



Miriam

Truman Capote

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Miriam Details

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From Reader Review Miriam for online ebook

Brennan Wieland says

This story had the same kind of hazy feel the "The Tooth" by Shirley Jackson had. The entire story seems cloudy, and once again, a lot is left up for interpretation.

In "Miriam", a woman is living a lonely life after her husband died, and she intends on keeping it that way. One day when she is at the movies, a young girl comes up to her and asks her for a favor. The woman is intrigued to hear that the little girl has the same name as her, "Miriam". They then part ways after that event. Several weeks later, there is a knock on the woman's door late at night. She finds the little girl there, and the girl invites herself in. The woman asks her to leave because of how late it was but Miriam refuses. She finally has the girl leave after making her a meal and practically forcing her out of the door. Before the girl leaves, she asks for a kiss on the cheek. The woman refuses, and the girl storms around the room, braking a vase and smashing the flowers inside. The woman is very stressed out over the event and, to help deal with the stress, goes out the next morning and shops for the entire day to try and forget about the strange night before.

That night the girl comes again, and will not leave the door until the woman opens it. The girl brings a box with her full of clothes and a doll. The tells the woman that she is moving into the house with her. The woman is very frightened and runs downstairs to find someone to help deal with the situation. A man goes to her room and doesn't find anything and tells the woman that it's safe to return. The woman returns reluctantly and lays down on the couch to try to relax. Then the woman hears the faint rustling sound of a dress, and then the final line of the story. -"Hello," said Miriam.

It is unclear which Miriam said those words, it's left for you to decide. The creepiness shows through this story, with the little girl who seems almost ghost like. The white silk dresses she wears and the words used to describe her add to this feel.

Overall, I really enjoyed this story and would highly recommend it.

arianna says

Charmingly creepy, makes your imagination soar with what it could mean...

Alice Dempsey says

As a novelist, I've always found Truman Capote's writing (in both short and long prose) to be something to aspire towards. I find his florid description, sentence structure, and keen observational ear to add something special to his stories, along with his excellent use of dialogue - a hard thing to crack, especially when it comes to writing dialect from different places in a believable manner.

Whilst building my character, (A Southern Gothic protagonist named Marybelle), I felt I needed to garner

inspiration and knowledge from Capote and see how he tackles the female character.

In this story, the narrative flickers between two different Miriam's - the widowed, childless spinster, and the hauntingly intelligent child - and we see a relationship build between the two women, albeit one of great confusion and eeriness. The younger Miriam inserts herself into the elder woman's life, which initially frightens the hesitant woman, but at the end of the narrative, the situation is shown to be something of a parasitic relationship shared between them both. It is then the reader must interpret whether this young girl was real, or just a figment of the lonely woman's mind.

What I found in this novel was the clear use of Freud's Uncanny - the psychological concept which usually lends itself to the Gothic genre - and I knew that I wanted my Marybelle character to be something of a childlike Miriam, as she not only leaves an impact on the adult Miriam but also on the reader. Miriam is never given a backstory, nor properly answers any of the questions that the adult Miriam asks her, but continues to move along at her own pace and never seems remorseful over what she is doing to this life she has interrupted. This is a very strong character to read about, and sets the reader on edge - something I want to mimic in my own work.

Ultimately, I want my Marybelle to showcase the same Gothic tropes that Miriam has, along with being able to insert herself intrinsically into other people's lives and leave them reliant on her. I will always refer to Capote when I'm reading Gothic literature, as I think the way he tells a story is simply beautiful.

Radwa says

I love Capote's writing style and I love the way his writing flows.

This is a creepy story about a 61-years-old woman coming across a little girl, with the same name as her, Miriam, and the consequences that follow. What I love about this story are the different interpretations you could come up with, the little girl could be death, mere hallucinations, an actual ghost, or a symbol of the old women's past and younger self!

I loved how creepy and eerie it was and how it could be a different story with each interpretation you choose.

Franco Santos says

Primer trabajo que leo de Truman Capote y tengo que decir que me dejó una muy buena experiencia.

Excelente historia para pasar un rato agradable. **Es sumamente perturbadora.**

-Hola -dijo Miriam.

Oswaldo says

Primer escrito de Truman Capote, uno bastante paranoico. Tiene sus pretenciones pero deja un buen sabor de boca y ganas de volver a leerlo.

danielle says

Starting a sentence with ‘And’ or ‘But’ should be a ballsy choice, not an oversight. Who allowed ‘ballsy’ to become a real word? Ah—Truman Capote. And I think I like his face—at least I do in the few artistic images I saw when it was already rough and weathered. How does one say, ‘Fantastic, Truman Capote was a proponent of a liberal use colons,’ without quite saying that? Or, ‘With Miriam, in I dip my toes, which have been too long unwet.’

There is a slight distracting difference in fonts, as there is with tone, after taking from with a copy and a paste. But I am too obsessed with myself, and so inward I recede. I concede, I may not be that fascinating to all those who do not choose to watch me. Submerged as so into one’s own head, a flicker of eyes from here to there is all there is, the subtlest hint of what remains is floating underwater, still hidden. The sensation of cessation differs on a continuum from far-too-soon to overstayed. Language as a graph in too many dimensions and with far too many categorical variables to ever accurately visualize (to aid in understanding), let alone understand.

To be let alone is dissimilar to being left alone and dissimilar still to being left, alone. As everyone great is dead and so the good are the cream who are left to rise and perhaps, only perhaps, someone great can stand upon those good shoulders while they maintain some lessened baseline—current maxima being some local minima amongst absolute maxima, I hope. But then, there is the issue of the gatekeepers, who are holding down weakening forts as well. So, if that is so, you and I, we may as well be dead already, for there is no hope left to claim. Ah, I exclaim, angrily, as I hate everyone who cannot write this well. And so, perhaps I am inappropriately appalled, as not many of any transient population could dream to attain such precision. ‘The rumble of newsreel bombs exploded in the distance’—at the time, a vivid image; I could almost hear them now.

If I could peer far enough outside myself, I would see I am conversing only with myself too, and it is, in fact, a symptom of loneliness or, at least, of finding oneself without peers in an overcrowded expanse. There are parallels, perhaps, but no two lines, which are not self-defined, overlap—not exactly. There may be tangents, if we allow for lines with curvature, assuming people change. To someone: a person; to only one: a name and face. And a place as just one place, but both her home and their escape. ‘Her hand shook as she held the match, fascinated, till it burned her finger,’ and still, as we are wont to do, in this life we long to linger led by hopes of perhaps more until somehow, all at once, we settle for less and less.

Unless we wake up, untethered from such ‘imitation’ pseudo-things, with the stillsame light anew disrupting our ‘unwholesome fancies.’ But, as light is wont too, it fades to unreplenished, dissatisfied, alone save for oneself and if that is enough.

Connie Kuntz says

Miriam is a short ghost story I read with my kids. Takes place in snowy 1950’s New York and follows the the lonely routine of the widow Mrs. H. T. Miller. She is a tidy, routine-loving, canary-owning, sixty-something year old who “meets” a young girl named Miriam while waiting in line at the movies. Though I don’t usually post reviews for short stories, I am for this because it is by Truman Capote and we are studying

his work; plus it is so well written that I guess others may appreciate the tale, too.

About loneliness: I recommend it often to my children. Another person might encourage “independence” or “solitude”, but not me. Learning how to live with loneliness is incredibly focusing and energizing. There is a sincerity to loneliness and I think it helps an individual draw out and commit to his or her own inherent values. I realize there are convincing contrary arguments, and that homeschoolers are accused of being “unsocialized” oh, like all the time, but I say phooey on all that. Get lonely! It’s great for you!

Signed,
Now I want a canary named Tommy

Everley Sharp, the Clankinist says

This was just weird.

Joselito Honestly and Brilliantly says

Miriam is a 61-year-old widow who lives alone in an apartment with her pet bird. Then she meets a young girl, around 8 years old, likewise named Miriam.

Sounds like the beginning of a feel-good story. Indeed, a movie would go towards this predictable direction: the lonely widow, despairing of old age, learns something new from the innocent child.

But not this one. If it hadn't ended sooner, I really felt the girl will turn out to be something like Chucky, the evil doll. But I wasn't really sure. Truth to tell, if one would ask me if the girl was real or only imagined by the old widow I'd honestly say I'm not sure. And, if she was only a hallucination, why the widow would suffer such mental deception (was it the guilt of an abortion of long ago that haunts her? Or maybe an unsatisfied yearning to become a mother?).

Katie says

So creepy...and yet it was impossible to put it down...The story is perfectly written, holds your interest till the last word...and makes you wonder long after you've read it...

Colours are important here: lots of blue and white...White shows Miriam was good + the girl's white hair suggests her being an angel. Blue, probably, stands for sadness: Miriam had to die.

The most striking is the last sentence:

"Hello," said Miriam.

And we don't know which Miriam...

Gary says

An excellent short story by Truman Capote.

Different from previous books I have read by Capote. This book is creepy and could easily be turned into a film if it hasn't already been done.

Dexter Jackson says

This was an interesting little short story, but it was kind of jumbled up at the end.

Alvaro Acevedo Barrios says

¡Qué buen minirelato! Recomendable para pasar el rato

Daz says

Starts off like a delightful story, then ever so slowly an absorbing sense of creepiness takes over. Love how clear the writing is, making it almost impossible to be removed or distracted from the story. 4 1/2.
