

APPENDICES

Synopsis of *While I Was Gone*

In the summer of 1968, Josephine Norris Becker or Jo Becker makes her decision to leave her house and gets married to a young man, named Ted Morris. Unfortunately, her parents get angry as they do not approve of the marriage. In fact, they want Jo to finish her college education first. They feel Jo does not appreciate them as her parents, so they do not want to contact Jo again.

The marriage turns out to be a failure and they get divorced. After that, Jo comes back home because her parents have already forgiven her. She regrets what she has done to her parents and decides to continue her studies to the Cambridge University. Because she is ashamed of her past life and willing to begin a new life, she changes her name from Josephine into Felicia. At Cambridge, she has a roommate named Dana, who is close to her. In addition, she also has a friend who attracts her, whose name is Eli. One day Dana is found lying dead in her room and nobody knows who has killed her. Although the police have interrogated Dana's friends, they cannot accuse any of them as Dana's killer.

After finishing her studies, Jo marries Daniel, a priest, and they have three daughters: Sadie, Cassie, and Nora. However, sometimes she feels unhappy, lonely, and static because of her boring marital life. Her daughters sometimes rebel against her. As a mother she does not have courage to talk to

her daughters, especially when she tries to give some advices to her second daughter, Cass. This becomes a reason for Cass to hate her mother. Thirty years later, suddenly she meets Eli again. Eli is now the husband of Sadie's teacher. Jo thinks he is the right person to fill her emptiness. They occasionally meet each other and finally think to have an affair. Unpredictably, Eli makes a confession which surprises Jo. He admits that he is the person who has killed Dana. He begs Jo not to tell the police. But, as a good citizen, she reports his confession to the police. Unfortunately, the police do not believe her, so they do not arrest Eli. After that, Jo and Eli do not make any contact and they pretend not to know each other. Her report to the police also causes problem between her and her daughter, Sadie. In the end, Jo returns to her husband, and Daniel forgives her betrayal. They try to rebuild their life.

Biography of Sue Miller

Sue Miller was born in Chicago in 1943. She is the second of four children in an academic and ecclesiastical family. She went to a college at Harvard, and at twenty she got married, shortly after she graduated. She had held a series of odd jobs until her son, Ben, was born in 1968. She separated from her first husband in 1971, and for thirteen years had been a single parent in Cambridge, Massachusetts. There she worked in a day care, learned to play the piano, and wrote stories with increasing focus.

Miller's first story was published in 1982. Since then, she has taught in various writing programs in Boston area. During 1983-1984, Sue Miller had won a

Bunting Fellowship and Radcliff, which led her to publish her first book *The Good Mother* in 1986, which was quickly followed by a collection of short stories. In the 90's she published *Family Picture*, *For Love*, *The Distinguished Guest*, and *While I Was Gone*. In 1985 Miller married Douglas Bauer, a writer, but later they got divorced. After living in Boston for 12 years, Sue Miller returned to Cambridge, which has been referred to as the land of many bookstores. Up to the present time, she still lives there.

Adapted from Book Browse (n. d.) *A Profile of Sue Miller: Sue Miller's biography plus multiple book reviews and one or more book excerpts by Miller*. Retrieved on March 29, 2007 from
<http://www.bookbrowse.com/biographies/index.cfm?author_number=279>