

Truman Capote



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Like a ringmaster at the circus, Truman Capote led us from one dazzling act to another in the entertainment that is the twentieth-century written word. Short stories, novels, novellas, plays, film scripts, and journalistic pieces dance in turn across the center stage of Capote's imagination, bringing to our view such masterpieces as *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948) and *In Cold Blood* (1966). Despite these successes, Capote came closest to achieving performance perfection when he turned his attention to shorter works. Full of vivid descriptions and colorful characters, these stories give us front row seats to the attraction of Capote as both a writer and a human being. Capote, originally Truman Streckfus Persons, was born in New Orleans in 1924, the product of a very unstable marriage. Often neglected, the young boy spent a lot of time with relatives, mostly in Alabama. When his mother divorced his father to marry a more successful businessman, Truman moved north with the couple and took his stepfather's surname. The Capotes lived in Greenwich and New York, where Truman would make his permanent base and where he would start stitching together the disparate threads of his unsettling childhood and make of them a grand tapestry revealing the frustration of life in contemporary America.

These connections between fact and fiction are carefully analyzed by Helen S. Carson, as are the links between the short fiction and Capote's longer works. She has provided the reader with a comprehensive, yet very readable study of one of Capote's more neglected genres.