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Thomas Savage Correspondence

Thomas Savage

Elizabeth Savage 1918-

Maine State Library

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The Tom Savages at home in Georgetown

Georgetown Man Writes Novel Of Montana Country


Glowing reviews in newspapers across the country have greeted The Power Of The Dog, latest novel by Thomas Savage of Indian Point, Georgetown.

WROTE MARSHALL SPRAGUE in the New York Times Book Review, "We live goggle-eyed in a noisy, audio-visual world, and still fine books like this one come along — novels where the printed words fade from consciousness and the reader floats off into a private world of his own and the author's imagining.

"Here we go to the Montana cattle country in the 1920's and up the Beaverhead River — where two bachelor brothers of middle age, Phil and George Burdick, run the biggest spread in that spacious valley. Their parents, the Old Gent and the Old Lady, are pioneers from New England, now retired to spend their last days playing mah-jongg with other retired ranchers at the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City.

"In those days, was a community of gentle scholars and great hearts. There Ludwig Lewisohn became my closest friend. In 1938 I went as a visiting professor to Vassar College, and the girls rode about on squeaky bicycles and wore old fur coats, I have often wondered why women never oil anything."

The brochure continues, "Special interests? Old cars and fancy cars, especially Pierce-Arrows and Rolls Royces. I think it was Michael Arlen who said that all the best cars in the world have two names and all the worst authors, three. I bought, second-hand, the Rolls Royce exhibit at the World's Fair. It had originally cost $37,000.00, and my love affair with the perfect machine results in my novel Trust in Chariots."

"A Bargain with God was televised on Old Studio One in 1954. It was a selection of the Reader's Digest of Books in English and three other languages, and there was a complete translation into Italian last year. Readers wrote me a thousand letters, and I answered everyone of them.

"Lona Hanson was published also as a paperback and translated into Italian. The script was bought by Columbia Pictures.

"TRUST IN CHARIOTS has had an English edition. I think it was by far my best book until The Power of the Dog, but I don't think anybody else does."

The Savages have three children, two sons, Robert and Russell, students at Colby and a daughter, Elizabeth St. Mark, a student at Rhode Island School of Design.

"I like solitude and the surf pounding at the rocks," he says. Their Maine friends hope the Savage writing team will yield some day to the rich dramatic lore of their adopted environment. — By PSP
ranchers at the Hotel Utah in Salt Lake City.

"THERE IS A frail, pretty widow, Rose, struggling to run a hotel in the valley, and her teen-aged son, Peter, a gentle, perceptive and mysterious lad who knows how to make artificial flowers. When George marries Rose and brings her to the big Burbank ranch house to live, Phil is vastly surprised and displeased. Those are the basic plot specifics."

Or as Frederick Manfred said in his Chicago News review, "All along I kept hoping, as the good writing and the wonderful Montana scenes kept coming at me, please don't let this turn into the usual Wyoming cowboy love story. You've got the right horse this time, stay on it and ride it out to the end."

"You didn't disappoint me. You" dramatic, shocking, soul-burning ending is utterly convincing."

These critics attest to the high writing standards of a Maine author whose zeal for perfection transcends any temptation to techniques of popular fiction.

"I LOVE the English language, and when I write I labor to make sentences scan and am always aware of the sound as well as the meaning of a word. I am much moved by nostalgia and the setting in which an event takes place. I am fascinated by the moment just before a tragedy," says Savage.

He and his wife Betty attended Colby College together, and are a writing team whose interdependence reflects clearly in their work. He has written four previous novels, The Pass, Lona Hanson, A Bargain with God, and Trust in Chariots. She authored the successful Summer of Pride, and both are now working on new plots.

They met as students at Colby in 1937. A Phi Beta Kappa graduate, she has taught English at Colby for the past three years. Tom was awarded an honorary master's degree at Colby in 1933 and is an English instructor at Franconia College in New Hampshire.

Savage is a native of Salt Lake City where he got his early schooling. "I attended the University of Montana for a year in 1932-33 and had such a good time at beer picnics, I found it necessary to drop chemistry. For the next three years I broke horses and herded sheep around Montana and Idaho, and got to know all about Saturday nights in places called Roseland where later on you got sick and sat on the running boards of cars retching and vaguely aware of the music from inside, such songs as Who's Your Little Whoosit and Stardust," he wrote in a publisher's brochure revealing his penchant for taking himself much less seriously than he does his art.

TAUGHT SEVEN YEARS at Brandeis — a marvelous experience; for Brandeis, at least.