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Rage to Live

John O'Hara

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Rage to Live

John O'Hara

Rage to Live John O'Hara
A huge bestseller when it first appeared in 1949, A Rage to Live is a large-scale social chronicle of America set against the backdrop of Fort Penn, Pennsylvania, a city with a dynamic history, both public and personal. The Caldwells are its leading family, and Grace Caldwell Tate is the dramatic symbol of their dominance. Her avidity for life carries her through an impetuous childhood, marriage, violent extramarital affairs, scandal, disaster, and her own kind of triumphs. Idealists and libertines, public-spirited and self-seeking citizens, officials and tradesmen and crusaders, men of violence and goodwill, and women of fierce possessiveness and tenderness form the pageant of memorable characters who vitalize what is perhaps the most ambitious work of O'Hara's career.
"The range of O'Hara's knowledge of how Americans live was incomparably greater than that of any other fiction writer of his time," judged The New Yorker. "One would have to go back to Frank Norris, Stephen Crane, and Theodore Dreiser to find a novelist who had even the intention of acquiring knowledge on the scale that O'Hara acquired it on, and with his degree of particularity." The New York Times Book Review concurred: "Like Dreiser and Sinclair Lewis before him, he was determined to record the whole of American life, and in such a comprehensive manner that the truth of his portraits would be unassailable. . . . O'Hara was perhaps the most class-conscious writer since James, and certainly one of the most accurate chroniclers of manners in America."

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