



Landscape for a Good Woman: A Story of Two Lives

By Carolyn Kay Steedman

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Editorial Review

Review

Carolyn Steedman's 1950s South London childhood was shaped by her mother's longing: "What she actually wanted were real things, real entities, things she materially lacked, things that a culture and a social system withheld from her... When the world didn't deliver the goods, she held the world to blame." When Carolyn Steedman grows up and begins to look for reflections of her and her mother's lives in history, theory, and literature, she finds that "the tradition of cultural criticism that has employed working-class lives, and their rare expression in literature, has made solid and concrete the absence of psychological individuality - of subjectivity." Through an in-depth comparison of personal experience and prevailing political and social science theory on the psychology and attitudes of working-class people, **Landscape for a Good Woman** challenges an intellectual tradition that denies "its subjects a particular story, a personal history, except when that story illustrates a general thesis." In this poignantly written and thoroughly researched work, the common theoretical conclusion that the survival struggles of working-class people precludes the time necessary for more genteel "elaboration of relationships" is shot full of delightfully life-affirming holes. -- *For great reviews of books for girls, check out Let's Hear It for the Girls: 375 Great Books for Readers 2-14.* -- *From 500 Great Books by Women; review by Jesse Larsen*

About the Author

Carolyn Steedman is professor of history at the University of Warwick (United Kingdom).

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