



Pink Triangle: The Feuds and Private Lives of Tennessee Williams, Gore Vidal, Truman Capote, and Famous Members of Their Entourages

Darwin Porter, Danforth Prince

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One hot summer night in 1945, three young American writers, each an enfant terrible, came together in a stuffy Manhattan apartment for the first time. Each member of this pink triangle was on the dawn of world fame—Tennessee Williams for *A Streetcar Named Desire*; Gore Vidal for his notorious homosexual novel, *The City and the Pillar*; and Truman Capote for *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, a book that had been marketed with a photograph depicting Capote as a underaged sex object that caused as much controversy as the prose inside.

Each of the three remained competitively and defiantly provocative throughout the course of his writing career. Initially hailed by critics as “the darlings of the gods,” each of them would, in time, be attacked for his contributions to film, the theater, and publishing. Some of their works would be widely reviewed as “obscene rantings from perverted sociopaths.”

From that summer night emerged betrayals that eventually evolved into lawsuits, stolen lovers, public insults, and the most famous and flamboyant rivalries in America’s literary history. The private opinions of these authors about their celebrity acquaintances usually left scar tissue.

Vidal became the most iconoclastic writer since Voltaire, needling and satirizing the sacred cows of his era and explosively describing subjects which included America’s gay founding fathers, the lesbian affairs of Eleanor Roosevelt, his own seduction of the Beat Generation’s spiritual leader and guru, Jack Kerouac. The book contains an overview of Vidal’s hot, then glacial, relationship with the fabled diarist Anaïs Nin, and the drawn-out slugfests which followed.

Capote became the mascot of the ultra-fashionable jet set, surrounded and showcased by his glamorous “swans.” Eventually, Capote feuded not only with Vidal, but with “The Queen of the Best-Sellers,” Jacqueline Susann, publicly referring to her as “a truck driver in drag.” Capote’s own struggles for bestsellerdom are depicted during the research of his all-time hit, *In Cold Blood*, wherein he falls hopelessly in love with one of its killers. The book contains details about his hosting of “The Party of the Century,” and his self-destructive descent into isolation, alcohol, and drugs.

Tennessee Williams, attacked for his “incurable sense of decadence,” became as notorious as his plays. His tumultuous private life is explored as never before in a portrait that’s as poignant and flamboyant as any character he created, including that of Blanche DuBois. Did Tennessee really perform fellatio on JFK at his Palm Beach compound? Did Warren Beatty really have sex with him as a means of procuring his role as the gigolo in *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*? What really happened when a then-unknown actor, Marlon Brando, arrived on Tennessee’s doorstep in Provincetown during World War II?

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