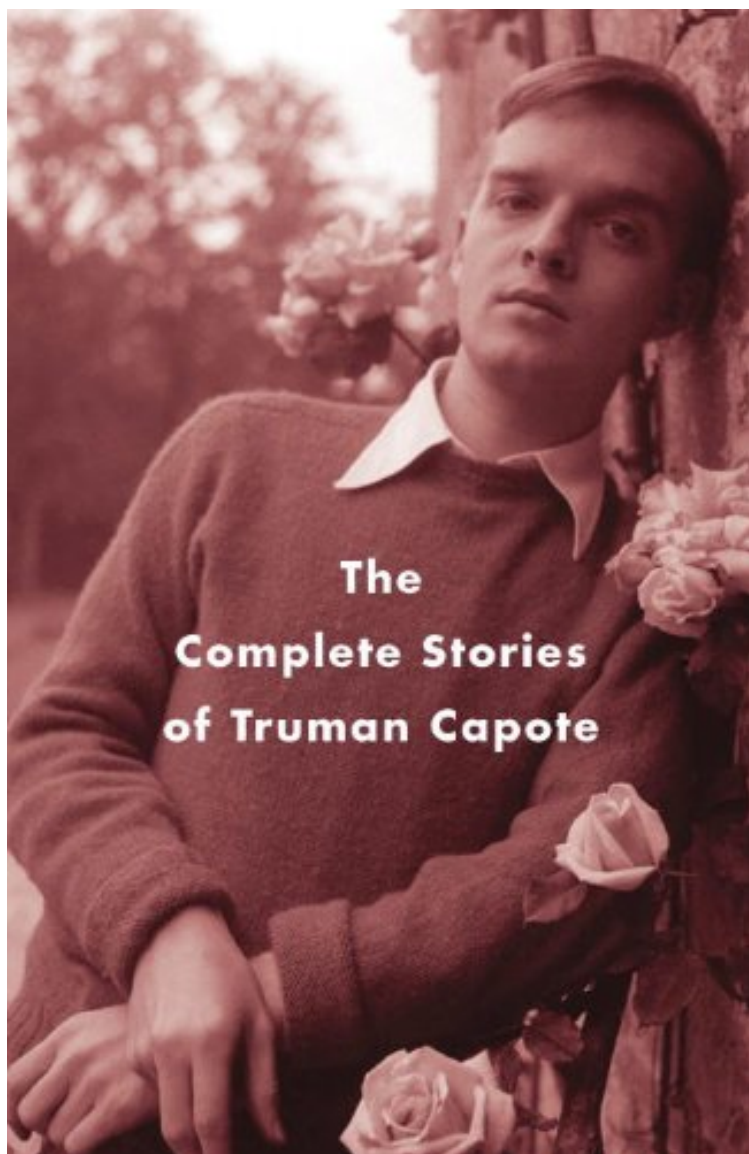


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The Complete Stories of Truman Capote



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA landmark collection that brings together Truman Capotes lifes work in the form he called his great love, The Complete Stories confirms Capotes status as a master of the short story. Ranging from the gothic South to the chic East Coast, from rural children to aging urban sophisticates, all the unforgettable places and people of Capotes oeuvre are here, in stories as elegant as they are heartfelt, as haunting as they are compassionate. Reading them reminds us of the miraculous gifts of a beloved American original.ExtraitCapote: THE COLLECTED STORIES OF TRUMAN CAPOTEThe Walls Are Cold(1943) . . . so Grant just said to them come on along to a wonderful party, and, well it was as easy as that. Really, I think it was just genius to pick them up, God only knows they might resurrect us from the grave. The girl

who was talking tapped her cigarette ash on the Persian throw rug and looked apologetically at her hostess. The hostess straightened her trim, black dress and pursed her lips nervously. She was very young and small and perfect. Her face was pale and framed with sleek black hair, and her lipstick was a trifle too dark. It was after two and she was tired and wished they would all go, but it was no small task to rid yourself of some thirty people, particularly when the majority were full of her fathers scotch. The elevator man had been up twice to complain about the noise; so she gave him a highball, which is all he is after anyway. And now the sailors . . . oh, the hell with it. Its all right, Mildred, really. What are a few sailors more or less? God, I hope they dont break anything. Would you go back in the kitchen and see about ice, please? Ill see what I can do with your new-found friends. Really, darling, I dont think its at all necessary. From what I understand, they acclimate themselves very easily. The hostess went toward her sudden guests. They were knotted together in one corner of the drawing-room, just staring and not looking very much at home. The best looking of the sextet turned his cap nervously and said, We didnt know it was any kind of party like this, Miss. I mean, you dont want us, do you? Of course youre welcome. What on earth would you be doing here if I didnt want you? The sailor was embarrassed. That girl, that Mildred and her friend just picked us up in some bar or other and we didnt have any idea we was comin to no house like this. How ridiculous, how utterly ridiculous, the hostess said. You are from the South, arent you? He tucked his cap under his arm and looked more at ease. Im from Mississippi. Dont suppose youve ever been there, have you, Miss? She looked away toward the window and ran her tongue across her lips. She was tired of this, terribly tired of it. Oh, yes, she lied. A beautiful state. He grinned. You must be mixed up with some other place, Miss. There sures not a lot to catch the eye in Mississippi, cept maybe around Natchez way. Of course, Natchez. I went to school with a girl from Natchez. Elizabeth Kimberly, do you know her? No, cant say as I do. Suddenly she realized that she and the sailor were alone; all of his mates had wandered over to the piano where Les was playing Porter. Mildred was right about the acclimation. Come on, she said, Ill fix you a drink. They can shift for themselves. My names Louise, so please dont call me Miss. My sisters names Louise, Im Jake. Really, isnt that charming? I mean the coincidence. She smoothed her hair and smiled with her too dark lips. They went into the den and she knew the sailor was watching the way her dress swung around her hips. She stooped through the door behind the bar. Well, she said, what will it be? I forgot, we have scotch and rye and rum; how about a nice rum and coke? If you say so, he grinned, sliding his hand along the mirrored bars surface, you know, I never saw a place like this before. Its something right out of a movie. She whirled ice swiftly around in a glass with a swizzle stick. Ill take you on a forty-cent tour if you like. Its quite large, for an apartment, that is. We have a country house thats much, much bigger. That didnt sound right. It was too supercilious. She turned and put the bottle of rum back in its niche. She could see in the mirror that he was staring at her, perhaps through her. How old are you? he asked. She had to think for a minute, really think. She lied so constantly about her age she sometimes forgot the truth herself. What difference did it make whether he knew her real age or not? So she told him. Sixteen. And never been kissed . . . ? She laughed, not at the clich but her answer. Raped, you mean. She was facing him and saw that he was shocked and then amused and then something else. Oh, for Gods sake, dont look at me that way, Im not a bad girl. He blushed and she climbed back through the door and took his hand. Come on, Ill show you around. She led him down a long corridor intermittently lined with mirrors, and showed him room after room. He admired the soft, pastel rugs and the smooth blend of modernistic with period furniture. This is my room, she said, holding the door open for him, you mustnt mind the mess, it isnt all mine, most of the girls have been fixing in here. There was nothing for him to mind, the room was in perfect order. The bed, the tables, the lamp were all white but the walls and the rug were a dark, cold green. Well, Jake . . . what do you think, suit me? I never saw anything like it, my sister wouldnt believe me if I told her . . . but I dont like the walls, if youll pardon me for saying so . . . that green . . . they look so cold. She looked puzzled and not knowing quite why, she reached out her hand and touched the wall beside her dressing-table. Youre right, the walls I mean, they are cold. She looked up at him and for a moment her face was molded in such an expression he was not quite sure whether she was going to laugh or cry. I didnt mean it that way. Hell, I dont rightly know what I mean! Dont you, or are we just being euphemistic? It drew a blank so she sat down on the side of her white bed. Here, she said, sit down and have a cigarette, what ever happened to your drink? He sat down beside her. I left it out in the bar. It sure seems quiet back here after all that racket in front. How long have you been in the navy? Eight months. Like it? It isnt much concern whether you like it or not. . . . Ive seen a lot of places that I wouldnt otherwise. Why did you enlist then? Oh, I was going to be drafted and the navy seemed more to my likin. Is it? Well, I tell you, I dont take to this kind of life, I dont like other men bossin me around.

Would you?She didnt answer but put a cigarette in her mouth instead. He held the match for her and she let her hand brush against his. His hand was trembling and the light was not very steady. She inhaled and said, You want to kiss me, dont you?She watched him intently and saw the slow, red spread over his face.Why dont you?Youre not that kind of girl. Id be scared to kiss a girl like you, sides, youre only making fun out of me.She laughed and blew the smoke in a cloud toward the ceiling. Stop it, you sound like something out of a gaslight melodrama. What is that kind of girl, anyway? Just an idea. Whether you kiss me or not isnt of the slightest importance. I could explain, but why bother? Youd probably end up thinking Im a nymphomaniac.I dont even know what that is.Hell, thats what I mean. Youre a man, a real man and Im so sick of these weak, effeminate boys like Les. I just wanted to know what it would be like, thats all.He bent over her. Youre a funny kid, he said, and she was in his arms. He kissed her and his hand slid down along her shoulder and pressed against her breast.She twisted and gave him a violent shove and he went sprawling across the cold, green rug.She got up and stood over him and they stared at each other. You dirt, she said. Then she slapped his bewildered face.She opened the door, paused, and straightened her dress and went back to the party. He sat on the floor for a moment, then he got up and found his way to the foyer and then remembered that he had left his cap in the white room, but he didnt care, all he wanted was to get out of here.The hostess looked inside the drawing-room and motioned for Mildred to come out.For Gods sake, Mildred, get these people out of here; those sailors, what do they think this is . . . the USO?Whats the matter, was that guy bothering you?No, no, hes just a small town moron whos never seen anything like this before and its gone to his head in a funny kind of way. Its just one awful bore and I have a headache. Will you get them out for me please . . . everybody?She nodded and the hostess turned back down the corridor and went into her mothers room. She lay down on the velvet chaise lounge and stared at the Picasso abstract. She picked up a tiny lace pillow and pushed it against her face as hard as she could. She was going to sleep here tonight, here where the walls were pale rose and warm.Revue de presseAn abundance of riches. . . . It is not hard at all to open to any page . . . and be amused, moved, intrigued. NewsdayTo best experience Capote the stylist, one must go back to his short fiction. . . . One experiences as strongly as ever his gift for concrete abstraction and his spectacular observancy. The New YorkerIt is a stunning experience to reread this fiction . . . and to realize how very golden this boy was. . . . We are in the presence of a tremendous talent, and a fully mature technique as well. Norman Mailers judgment that Capote was the most perfect writer of their generationhe writes the best sentences word for word, rhythm upon rhythmseems true and just. The New CriterionCapote does some things perfectly than many writers cant do at all. . . . He summons the sensory world in its bewildering, inexhaustible richness. Los Angeles Times Book