



The Beautiful Room Is Empty: A Novel

By Edmund White

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The Beautiful Room Is Empty: A Novel By Edmund White

When the narrator of White's poised yet scalding autobiographical novel first embarks on his sexual odyssey, it is the 1950s, and America is "a big gray country of families on drowsy holiday." That country has no room for a scholarly teenager with guilty but insatiable stirrings toward other men. Moving from a Midwestern college to the Stonewall Tavern on the night of the first gay uprising--and populated by eloquent queens, butch poseurs, and a fearfully incompetent shrink--**The Beautiful Room is Empty** conflates the acts of coming out and coming of age.

"With intelligence, candor, humor--and anger--White explores the most insidious aspects of oppression.... An impressive novel."--*Washington Post book World*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

This sequel to *A Boy's Own Story* is a satisfying successor to that acclaimed 1982 novel, taking the narrator through the 1950s and '60s as he matures as a gay man at the University of Michigan and later in New York. Some of White's previous fiction (*Forgetting Elena*, *Caracole*) has been considered opaque and inaccessible, but his discursive stylea modified stream of consciousness that leans luxuriantly and effectively on metaphor and simileaptly suits *A Boy's Own Story* and this novel, both books of memory, never too tightly plotted, but always revelatory of character and milieu as a wise narrator dissects his past and the web of his relationships with family, lovers and friends. Life in the novel is life as it is remembered, and the two novels form the lyrical but politically pointed fictional autobiography of a homosexual recalling his youth (in *A Boy's Own Story*) and, in this novel, the last years of psychological self-oppression and the first sweet years of liberation. White's gift for dialogue and anecdote and the melancholy elegance of his prose (often at odds with the spiteful tone the narrator takes) persuade the reader to suspend judgment as the author suspends time, to move with the narrator back and forth between past and deeper past, to delve deeper inside the soul of a man whose spiritual and sexual odysseys chart the development and joyfully confirm the existence of the elusive notion of "gay sensibility."

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From Library Journal

White, generally recognized as one of the most influential of modern gay authors, continues the coming-of-age tale begun in *A Boy's Own Story* (LJ 9/1/82). He follows our nameless hero from his final year at prep school in the mid-1950s through his cruisy but self-deprecating college years to the "turning point" in his lifethe famous Stonewall uprising of 1969 in which the clients of a New York gay bar stood up to the policemen trying to close it down. What emerges is the picture of a young man desperately struggling to come to terms with himself, a struggle that is a universal even if the context for every individual is different. Artfully constructed, this work clearly transcends its "gay" theme. Explicit at times, it remains highly recommended. David W. Henderson, Eckerd Coll. Lib., St. Petersburg, Fl.

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From the Inside Flap

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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This book untitled *The Beautiful Room Is Empty: A Novel* to be one of several books in which best seller in

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Gary Stark:

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Kathleen Hernandez:

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Claudia Butler:

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