

# Be Mine: A Haunting Short Story Exploring the Dangers of Obsession



## Be Mine: A Short Story by Lorna Collins

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 710 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 10 pages
Lending	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported



*Be Mine* is a chilling short story by Joyce Carol Oates that explores the dark and dangerous depths of obsession, jealousy, and the destructive consequences that can ensue. First published in 1973, the story has since become a classic of the horror genre, praised for its psychological realism and its unflinching portrayal of the human psyche. Through the story's complex characters and intricate symbolism, Oates delves into the corrosive nature of unchecked desire, revealing the fragility of human relationships and the devastating toll that obsession can take.

## A Twisted Obsession

At the heart of *Be Mine* lies the twisted obsession of Robert Mallory, a lonely and disturbed young man who becomes infatuated with a beautiful and enigmatic woman named Anya Keller. Driven by an unhealthy desire to

possess her, Robert's obsession quickly spirals out of control, leading him down a dark and destructive path.

Oates masterfully portrays Robert's descent into madness, capturing the obsessive thoughts and irrational behaviors that consume him. He stalks Anya, following her every move and fantasizing about their future together. His obsession blinds him to reality, distorting his perception of her and leading him to believe that she reciprocates his feelings. However, Anya remains aloof and distant, oblivious to the torment that her presence inflicts upon Robert.

As Robert's obsession intensifies, so too does his jealousy. He suspects that Anya is seeing other men and imagines scenarios in which she betrays him. His jealousy fuels his rage and desperation, driving him to confront Anya and demand her love. The confrontation ends in tragedy, as Robert's obsession consumes him and leads him to commit a horrific act of violence.

### **The Corrosive Nature of Desire**

Through Robert's tragic story, Oates explores the corrosive nature of unchecked desire. She argues that when desire becomes an obsession, it has the power to distort our perceptions, blind us to reality, and lead us down dangerous paths. Robert's obsession with Anya transforms him from a lonely and harmless young man into a violent and destructive individual.

Oates also suggests that obsession is often rooted in a lack of self-worth and a need for validation. Robert feels inadequate and unworthy of Anya's love, which fuels his obsessive desire to possess her. He believes that if he can win her over, he will finally be complete and worthy of happiness.

However, his obsession only serves to highlight his own insecurities and self-destructive tendencies.

## **Symbolism and Themes**

Oates uses a variety of symbols and themes to enhance the story's impact and explore its deeper meanings. The recurring image of the mirror is particularly significant, representing Robert's distorted view of himself and his obsession. He looks in the mirror and sees a handsome and desirable man, but his reflection is a false image, a product of his own inflated ego and obsessive desires.

Another important symbol in the story is the flower bed that Robert obsessively tends to. The flowers represent his fragile and unrealistic hopes for a relationship with Anya. He believes that if he can create the perfect environment for her, she will love him in return. However, the flowers are ultimately doomed to wilt and die, just as Robert's obsession is doomed to end in tragedy.

Throughout the story, Oates also explores themes of loneliness, isolation, and the search for meaning. Robert is a lonely and isolated individual, lacking meaningful connections with others. His obsession with Anya gives him a sense of purpose and belonging, but it is an unhealthy and destructive substitute for genuine human relationships.

*Be Mine* is a haunting and thought-provoking short story that explores the dark and dangerous depths of obsession. Through the story's complex characters and intricate symbolism, Oates delves into the corrosive nature of unchecked desire, revealing the fragility of human relationships and the devastating toll that obsession can take. The story serves as a cautionary

tale about the importance of self-awareness and the dangers of allowing our desires to consume us.

*Be Mine* remains as relevant and unsettling today as when it was first published nearly 50 years ago. It is a powerful and disturbing story that will stay with you long after you have finished reading it.



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