



Capote in Kansas: A Ghost Story

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Truman Capote and Harper Lee were children when they met. Twenty-five years later, Capote had taken New York's literary world by storm, while Lee struggled to put pen to paper and sweat out the story of her childhood in the same city. They would reunite in the desolate plains of Kansas to create *In Cold Blood*. And they would start talk of an even greater mystery: What happened between them — and who really wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird*? How did two innocents from a backwoods Southern town achieve such fame, and why did they stop speaking to one another? Kim Powers has conjured a death-bed confession from Capote, in which he picks up the phone to Harper Lee one last time to tell her is being haunted — a tale she doesn't believe, until she is forced to. What do the ghosts of the Clutters want, as they appear one by one to confess their secrets and their anger to the most unlikely mediums of Capote and Lee? *Capote in Kansas* is an unforgettable "what might have been" — a fantasia of ghosts seeking resolve and revenge, and memories and regret for a past that was, that will never be again.

Capote in Kansas: A Ghost Story Details

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Author : Kim Powers

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From Reader Review Capote in Kansas: A Ghost Story for online ebook

David Burkam says

Beautifully written and emotionally true ... and what greater truth is there?

Donna Radcliff says

I liked this quirky little book about the odd and decades old relationship between Truman Capote and Harper Lee. The story is set in 1984, weeks before Truman dies, and the ghosts of his past come to haunt him...the Clutter family of *In Cold Blood*, as well as his 20+ year estrangement from his childhood friend, Harper (Nelle) Lee.

The story meanders smoothly between past and present, fact and fiction so the reader is never LOST. The characters are nicely developed, so much that you can actually see some of Capote's signature gestures and hear his voice.

Based on historical fact and literary license, this was a great tale with a bittersweet ending.

Andi M. says

A wonderful, surreal, really sad book. A fictional version of Truman Capote's and Harper Lee's friendship. Not to be missed.

Sharon says

An elegant, slender "what if" novel about the last days of Truman Capote's life and his lost friendship with Harper Lee. I've never read anything else by Mr. Powers before (and probably wouldn't have if I hadn't been working on a Southern Gothic unit), but he has a gift for rendering powerful images with just a few sentences. He deftly weaves known facts about Capote and Lee into his own narrative framework to create a very plausible scenario. It's ultimately a melancholy book, perfect for reading on a warm summer night.

Danielle says

A fictional tale based on reality concerning Truman Capote and Harper Lee. The book begins with Capote contacting Lee towards the end of his life after 20 years of estrangement. He claims to be seeing the ghosts of some members of the family he chronicled in *In Cold Blood* as well as one of their murderers. The story goes back and forth between the present and past referring to Capote and Lee's friendship as children and

their time in Kansas while Capote was working on *In Cold Blood* in the past and Capote's bizarre behavior in the present and how it affects Lee. It was a quick read. It wasn't a great book, but I did find it kind of interesting because it had lots of information I didn't really realize about Capote and Lee's friendship. While I was reading it I kind of wondered how much of the story was actually based in fact. The author wrote an afterward that pretty much outlined which parts of the story were fact and which were embellishments, which I really appreciated.

Velvetink says

This seems like a development of fan-fiction, only it's really an alternative history of Harper Lee and Truman Capote with a twilight zoneish twist. It didn't shed too much new light on Capote other than I was not aware of his collaged "snake boxes". Powers attempts to blend them into some possible meaning. It was an enjoyable read and made me want to find out more about Harper Lee.(Nellie). I might add that if you are not familiar with Capote's life much of it won't make sense.

* library borrow.

So far hauntingly familiar. Have I read this before? or just read enough of Capote for it to be familiar.

Christine says

This is the imagining of "What if Capote and Harper Lee got back in touch before they died." It was a really good refresher on significant events in both the authors' lives, from the Klan appearing at a party in their childhood, to their working on *In Cold Blood* together, to both of them living as celebrity authors. It eludes to potential reasons for their fall out.

Most of this book was just depressing. I found the Capote chapters more compelling, and even laughed out loud at his retaliation to a person stealing something from him. But, that was it. One chapter that I truly enjoyed.

Before this book I hadn't known about Capote's "art pieces" of snake bite kit collages, and Powers did a great job incorporating the pieces into the story.

Ben says

The premise of this book is more audacious than what it actually does with it. It imagines Truman Capote and Harper Lee being haunted by their pasts, figuratively and literally. Having not read too much about Capote's actual life, I was surprised to find out that the more surprising aspects of the book were based in fact. I guess I was just too distracted by the conjecture. It makes me want to read biographies of Capote and Lee (is there even one?) more than anything else. I liked it, but that's it--just liked it.

Timothy Juhl says

I enjoy novels by authors who take a few facts from the real lives of notable people and weave them into a fictional storyline. This slim novel lifts many facts from the lives of Truman Capote (perhaps one of our most fascinating authors) and his relationship with his childhood friend and Pulitzer-winner (and renowned recluse), Harper Lee. The story shifts from modern day (1984, in the months before Capote's death), to twenty years prior when he and Lee were researching the Clutter murders in Kansas for 'In Cold Blood' and then gives glimpses into the Lee and Capote's childhood in Alabama and those events that inspired Lee to write 'To Kill A Mockingbird'. Capote is portrayed with all the insanity and hallucinatory frailty we came to understand in his many talk show appearances. Harper Lee (who the author notes as having known personally) is drawn as a fearful woman who only wishes she had never met fame. Both are visited in their dreams by the ghosts of the Clutters who only wish to be left alone and never asked for the odd fame brought by Capote's brilliant telling of their murders. Lee is also haunted by the undo fame she gave her neighbor, the unwitting inspiration for Boo Radley, whose family came to hate Lee for making their son and brother an object of ridicule in their opinion. There were some nice moments in the book, a few phrases and descriptive turns that were worthy of my time reading this book, and I have to confess to a newly discovered obsession with Capote and his work.

Mark B. Perry says

Given that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is my favorite novel and Truman Capote is in my top five writers, I was intrigued when I unwrapped this book on Christmas morning. From the subtitle, I expected more of a classic ghost story, but the spirits in Powers' book are more like the personal demons haunting Nelle Harper Lee and Truman Streckfus Persons Capote as they enter their later years. Using real and well-known treasured writers as characters in fiction (particularly when one of them is still alive) and taking creative liberties with the facts, is, in a word, nothing short of audacious (as in "a willingness to take surprisingly bold risks"). I was kept off kilter throughout, and had to periodically remind myself that I was reading a novel and not a biography--which I believe is the only fair approach one can take when approaching Powers' ambitious book. As a writer of historical fiction myself, and one who gave Capote a cameo appearance in my debut novel, I was rather shocked by some of Powers' bold choices--such as putting Harper Lee smack dab in the middle of the action at Capote's famous Black & White Ball. To his credit, Powers explains all of his choices in an Author's Note, and I'll admit these fanciful rewrites of history do, in fact, serve his narrative. All in, Powers has written a bold, risky novel that simultaneously satisfies as much as it unsettles.

Linda says

Capote in Kansas is a ghostly story, in which a pair of childhood friends attain tremendous literary fame, only to have their relationship destroyed by their success. The novel opens as both Truman Capote and Harper Lee are nearing the ends of their respective lives. Each has been a "one book wonder" of a sort, each now long paralyzed by a form of writer's block. Both authors, who were simply human, after all, obsess over the choices they've made, struggling with enormous guilt and anxiety, somewhat existential in nature. Kim Powers takes the reader on an imaginary sojourn into their minds and hearts.

Kathy (Bermudaonion) says

Capote in Kansas: A Ghost Story by Kim Powers is a fictional account of the relationship between Truman Capote and Harper Lee. The book opens over twenty years after the publication of *In Cold Blood* with Truman being haunted by the ghost of Nancy Clutter. Even though he hadn't spoken to Nelle (Harper Lee) in twenty years, he calls her in the middle of the night. From there, the book explores their relationship from childhood to Truman's death. It also delves into the affect writing and researching the book *In Cold Blood* had on their relationship and on them individually. At one point, Nelle wondered, "What had happened to them in Kansas? Had those murders so sapped them they didn't have anything left over to put on the page?" Capote in Kansas also examines the controversy surrounding the authorship of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

Of course, this is a work of fiction. In an author's note at the back of the book, Kim Powers explains how he came to write the book and the research he undertook in preparation for writing it. So, while this book is fiction, much of it is based on real events. The thoughts and emotions of the characters are all imagined, though.

I am a fan of both Truman Capote and Harper Lee and their writing, so I found this to be a fascinating, page-turning read. I do wonder if someone who is unfamiliar with them would enjoy the book as much as I did.

Bamboozlepig says

After a string of DNF's, I finally found a book that caught my interest. I almost returned the book the same day I checked it out because sometimes supernatural elements make me uneasy. But I'm glad I decided to keep the book and give it a chance because it turned out to be a solidly good read.

I'm not going to spoil the plot for anyone who might be interested in reading the book, but I will say it blew me away. It's about the relationship between Harper Lee and Truman Capote and while it's fiction, it really delves into the turmoil both Lee and Capote had in regards to their writing abilities. Really loved the prose in this, Powers knows how to turn out beautiful phrases. For such a short book, it packed a powerful impact. In fact I really don't know what to say other than wow.

Anna says

Capote in Kansas tells the story of two childhood friends, Truman Capote and Harper Lee, who investigated the slaughter of the Clutter family together but eventually severed all ties. It begins with Capote making a late-night call to Lee, known as Nelle, to say he is being tormented by the ghost of Nancy Clutter. He hasn't spoken to Nelle in years. What follows is an eccentric tale of the end of Capote's life, the ghosts that haunt both him and Nelle, and the creepy snake boxes Capote assembles and has delivered to Nelle. Nelle must determine who is sending her these odd packages and why, and the snake boxes spark memories from their childhood and their trip to Kansas to research the Clutter murders. Why have the Clutters come back to haunt them? Did Harper Lee really pen *To Kill a Mockingbird*? And why does she never write another book? These are just some of the questions Powers raises in *Capote in Kansas*.

Powers expertly created a fictional story about two very real, very famous people. The book flows seamlessly from the past to the present, and he made the characters come to life on the page.

Full review on Diary of an Eccentric

Paula says

All the characters are factual and famous: Truman Capote, Harper Lee (Nelle Harper), and Nancy Clutter. The story is confusing and positively shrill at times. Capote's constant drunken harassment of his housekeeper and his childhood friend Harper/Nelle, and his rantings about ghostly visitations by the murdered Clutter family seemed over the top. Nancy Clutter, an ordinary mother and farmwife cruelly killed along with her family by two drifters, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock, who Capote immortalized in his novel, *In Cold Blood*, is the ghost who visits Capote and Nelle most often. This book fascinated and frustrated me.
