



Enfants Terribles

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Characters Discussed

Paul (pohl), a sensitive, imaginative adolescent living insulated from the real world. With his sister Elisabeth, he inhabits the Room, the one material reality of their two lives, and with her plays the Game—a willful withdrawing into the world of the imagination. With the appearance of outsiders, this world is threatened; in the fight to recapture it, Paul is destroyed.

Elisabeth (ay-lee-zah-BEHT), Paul's older sister. Utterly absorbed in her brother and their life together in the dream world of the Room and the Game, she is terrified by, and retaliates against, any threat to their isolation. Finally, in a successful effort to separate Paul from Agatha, whom he loves, she brings about her brother's destruction and her own.

Agatha (ah-gah-TAH), Elisabeth's friend, whose devotion to Paul threatens the dream world of the brother and sister and finally brings about its destruction.

Gérard (zhay-RAHR), a friend of Paul and Elisabeth. He is persuaded by Elisabeth to marry Agatha, whose devotion to Paul threatens Elisabeth's domination of her brother.

Dargelos (dahr-zeh-LOH), the school hero, worshiped by the fragile Paul for his strength and beauty.

Mariette (ma-RHEHT), the nurse who loves and cares for Paul and Elisabeth.

Michael, an American to whom Elisabeth transfers her dream world when her dominance over Paul is threatened. He marries Elisabeth only to be killed a few hours after the wedding.

Bibliography:

Brée, Germaine, and Margaret Guiton. *An Age of Fiction: The French Novel from Gide to Camus*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1957. Cocteau's novels are discussed from page 140 to page 148, which describe him as "a modern Daedalus."

Brown, Frederick. *An Impersonation of Angels: A Biography of Jean Cocteau*. New York: Viking, 1968. Like most studies of Cocteau this concentrates more on his work for the cinema than on his novels. Considers the relationship between the two versions of *Les Enfants Terribles*.

Crosland, Margaret. *Jean Cocteau*. London: Peter Nevill, 1955. A biography and critical analysis. Discusses the novel version of *Les Enfants Terribles* on pages 166-169.

Fowlie, Wallace. *Jean Cocteau: The History of a Poet's Age*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966. A sensitive study that includes a discussion of *Les Enfants Terribles*.

Enfants Terribles: Enfants Terribles

Stegmuller, Francis. *Cocteau: A Biography*. London: Constable, 1986. A biography that is fuller than Crosland's and less florid than Brown's.

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