



Stumbling Out the Stable

Sean Pravica

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With its focus on character and experience, Stumbling Out the Stable is a thorough exploration of modern adulthood.

Stumbling out the Stable is the bildungsroman of the new generation. Sean Pravica touches on the confusion plaguing modern university students, on the doom that hangs over them in the shapes of student loans and a stifling job market. True to the title of the book, Pravica's protagonist, Seamus, stumbles his way through a four-year degree, friendships, and lovers as he tries, almost desperately, to give meaning to his life.

Seamus, as a character, feels both familiar and unfamiliar. On the surface, his dismissal of the rigid structure of academia, his heavy drug use, and his lackadaisical work ethic fit the stereotypical student mold, but Pravica's dedication to the character's complexity separates Seamus from his comedy-movie peers. Pravica delves into the character's mind until no parts are left unexplored or unexposed. Instead of falling back on clichés, Pravica uses Seamus to create a commentary on the experiences of young middle-class America.

Seamus's presence in the novel is so strong that the very language Pravica uses gets filtered through the character. There isn't a sentence or a word written that doesn't ring true to Seamus's character. The novel follows Seamus through his classes, his first love, and his time at the Singing Pines Country Club, where he works as a banquet server during wedding receptions. While there are a variety of side characters, Seamus's coworkers at Singing Pines are given the most depth. The exploration of these side characters is like a glimpse through a window: a brief but stunningly clear display.

Although at times the language, and especially the dialogue, can feel stilted, overall the book flows naturally and smoothly. Grand, sweeping imagery is used when describing both characters and landscapes. With its focus on character and experience, *Stumbling Out the Stable* is a thorough exploration of modern adulthood.

CLARISSA GOLDSMITH (Spring 2016)

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