

小説の面白さ

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小説と云うものは、本来、女子供の読むもので、いわゆる利口な大人が目の色を変えて読み、しかもその読後感を卓を叩いて論じ合うと云うような性質のものではないのであります。小説を読んで、襟を正しただの、頭を下げてただのと云っている人は、それが冗談ならばまた面白い話柄でもありましょうが、事実そのような振舞いを致したならば、それは狂人の仕草と申さなければなりません。たとえば家庭に於いても女房が小説を読み、亭主が仕事に出掛ける前に鏡に向ってネクタイを結びながら、この頃どんな小説が面白いんだいと聞き、女房答えて、ヘミングウェイの「誰がために鐘は鳴る」が面白かったわ。亭主、チョッキのボタンをはめながら、どんな筋だいと、馬鹿にしきったような口調で訊ねる。女房、俄かに上気し、その筋書を縷々と述べ、自らの説明に感激しむせび泣く。亭主、上衣を着て、ふむ、それは面白そうだ。そうして、その働きのある亭主は仕事に出掛け、夜は或るサロンに出席し、曰く、この頃の小説ではやはり、ヘミングウェイの「誰がために鐘は鳴る」に限るようすな。

The Appeal of Novels

Osamu Dazai

Something called a novel is, primarily, something little girls would read, not having qualities such that so-called intelligent adults would become engrossed in reading, even pounding their fists on the table arguing over their impressions. A person saying they were greatly impressed by a novel, or that reading it made them a better person, could be an interesting subject as a joke, but if such a thing were to actually happen, it would have to be called the behavior of a lunatic. For example, in a household where the wife is reading a novel, while the husband is tying his necktie in front of the mirror before heading off to work, he asks what kind of novels are interesting these days, the wife replies, Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was interesting. The husband, while buttoning his vest, asks what it's about, in a mocking tone. The wife, suddenly getting very excited, explains the plot in great detail, and starts becoming choked up with tears, being moved from her own explanation. The husband, puts on his coat, hmm, that seems interesting. And so, the husband who did that went off to work, and attended a salon at night, allegedly novels these days are limited to Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* after all.