



One Christmas

Truman Capote

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One unforgettable Christmas, young Truman Capote is sent from his childhood home and his beloved cousin Miss Sook to New Orleans, to a father he's never met. Far from the warmth and familiarity of small town dreams and family traditions, Truman learns the painful truths about his father, about Santa Claus, and about love lost and found.

One Christmas Details

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notgettingenough says

My first (but not last) Capote:

<http://alittleteaalittlechat.wordpress...>

Sarah says

Damn--Truman Capote always brings me to tears! I need to read one of his longer books, but I'm not sure I have enough tissue.

Laura says

Read with my 10 year old. She felt sorry for Buddy's dad and was glad when Buddy returned to Alabama to Miss Sook. Great story!

Jessaka says

Not all Christmases can be wonderful, and this Christmas for Buddy (Truman Capote) was a bitter-sweet Christmas because he didn't get to spend it with his cousin Miss Sook but is sent to visit his father in New Orleans, a bus trip he hated to take because his father was a stranger, and because he misses Miss Sook.

Miss Sook said maybe there will be snow in New Orleans. Neither of them had ever seen snow. I think Sook loved snow because as he said, "Sook read me many stories, and it seemed a lot of snow was in almost all of them. Drifting, dazzling fairy tale flakes." Of course there was no snow in New Orleans, which was the second of his disappointments, the first having to leave at all.

His father was happy to see him, and when he picked him up at the bus station, he was laughing and crying and then asked him, "Don't you know me?" But that night he just prayed to be home.

His father had already bought him a Christmas tree, which I felt should have been something that they should have done together, but at least they went into town to buy ornaments.

What an estranged family, with even a mother who was not around and who said that his birth had destroyed her, which comment also destroyed him. Some things like this, you just never get over. And how hard that must have been for him to put this memory down in this Christmas story, at least, I thought, "A Christmas Memory," although also being bitter-sweet, was mostly sweet.

And Sook had told him about Santa Claus, and he believed in this Santa with his "flowing beard, he red suit, his jangling present-filled sled," he believed it just as he believed in God, and he prayed to this Santa to bring

him a gift that he saw and desired when he was shopping with his father.

At one moment he is talking about wanting a radio, his father had one but few people owned them. His father was wealthy; he had everything. He even had a big party where Buddy ate his first oyster and said, "It was like a bad dream sliding down my throat." I can understand that, as I felt that way when I ate my first and only one. The butter that was on it did not help. Mushrooms are like that too, they are like eating dead goldfish.

His father wanted his love, but that was hard to come by. At the end of the book Buddy realizes that his dad did love him, as he found evidence in his safety deposit box after he had died, just as I did when I picked up my own father's belongings after his death, for I had found photos of us kids that he kept in an album. One of his few possessions. Memories are far and few between when there is a divorce in the family, and not all of them are good, not even the ones before.

Cheri says

This is a very short story written by Truman Capote about one Christmas when he went to spend the holidays with his father, who lived in New Orleans, leaving behind his beloved Miss Sook – his much older, white-haired cousin, as well as his best friend - if only temporarily.

Having just read Truman Capote's *The Thanksgiving Visitor* last month, I was familiar with the setting, and the people, and I was more than happy to return.

This was published originally in a 1982 issue of Ladies Home Journal, and later published by Random House in 1983 – making this the final published work of Capote before his death in 1984.

I have a copy of this book, but you can read this several places online for free. Here's a link to one: <http://shortstorymasterpieces.altervi...>

Cynthia Egbert says

I was hoping for another story like A Christmas Memory but this story just broke my heart. It is well written but it's not happy. I don't know why parents would manage a child in this way but I am grateful that Mr. Capote was able to get it down on paper, I hope that helped. Mr. Capote was special as a child and I desperately wish I could hug young Truman.

Here are a couple of good phrases:

"I will never forget my first oyster, it was like a bad dream sliding down my throat."

"Of course there is a Santa Claus. It's just that no single somebody could do all he has to do. So the Lord has spread the task among us all. That's why everybody is Santa Claus. I am. You are. Even your cousin Billy Bob."

"Now go to sleep. Count stars. Think of the quietest thing. Like snow. I'm sorry you didn't get to see any. But now snow is falling through the stars.' Stars sparkled, snow swirled inside my head; the last thing I remembered was the peaceful voice of the Lord telling me something I must do. And the next day I did it."

Jake says

A very true story about Christmas and facing the harsh realities that a kid has to face. Such great writing for a classic, and a very enlightening story on Capote life as a young boy.

Yvonne says

A haunting tale of a first Christmas far from the comforts that he grew up with in Alabama. Truman Capote shares with us his memory of Christmas with his father in New Orleans and the disillusioned results of that visit. I enjoyed it immensely even though it brought memories of my own back...memories of divorced parents and the bitterness they give to their children. Still a wonderful tale of growth, disillusionment, and the different ways used to handle life and its challenges.

Terri says

Great childhood memories that bring out the real wonder and meaning of Christmas. A very short read and good book for discussion with children.

Ria says

A lovely short story of a Christmas visit made by the author to his father in New Orleans over the festive period.

Its a very sad episode as Truman didn't wish to go to see his father as they were virtual strangers and his father was prone to fits of drinking culminating in an ugly scene when Truman goes back home.

But after a soothing chat with the elderly "Sook" he seems to somehow reconcile himself to the whole business of that lost Christmas with an estranged father who didn't seem to care or understand the homesickness his little boy was experiencing.

Overall a great glimpse into a period of the author's life that obviously caused him great pain at the time and that still resonates with him today to enable him to write about it with such poignancy.

A great read.

??????? ?????????? says

There should have been a whole novel or a collection of short stories about Miss Sook.

The room was dark. Sook was sitting beside me, rocking in a rocking chair, a sound as soothing as ocean waves. I had tried to tell her everything that had happened, and only stopped when I was hoarse as a howling dog. She stroked her fingers through my hair, and said: "Of course there is a Santa Claus..."

Eleanor says

This is really a short story published all by itself. I grabbed it off the Christmas books display at the library. If you find it, check it out. So much said in so little space. It's a story that contains a lot of beginnings -- a lot of "now I realize this was the beginning of something..." I like it.

Stella Wenny says

"Of course there is a Santa Claus. It's just that no single somebody could do all he has to do. So the Lord has spread the task among us all. That's why everybody is Santa Claus. I am. You are."

;____;

Tempo de Ler says

Truman Capote é um daqueles escritores que, dizendo pouco, nos diz tanto.

Aqui é-nos narrado, na primeira pessoa, o episódio em que, na infância, Capote foi passar o Natal com o pai enquanto cede, simultaneamente, indicações do que aconteceu posteriormente, anos mais tarde.

O casamento dos seus pais é um daqueles que nunca deveria ter acontecido; quando decidiram finalmente seguir cada um o seu caminho, deixaram o filho aos cuidados de familiares, nomeadamente uma tia à qual ele muito se afeiçoa.

É esta criança que nos fala directamente, criando um contraste formidável entre o peso do que nos é dito e a leveza com que essa informação é partilhada. Apesar do ponto de vista infantil, simples, minimalista, notamos no tanto que se esconde por detrás de cada frase. Mesmo que na altura não conseguisse compreender o que o rodeava, Capote viria mais tarde a estudar estas peripécias, a analisá-las, a perceber como moldaram a sua personalidade, como o traumatizaram e fizeram sentir que o seu nascimento veio comprometer a vida dos pais. Sem explorar largamente os sentimentos dos personagens, Capote explicita o respectivo sofrimento, medo e raiva no comportamento de cada um deles, nas suas decisões e reacções.

"Todo o tempo que ela falou (e eu tentava não ouvir, porque ao dizer que o meu nascimento a tinha destruído, ela estava a destruir-me)" - p.19

Como é fácil de adivinhar, esta visita não corre pelo melhor. O pai exhibe-o com orgulho sem se aperceber do embaraço que lhe provoca; não o conhece e, por isso mesmo, não o consegue agradecer.

Curto e muito fácil de acompanhar, é bem provável que passemos mais tempo a pensar no livro depois de terminado do que propriamente a lê-lo.

"Senti uma dor estranhíssima. Uma dor esmagadora que doía por todo o lado." - p. 26

Paula says

Wonderfully human and sad--poignant.

Emi says

J'ai absolument adoré cette nouvelle où Buddy et son amie font des cakes aux fruits tous les mois de novembre. Ça sent les cerises confites, le gingembre, l'ananas d'hawaii, les raisins et le whiskey et nous sommes envoûtés dans cette aventure si douce et mélancolique. À lire, à relire et à faire lire.

Catherine Mustread says

Young boy learns a few things about his long absent father (and Santa) when he spends Christmas with his Dad in New Orleans as a 6-year-old in the 1930s.

Listened to this on Selected Shorts.

Patrice says

I love Truman Capote's Christmas shorts. They are sweet, charming, and humorous. A glimpse into a rural southern childhood of another time. These stories let us see why Capote was such a great writer. If you only have a little time for a Christmas read, try these sweet treats!

Jen says

This was a well-written short story that was truly heartbreaking. I agree with another reviewer, I wish there were a whole collection of stories about Ms. Sook and his Alabama family. Highly recommended to fans of Truman.

Gila Gila says

I don't like sap. I particularly don't like sappy Christmas stories (or songs or tv shows or display windows, added Ms. Scrooge). But I love Truman Capote and his autobiographical stories are some of his best, and if the last line of this incredibly sad memory of the one Christmas he spent with his alcoholic father, a stranger to him, is sappy, then - well, it is that, and it's fine. It's absolutely fine.

Someone here wrote that they wanted to read more of Capote's doting older cousin, here named Cousin Sook (her real name, fantastically, was Nanny Rumbley Faulk). I believe there are a couple of other stories that feature her - I want them too. I also want Miss Sook to sit by my bedside and soothe me until I fall asleep, as she did for "Bud", and I want her to explain to me and to every child disappointed to learn there is no Santa that the truth is everyone is Santa Claus, it had to be that way, because the job is just too big for one person.

Well damn, look there. Sap love, through and through.
