

in cold blood truman capote

****In Cold Blood Truman Capote: A Groundbreaking True Crime Masterpiece****

in cold blood truman capote is more than just the title of a book; it represents a revolutionary moment in literary history. Truman Capote's 1966 work redefined the boundaries between journalism and literature, giving birth to the "nonfiction novel" genre. The book's chilling narrative, meticulous research, and compelling storytelling have captivated readers for decades, making it a seminal piece in both American literature and true crime writing.

The Genesis of In Cold Blood Truman Capote

The story behind *In Cold Blood* is as fascinating as the book itself. Truman Capote, already an acclaimed writer with works like *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, was intrigued by a brutal murder that took place in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, in 1959. The Clutter family was senselessly killed, and Capote saw an opportunity to craft a narrative that went beyond traditional crime reporting.

Capote, along with his childhood friend Harper Lee, traveled to Kansas to investigate the case firsthand. Their dedication to interviews, court documents, and crime scene details laid the foundation for a narrative that was both factually accurate and emotionally gripping.

The Development of the Nonfiction Novel

Before *In Cold Blood*, true crime stories were typically straightforward accounts, lacking the depth and literary craftsmanship seen in novels. Truman Capote's approach was revolutionary. He combined exhaustive research with novelistic techniques like character development, dramatic pacing, and vivid descriptions to create a work that read like fiction but was grounded in reality.

This blending of fact and storytelling raised questions about journalistic ethics and the boundaries of literary license, but it also set a new standard for narrative nonfiction. Capote's meticulous attention to detail and his ability to humanize both victims and perpetrators transformed true crime writing forever.

Plot Overview and Key Themes in In Cold Blood Truman Capote

At its core, *In Cold Blood* recounts the harrowing murders of Herbert Clutter, his wife Bonnie, and their two children, Nancy and Kenyon. The crime was committed by two drifters, Richard "Dick" Hickock and Perry Smith, who believed the Clutter family had a safe

filled with cash. Their inability to find any money led to a senseless and brutal killing.

Exploring the Dual Narratives

One of the most compelling aspects of *In Cold Blood* is how Capote weaves together two distinct narratives: the lives of the Clutter family and the backgrounds of their killers. This dual perspective allows readers to understand not only the tragedy but also the complex motivations, histories, and psyches of Hickock and Smith.

By humanizing the murderers without excusing their actions, Capote challenges readers to grapple with themes of morality, justice, and the nature of evil. This nuanced portrayal is a hallmark of the book and contributes to its lasting impact.

Major Themes and Literary Techniques

- **The American Dream and Its Dark Side:** The Clutter family represented the ideal of suburban success and wholesomeness, but their violent end exposes the fragility of that dream.
- **Fate and Free Will:** Capote explores whether Hickock and Smith's backgrounds determined their violent actions or if they made conscious choices.
- **Isolation and Loneliness:** Both the victims and perpetrators experience profound isolation, which influences their fates.
- **Detailed Scene Setting:** Capote's vivid descriptions of the Kansas landscape and the Clutter home immerse readers, heightening the emotional impact.

The Impact of *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote on Literature and Culture

The release of *In Cold Blood* had a seismic effect on literature, journalism, and popular culture. It wasn't just a bestseller; it was a cultural phenomenon that influenced countless writers and filmmakers.

Influence on True Crime Genre

Capote's work elevated true crime from sensationalist storytelling to serious literature. Many modern true crime authors cite *In Cold Blood* as a primary inspiration for their work. The book's methodical research, combined with narrative flair, set a blueprint for how to tell true crime stories responsibly and compellingly.

Ethical Debates and Criticism

Despite its acclaim, *In Cold Blood* sparked debate over journalistic ethics. Critics questioned Capote's close relationship with the murderers and whether he compromised objectivity to create a more engaging narrative. Some even accused him of fabricating or altering certain scenes for dramatic effect.

These controversies have fueled ongoing discussions about the responsibilities of nonfiction writers, especially when dealing with sensitive subjects like violent crime.

Adaptations and Legacy

The story's compelling nature made it ripe for adaptation. In 1967, a film version of *In Cold Blood* was released, praised for its faithful and haunting portrayal of the events. Since then, the book has inspired documentaries, stage plays, and countless articles exploring the case and Capote's methods.

Moreover, *In Cold Blood* remains a staple in academic settings, often included in curricula exploring American literature, journalism, and criminal psychology.

Truman Capote's Writing Style and Research Methodology

Understanding Capote's approach to writing *In Cold Blood* offers valuable insights into how he achieved such a powerful narrative.

Immersive Journalism

Capote's commitment to immersive journalism was extraordinary. He spent years interviewing everyone connected to the case, from law enforcement to local townspeople, and most notably, the killers themselves. This deep immersion allowed him to capture authentic voices and perspectives, lending credibility and emotional resonance to his work.

Balancing Objectivity and Subjectivity

While Capote aimed for factual accuracy, he also recognized the need for storytelling techniques that could engage readers on a deeper level. His use of dialogue reconstruction, scene setting, and inner monologues created a literary experience that felt immediate and intimate.

This balance between objective fact and subjective narrative is one reason why *In Cold Blood* is studied as both journalism and literature.

Challenges Faced During Research

Capote's dedication wasn't without its challenges. Gaining the trust of the killers was difficult, and the emotional toll of dealing with such a grim case was significant. Furthermore, Capote faced pressure from editors and publishers eager for a finished product, which sometimes conflicted with his meticulous pace.

Despite these obstacles, his perseverance resulted in a book that remains unmatched in the genre.

Why *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote Still Matters Today

Decades after its publication, *In Cold Blood* continues to resonate with readers, scholars, and true crime enthusiasts.

Relevance in Contemporary True Crime

In an era where true crime podcasts, documentaries, and books dominate popular culture, Capote's work stands as a foundational text. His methods and narrative style have influenced how stories of crime and justice are told, emphasizing the importance of comprehensive research and ethical storytelling.

Exploring Human Nature Through Crime

At its heart, *In Cold Blood* is a profound exploration of human nature. The book forces readers to confront uncomfortable questions about violence, empathy, and the factors that shape behavior. It remains a powerful reminder that true stories, when told with care and insight, can illuminate the complexities of life in ways fiction alone cannot.

Tips for Readers Approaching *In Cold Blood*

- **Read with an Open Mind:** Recognize that Capote's portrayal of the killers is nuanced but not apologetic.
- **Consider the Historical Context:** Understanding 1950s America and the social environment of Kansas enhances appreciation.
- **Reflect on the Ethical Questions:** Think critically about the responsibilities of writers when handling true stories.
- **Explore Supplementary Material:** Documentaries and biographies about Capote and the Clutter case provide valuable background.

In Cold Blood Truman Capote remains a testament to the power of storytelling grounded

in truth. Its blend of investigative rigor, literary artistry, and psychological insight makes it a captivating read that continues to inspire and challenge readers around the world.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the genre of Truman Capote's 'In Cold Blood'?

'In Cold Blood' is a non-fiction novel, often classified as a true crime narrative or a literary nonfiction work.

What is the main plot of 'In Cold Blood' by Truman Capote?

'In Cold Blood' recounts the real-life story of the brutal 1959 murders of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, and the subsequent investigation and capture of the killers.

How did Truman Capote research for 'In Cold Blood'?

Truman Capote conducted extensive research for 'In Cold Blood,' including interviews with investigators, friends, and relatives of the victims, as well as the killers themselves, Perry Smith and Richard Hickock.

Why is 'In Cold Blood' considered groundbreaking in literature?

'In Cold Blood' is considered groundbreaking because it pioneered the true crime genre by blending factual reporting with the narrative techniques of fiction, creating a compelling and immersive storytelling style.

What themes are explored in 'In Cold Blood'?

The book explores themes such as the nature of evil, the impact of violence on a community, the complexities of human psychology, and the American justice system.

Additional Resources

****In Cold Blood Truman Capote: A Groundbreaking Exploration of True Crime Literature****

in cold blood truman capote stands as a seminal work in American literature, often credited with pioneering the true crime genre and redefining narrative journalism. Published in 1966, Capote's meticulous account of the brutal 1959 murders of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, combines rigorous investigative reporting with novelistic storytelling to deliver a haunting and complex portrait of crime and its consequences. This article delves into the significance of **In Cold Blood**, examining its literary techniques, thematic depth, and lasting impact on both literature and journalism.

The Genesis of *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote

Truman Capote, already an established literary figure by the early 1960s, embarked on the project that would become *In Cold Blood* after reading a brief article about the Clutter family murders. Intrigued by the stark brutality of the crime and its impact on the small Kansas community, Capote traveled to Holcomb to investigate firsthand. What followed was a four-year immersion into the lives of everyone connected to the case—victims, perpetrators, law enforcement, and locals.

Capote's approach was revolutionary for its time. Instead of merely reporting facts, he sought to reconstruct the entire narrative with literary finesse, blending factual accuracy with the emotional and psychological depth characteristic of fiction. This commitment to immersive storytelling is one reason *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote remains a benchmark in the true crime genre.

Blending Journalism and Literature

One of the most discussed features of *In Cold Blood* is its narrative style. Capote coined the term "nonfiction novel" to describe his work, emphasizing the book's factual basis while employing techniques traditionally reserved for novels. These include detailed character development, dialogue reconstruction, and scene-setting descriptions that create a vivid and immersive reading experience.

The use of multiple perspectives is another key aspect. Capote shifts seamlessly between the viewpoints of the victims, the murderers, and the investigators, offering readers a comprehensive understanding of the crime's complexity. This multifaceted approach allows for a nuanced exploration of motives, consequences, and the human psyche.

Investigative Rigor and Ethical Controversies

The depth of Capote's research underpins the credibility of *In Cold Blood*. His collaboration with Harper Lee, who assisted in interviews and background research, contributed significantly to the book's detailed accuracy. Capote conducted hundreds of interviews, reviewed court transcripts, and spent extensive time with the murderers, Richard "Dick" Hickock and Perry Smith, gaining insights into their backgrounds and motivations.

However, this close involvement also sparked ethical debates. Some critics questioned Capote's objectivity, suggesting that his personal relationship with the killers may have influenced his portrayal of them, particularly Perry Smith, who is depicted with a degree of sympathy and complexity. Moreover, Capote's reconstruction of dialogue and private thoughts, while artistically compelling, raised questions about the boundaries between fact and fiction in nonfiction works.

The Role of Setting and Atmosphere

Capote's vivid descriptions of Holcomb and the American Midwest in the late 1950s play a critical role in **In Cold Blood**. The seemingly idyllic small-town atmosphere contrasts sharply with the violent disruption caused by the murders, amplifying the shock and tragedy. This juxtaposition also serves to explore broader themes such as the fragility of the American Dream and the darkness lurking beneath the surface of everyday life.

The meticulous portrayal of the physical environment—the sprawling fields, weather conditions, and the Clutter family home—contributes to the book's immersive quality. Readers gain not only an understanding of the crime but also a profound sense of place, which anchors the narrative in a specific cultural and historical context.

Thematic Exploration in *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote

Beyond narrating a true crime story, **In Cold Blood** delves into profound themes that resonate universally, which is part of why it continues to be studied and discussed decades after publication.

Crime and Punishment

The book offers an unflinching look at the criminal justice system, from investigation to trial and eventual execution. Capote presents the legal proceedings with detailed accuracy but also questions the nature of justice itself. Through the portrayals of Hickock and Smith, he examines whether the death penalty serves as an effective deterrent or merely perpetuates a cycle of violence.

Psychological Complexity of Criminals

Unlike many crime narratives that reduce offenders to caricatures of evil, Capote humanizes the murderers, exploring their troubled pasts, motivations, and vulnerabilities. Perry Smith, in particular, emerges as a tragic figure shaped by abuse and neglect. This psychological depth invites readers to grapple with uncomfortable questions about nature versus nurture and the societal factors that contribute to criminal behavior.

Impact on Small Communities

In Cold Blood also investigates the ripple effects of violent crime on close-knit communities. The Clutter murders shattered the sense of safety and cohesion in Holcomb, illustrating how a single act of violence can profoundly alter social dynamics and collective consciousness.

Legacy and Influence of *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote

The publication of *In Cold Blood* marked a turning point in both literature and journalism. Its innovative narrative style inspired a generation of writers and journalists to explore nonfiction storytelling with greater creativity and depth. The book's commercial success demonstrated a widespread appetite for true crime narratives that combine investigative rigor with literary craftsmanship.

In the decades since its release, *In Cold Blood* has been adapted into films, documentaries, and academic studies, further cementing its cultural significance. It remains a subject of analysis in literary criticism, particularly discussions about the ethics of narrative nonfiction and the representation of truth.

Comparisons with Contemporary True Crime Works

When compared to modern true crime literature and media, *In Cold Blood* stands out for its pioneering narrative techniques and ethical complexity. While many contemporary works emphasize sensationalism or focus heavily on forensic details, Capote's book balances emotional resonance with factual precision. However, some modern critics argue that newer works benefit from advancements in forensic science and media transparency, which were unavailable during Capote's time.

Criticisms and Controversies

Despite its acclaim, *In Cold Blood* Truman Capote has faced criticism regarding the accuracy of certain details and the potential embellishment of events. Scholars and journalists have debated whether Capote's artistic liberties compromised the book's factual integrity. Additionally, questions about Capote's motivations—whether he prioritized narrative drama over journalistic objectivity—continue to fuel discussions about the responsibilities of nonfiction writers.

- **Pros:** Innovative narrative style, deep psychological insight, immersive storytelling, influential in true crime genre.
- **Cons:** Ethical concerns over objectivity, potential fictionalization of facts, controversial portrayal of criminals.

In Cold Blood Truman Capote remains a landmark work that challenges readers to confront the complexities of crime, justice, and human nature. Its blend of literary artistry and investigative reporting set new standards, while its thematic richness invites ongoing reflection on issues that transcend the specific case it chronicles. As true crime continues to captivate audiences worldwide, Capote's groundbreaking work endures as both a masterful

narrative and a profound inquiry into the darker facets of society.

In Cold Blood Truman Capote

in cold blood truman capote: In Cold Blood Truman Capote, 1994-02-01 NATIONAL BESTSELLER • The most famous true crime novel of all time chills the blood and exercises the intelligence (The New York Review of Books)—and haunted its author long after he finished writing it. On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. In one of the first non-fiction novels ever written, Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, generating both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.

in cold blood truman capote: *Truman Capote and the Legacy of "In Cold Blood"* Ralph F. Voss, 2011-11-16 Truman Capote and the Legacy of *In Cold Blood* is the anatomy of the origins of an American literary landmark and its legacy.

in cold blood truman capote: *Truman Capote's In Cold Blood* , 1968

in cold blood truman capote: In Cold Blood by Truman Capote: Hardcover Book Truman Capote, 1966 *In Cold Blood* is a non-fiction novel by American author Truman Capote, first published in 1966. It details the 1959 murders of four members of the Clutter family in the small farming community of Holcomb, Kansas. Capote learned of the quadruple murder before the killers were captured, and he traveled to Kansas to write about the crime. He was accompanied by his childhood friend and fellow author Harper Lee, and they interviewed residents and investigators assigned to the case and took thousands of pages of notes. Killers Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were arrested six weeks after the murders and later executed by the state of Kansas. Capote ultimately spent six years working on the book. Herbert Herb Clutter was a prosperous farmer in western Kansas. He employed as many as 18 farmhands, who admired and respected him for his fair treatment and good wages. His two elder daughters, Eveanna and Beverly, had moved out and started their adult lives; his two younger children, daughter Nancy, 16, and son Kenyon, 15, were in high school. Clutter's wife Bonnie had reportedly been incapacitated by clinical depression and physical ailments since the births of her children, although this was later disputed by her brother and other family members, who maintained that Bonnie's depression was not as debilitating as portrayed in the book. Two ex-convicts recently paroled from the Kansas State Penitentiary, Richard Eugene Dick Hickock and Perry Edward Smith, robbed and murdered Herb, Bonnie, Nancy, and Kenyon in the early morning hours of November 15, 1959. A former cellmate of Hickock's, Floyd Wells, had worked for Herb Clutter and told Hickock that Clutter kept large amounts of cash in a safe. Hickock soon hatched the idea to steal the safe and start a new life in Mexico. According to Capote, Hickock described his plan as a cinch, the perfect score. Hickock later contacted Smith, another former cellmate, about committing the robbery with him. In fact, Herb Clutter had no safe and transacted essentially all of his business by check. After driving more than 400 miles across the state of Kansas on the evening of November 14, Hickock and Smith arrived in Holcomb, located the Clutter home, and entered through an unlocked door while the family slept. Upon rousing the Clutters and discovering there was no safe, they bound and gagged the family, and continued to search for money, but found little of value in the house.

in cold blood truman capote: In Cold Blood Truman Capote, 1970 With the publication of this book, Capote permanently ripped through the barrier separating crime reportage from serious literature. As he reconstructs the 1959 murder of a Kansas farm family and the investigation that led

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in cold blood truman capote: In Cold Blood Truman Capote, 1965

in cold blood truman capote: In Cold Blood Truman Capote, 2007-01-01 Sebuah keluarga pemilik ranch kaya dibunuh secara brutal: ayah, ibu, anak laki-laki dan perempuan. Pembunuhan ini begitu mengguncang karena tampak tidak ada motivasi ekonomi maupun dendam pribadi. Dan, korbannya??keluarga Clutter adalah keluarga yang begitu santun-terpandang dan yang paling tidak mungkin memiliki musuh: sosok keluarga paling ideal yang bisa dicita-citakan oleh masyarakat Holcomb, Texas. Truman Capote ingin menulis sebuah laporan yang lengkap dan kaya tentang tragedi ini. Ia mewawancarai orang pertama yang mendapati pembunuhan ini, orang-orang terdekat korban, detektif yang menyelidiki, hingga perjumpaannya dengan pelaku itu sendiri dan kisah panjang yang melatarbelakangi tindakan nekad di tengah malam itu. Dan Capote memang berhasil menuliskannya secara memuaskan, dari detail psikologis hingga aspek legalitas yang berkenaan dengan hukuman mati??yang menjadi perdebatan tentang layak tidaknya pembunuh keluarga Clutter dihukum mati di tiang gantungan. [Bentang, Novel, Pembunuhan, Indonesia]

in cold blood truman capote: Summary and Analysis of In Cold Blood: A True Account of a Multiple Murder and Its Consequences Worth Books, 2017-01-10 So much to read, so little time? This brief overview of In Cold Blood tells you what you need to know—before or after you read Truman Capote’s book. Crafted and edited with care, Worth Books set the standard for quality and give you the tools you need to be a well-informed reader. This short summary and analysis of In Cold Blood by Truman Capote includes: Historical context Chapter-by-chapter summaries Detailed timeline of important events Important quotes Fascinating trivia Supporting material to enhance your understanding of the original work About Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood: A masterpiece of true crime and literary nonfiction, Truman Capote’s In Cold Blood is the story of a 1959 multiple murder in rural Kansas. Combining journalistic research with masterful storytelling, Capote reconstructs the events surrounding the killing of the Clutter family and the crime’s aftermath—from the last day of the Clutters’ lives to the day their murderers are executed. Gripping, chilling, and suspenseful, In Cold Blood is a pioneering work of nonfiction and a highly acclaimed modern American classic. The summary and analysis in this ebook are intended to complement your reading experience and bring you closer to a great work of nonfiction.

in cold blood truman capote: Quicklet On Truman Capote's In Cold Blood Larry Holzwarth, 2012-02-05 ABOUT THE BOOK Serialized in the New Yorker prior to publication in book form, In Cold Blood presents investigative journalism in the form of a novel, effectively combining literature and reporting. The New York Review of Books called it “The best documentary of an American crime ever written...” Other critics have not been so kind, citing fictionalized conversations, invented scenes, and fabricated events. Capote’s narrative contains no footnotes, nor does he cite specific sources for any of the conversations in the book. By the time In Cold Blood appeared the end of the story was known. Both murderers had been tried, convicted and executed by hanging. The book’s tremendous success stemmed from Capote’s graphic depiction of the crime as well as his incisive and often empathetic descriptions of the killers. MEET THE AUTHOR Larry

Holzwarth is a freelance writer and submarine veteran. A former US Navy systems analyst, he has been a corporate writer on diverse subjects, a professional trainer, recruiter and lecturer. A lifelong student of history, he enjoys reading, camping, hiking and Reds baseball. After traveling extensively he returned to his native midwest where he resides near Cincinnati. EXCERPT FROM THE BOOK

Capote paints an image of a bucolic community, basking in the crisp sunshine of a November day as well as in small town American innocence. A prosperous and well respected farmer, admired in his community for his character as well as his family, Herb Clutter is the quintessential American father. Though his wife has been ill, with what would now be called depression, the community rallies around the family with support. Compared to this picture of small town happiness is the sordid world of small time criminals Perry Smith and Richard Hickock. They arrive in Holcomb, Kansas, armed with a bowie knife, a shotgun, and the erroneous information that the Clutter home housed a safe filled with a large amount of cash. They creep in and out of town in one night. In the morning the Clutter's are found dead, murdered by shotguns blasts delivered with the muzzle inches from each victim's head. They are discovered by a friend of 16-year-old Nancy Clutter, coming to join her friend for church that Sunday morning. Despite few clues, no hint of a motive, and conflicting theories amongst investigators, Alvin Dewey, lead investigator for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation and personal friend of Herb Clutter, vows to solve the crime. When he does, it is through a combination of luck and the killers' willingness to blame each other for the crimes. He obtains, through conflicting confessions, enough information to build a case against the pair leading to their trial, conviction, and eventual execution. Buy a copy to continue reading!

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2020-09-11 On November 15, 1959, in the small town of Holcomb, Kansas, four members of the Clutter family were savagely murdered by blasts from a shotgun held a few inches from their faces. There was no apparent motive for the crime, and there were almost no clues. As Truman Capote reconstructs the murder and the investigation that led to the capture, trial, and execution of the killers, he generates both mesmerizing suspense and astonishing empathy. *In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.

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in cold blood truman capote: Truman Capote's Nonfiction Novel "In Cold Blood" and Bennett Miller's Biopic "Capote" Michael Helten, 2010-02-03 Examination Thesis from the year 2008 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 1, University of Freiburg, language: English, abstract: When *In Cold Blood* was first published, critics had a hard time categorizing the book. Capote himself held that he had written a nonfiction novel (Capote in Plimpton 1966: 2) and that he had thereby created an altogether new genre. In the subtitle, Capote stresses his central claim regarding this new genre, assuring the reader that what she is about to delve into is a true account of a multiple murder and its consequences (Capote 2000 [1966]). As will be seen in the opening chapter, criticism of *In Cold Blood* has therefore to a great degree revolved around Capote's and the book's adherence to this assertion of truth. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles (SOED) lists as the three first entries under the head word true true /tru:/ 1 Steadfast in allegiance, loyal; faithful, constant (...). 2 Honest, honourable, upright, virtuous; straightforward, sincere (...). 3 Of a statement, report, etc.: consistent with fact; conforming with reality (...). The following investigation of *In Cold Blood* and of the biopic based on Capote's work on the book, Bennett Miller's *Capote* (2005), will proceed along the lines of these three aspects of the definition, questioning Capote's claim of rendering a true account. The genre chapter and large parts of the ensuing discussion of *In Cold Blood* will be especially concerned with the definition's third aspect, *In Cold Blood*'s consistency with fact and its conformity with reality. The question will be raised as to whether or not a true account of real events is possible at all, and in what ways Capote and other writers of New Journalism, as the genre is most frequently called today, have tried to achieve such true accounts.

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