

'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