



## Binstead's Safari

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Stan Binstead, an ambitious young anthropologist at a New England university, is heading off to East Africa on sabbatical to study the survival of primitive lion cults. Binstead has a theory that such cults operate as tribal protection rackets-- stay in line or the lions will get you!

When his timid wife Millie asks if she can come along, Binstead's heady fantasies of intellectual and sexual triumph in the lush jungle begin to fade. Millie's absence seems essential to the trip's success. He does his best to talk her out of it--Africa is no place for a woman, after all--but Millie stands firm.

After a few days in London, a stopover on the first leg of the journey, Stan and Millie begin to switch roles. She becomes vibrant, adventuresome, almost flirtatious; he turns sullen and withdrawn, the proverbial party-pooper. Once they arrive in Africa the change is even more pronounced. Millie has a romantic fling with a charismatic white hunter, while Stan mopes around by himself, unable to get started on his research. Millie's white hunter is later killed in mysterious circumstances, but by then she has made up her mind to divorce Stan as soon as they return to the United States. Stan is devastated by this news, which a few months earlier would have delighted him. He has trouble sleeping and begins to imagine that lions are about to attack him.

Rachel Ingalls is an American writer living in England, where she has been named one of the twenty best postwar American novelists by the British Book Marketing Council. *BINSTEAD'S SAFARI*, first published in Great Britain in 1983, is in part an ingenious feminist reworking of Ernest Hemingway's famous short story, "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber." Ingalls' subtle "deconstruction" points out and challenges the male-centered assumptions of the typical safari tale, offering at the same time a compelling "magic realist" alternative. This is a well-written and thought-provoking book that is also fun to read.

## Sources for Further Study

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