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This is the first novel that I have read by Willa Cather, and so I began my reading with no specific expectations. What I found was an extraordinary American writer. Her descriptions, and her ability to sum up the lifetime of a character in just a few sentences or lines are unlike the writings of anyone else I have read. She reminds me most of Henry James, although she is easier to read..

Thea, the subject of this early Willa Cather novel is flawed, and not really a heroine at all. She is an artist; her art is music. Her family and neighbors in Moonstone Colorado barely recognize what this means; most just find her odd. Thea is a loner. She has no friends her own age. Her siblings do not like her. But, she is the subject of attention from the town doctor, a railroad worker, a drunkard piano teacher, and Mexican laborers. All recognize something special in her; all contribute to her early struggle to find her art, and herself.

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