

'Mills is a master of the cliffhanger and can make even the most deadpan behaviour compelling and funny. . . A deliciously sly comic fable.'

FINANCIAL TIMES

'We are never told the name of the protagonist. It is the end of the season and he is soon the sole occupant of a lakeside campsite. The landowner, Mr Parker, puts a bit of work his way – there are the rowing boats to be repainted, a mooring to be resunk, wood to be sawn. . . Meanwhile his status in the decidedly odd and cliquish village has improved now that he is no longer a holidaymaker. Not a bad life really, if he can avoid provoking Mr Parker's notorious temper and resist the allure of his boss's 15-year-old daughter. . . A simple summary does nothing to convey the atmosphere of Mills's fiction, its mood of suffocation and gathering menace. As in Kafka, a Mills hero is propelled by a series of circumstances that, taken individually, are logical and innocuous but which have the cumulative effect of entangling him in a life where he is no longer in control. . . As a novelist Mills is so refreshingly original – in terms of style, subject, matter and theme – it is astounding. He is also very funny.'

NEW STATESMAN

'The arrival of Magnus Mills on the British literary scene is extraordinarily refreshing. His narrative deliberately hovers around the edge of old-fashioned children's books, while in a manner slightly reminiscent of David Lynch somehow endowing nostalgic kitsch with a sense of weirdness and threat. . . For this, Mills is to be treasured and revered. You cannot ask more of a book than for it to make the familiar seem fresh, strange and scary. In a modest, sneaky way, Mills pulls this off better than any other writer at work today.'

INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



From the author of

THE RESTRAINT OF BEASTS

**'The menace
accumulates
deliciously. Mills
has made a
territory entirely
his own.'**
SCOTSMAN