my compliments. If I waded through over five hundred pages of novel, I expect something redeeming. While I won't go so far as to say that there was nothing redeeming about "them," I can honestly say that there wasn't enough to make it worth it.

The theme of love bordering on violence is prevalent in "them." Oates often throws it in your face, in a way that is often quite disturbing. Jules and Nadine are an obvious example of this. They both passionately love each other, so much that not touching each other is simply not an option. So much that Jules will practically rape her in order to sleep with her. So much that Jules acts like an overprotective psychopath. So much that Nadine feels trapped by their love, lost in it. And so much that Nadine decides to kill them both?

And, of course, Maureen's brief stint with whoring is another example of love/violence. Oates repeats again and again that Maureen's customers constantly tell her that they are in love with her. As a result, Maureen doesn't understand love and both longs for it and fears it. She marries one of her professors late in the book, stealing him from his wife and three children. When Jules visits in the very last chapter, and asks her if she loves her husband, she only says, "I'm going to have a baby. I'm a different person," which is both cryptic and completely typical of Maureen. This suggests that she repels love, although in a letter she writes, she claims to want it desperately.

One more thing that I want to mention is the bizarre dialogue in Oates' novel. Very much unlike the sparse, realistic dialogue of Hemingway and Salinger, Oates' characters pontificate in flowery, emotional language. I gagged on the emotionally clogged speeches of Nadine, as well as Vera, a girl Jules meets near the end of the book. They all spout their feelings, in a seemingly uncontrollable manner. It is not only unrealistic: It takes away from Oates' otherwise lifelike portrayal of Detroit.

For the serious reader, "them" is a good read, if only to understand Detroit and maybe mull over these heavy topics for awhile. For everyone else, though, give "them" a pass.

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## **ALLEN says**

Whenever readers complain (based on what they've heard, or whatever) that the novels of Joyce Carol Oates are too non-realistic or stylized, I immediately recommend THEM to them. This starkly realistic, almost naturalistic early novel (1969) is set in working-class Detroit from the depression to the race riots of 1967. I've read it twice (third read coming up) and am always impressed by the power of the narrative and the sympathy I feel for the book's heroine. Originally, the book's title was printed in all-lowercase to demonstrate the disdainful attitude the middle class took toward "those people," the "them" that had to struggle all the way.

THEM, by the way, is third in Oates's so-called "Wonderland Quartet," the other books being A GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS, EXPENSIVE PEOPLE, and WONDERLAND.

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## **Julie Wilding says**

"As soon as she read the first page of a novel... she was pleased, startled, excited to know that this was real, the world of this novel."

"She could draw near to a man and through half-closed eyes assess him, never really looking at him; it was a feeling in her blood."

"There were certain cycles to go through. The cycle had begun when he had opened the door of his car for her, and in a minute or two it would end with his sudden paralyzed tension, his broken breath against her face, the familiar urgent signs of a man's love."

"With you, Jules, I can't think of my life or remember what it is. I can't remember myself. It's as if I were walking somewhere and music began to play very loud, making me deaf, and someone took my hand to lead me away--why not? How can I remember who I am, what does it matter? I've been waiting for you for three days."

"Other people have loved me and I knew what that was, exactly. But you love me like somebody calling out my name in a crowd."

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