

Statements about 'Bad Dreams' (the story and the collection of stories)
by Tessa Hadley (all direct quotations from serious reviews)

- 5 -a collection of 10 tales, Tessa Hadley develops a quiet but nevertheless vicious catalog of the misery dealt to women who care – for themselves, for other people, or for abstract principles like love or justice. (L A review of books.Jarvis)
- 10 -The authority that literature has in ordering a life is perhaps most striking in two stories that focus on children. (Jarvis)
- The epilogue's gloating bland language, complacently regretful, seemed to relish (*genießen*) catching her out in her dismay.(Jarvis)
- 15 - The slippery worlds of the reading child and of realistic dreams blur together in a moment of real-world antagonism, which pits the early stages of social self-awareness (– the girl's frustrations with her parents' lives beyond the family –) against the exciting obliviousness that childhood (– an obliviousness reinforced by absorptive reading and rereading –) often allows. (Jarvis)
- 20 - the power of both words and silence, (Macalpine npr 2017)
- The mother's silence around this incident compounds (*verstärkt*) her daughter's, and turns out to be far more damaging. (Macalpine)
- 25 - Great nuance and psychological acuity (*Schärfe*)...It is exquisite, haunting ... (Orr 28.1. 17, Guardian)
- Knowledge...is often unexpected or unwanted; and it can feel transgressive. (Orr)
- 30 - A shift of perspective can also lead to moments of great tenderness. (Orr). *Here, too?*
- how intricately their lives are connected and yet how solitary they are. Attempts to decipher each other are moving (Orr)
- 35 - One of Hadley's striking achievements in this collection is setting up a tension between life lived moment by moment, ..., and events viewed from the outside, from positions of separation... (Orr)
- 40 - combines acerbic social observation and wry humour with moments of breathtaking delicacy and tenderness.(Orr)
- 45 - It's often intimated that a kind of literary sexism keeps Tessa Hadley's low-key tales of home-life heartache from finding more readers. Guardian, 29.1.17 Cummins
- Hadley's spell (*Zauber*)– and she is a spellbinding writer – derives its power from the way she keeps the uncanny (das Unheimliche) almost precisely counterbalanced with the commonplace. No, that's wrong: It's the way she discloses the uncanny within all that is commonplace. (Cohen, NYT June 2017)
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In an interview (This week in fiction, The New Yorker, September 23, 2013)

55 Hadley tells that she did have this dream - also that on a different occasion she tipped all the chairs over in the living room. Her parents 'believed for years that one of their guests had had too much to drink and played a trick on them—I didn't own up to it until much later'. She says that 'The Swallows and the Amazons persist in perpetual youth' and laughs at the child 'What she has read copiously are Victorian and Edwardian novels,' ...' cushioned by sentimentality'....

60 She also says: 'The revelation—of her husband's anger, his resentment of her domestication—doesn't come to her out of nothing. She unburies it,...

'.... A lot of the intimations in the story have a deliberately double-faced aspect.'

65 ' ...Obviously the story *chooses* those two moments, as turning points. Each character has a new intimation forced upon her—the story makes these moments into something pivotal. But the characters also act like people in real life, oblivious of the mechanisms of story. The next morning, they both refuse to be new people; they return inside the forms they're used to. No doubt the
70 intimations persist somewhere.'

(In the first two parts of the story, you are very much inside the characters' minds. For the short, third part, you pull back, in an almost cinematic way. Why the retreat at that point in the narrative?) '...I find the effect of this last section
75 almost frightening now. I didn't notice until after I'd written it that it's dead silent.'

Haunting: eindringlych, gespenstisch, packend, quälend, tief bewegend, unvergesslich