

THE WILD CHERRY TREE. H. E. Bates. *Michael Joseph*, 25s. 1968.

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This collection of short stories is dominated by studies of women who suffer isolation or allow themselves some indulgence which has the effect of detaching them from reality. Such, for example, is the pig farmer's wife who orders luxurious clothes from London which she cannot wear in front of her husband; instead, her appearance attracts the notice of a passing stranger, who fails, however, to recognise her in her everyday wear. Mr. Bates writes, as always, with fluency and a strong sense of form, but his tales stop short of exploring the emotions of his characters to a significant depth.