



The Talented Mr. Ripley

By Patricia Highsmith

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"Tom Ripley is one of the most interesting characters in world literature."
—Anthony Minghella, director of the 1999 film *The Talented Mr. Ripley*

Since his debut in 1955, Tom Ripley has evolved into the ultimate bad boy sociopath. Here, in this first Ripley novel, we are introduced to suave Tom Ripley, a young striver, newly arrived in the heady world of Manhattan. A product of a broken home, branded a "sissy" by his dismissive Aunt Dottie, Ripley meets a wealthy industrialist who hires him to bring his playboy son, Dickie Greenleaf, back from gallivanting in Italy. Soon Ripley's fascination with Dickie's debonair lifestyle turns obsessive as he finds himself enraged by Dickie's ambivalent affections for Marge, a charming American dilettante. A dark reworking of Henry James's *The Ambassadors*?, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*? serves as an unforgettable introduction to this smooth confidence man, whose talent for murder and self-invention is chronicled in four subsequent Ripley novels.

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The Talented Mr. Ripley By Patricia Highsmith Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

One of the great crime novels of the 20th century, Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is a blend of the narrative subtlety of Henry James and the self-reflexive irony of Vladimir Nabokov. Like the best modernist fiction, *Ripley* works on two levels. First, it is the story of a young man, Tom Ripley, whose nihilistic tendencies lead him on a deadly passage across Europe. On another level, the novel is a commentary on fictionmaking and techniques of narrative persuasion. Like Humbert Humbert, Tom Ripley seduces readers into empathizing with him even as his actions defy all moral standards.

The novel begins with a play on James's *The Ambassadors*. Tom Ripley is chosen by the wealthy Herbert Greenleaf to retrieve Greenleaf's son, Dickie, from his overlong sojourn in Italy. Dickie, it seems, is held captive both by the Mediterranean climate and the attractions of his female companion, but Mr. Greenleaf needs him back in New York to help with the family business. With an allowance and a new purpose, Tom leaves behind his dismal city apartment to begin his career as a return escort. But Tom, too, is captivated by Italy. He is also taken with the life and looks of Dickie Greenleaf. He insinuates himself into Dickie's world and soon finds that his passion for a lifestyle of wealth and sophistication transcends moral compunction. Tom will become Dickie Greenleaf--at all costs.

Unlike many modernist experiments, *The Talented Mr. Ripley* is eminently readable and is driven by a gripping chase narrative that chronicles each of Tom's calculated maneuvers of self-preservation. Highsmith was in peak form with this novel, and her ability to enter the mind of a sociopath and view the world through his disturbingly amoral eyes is a model that has spawned such latter-day serial killers as Hannibal Lecter. --
Patrick O'Kelley

Review

"[Highsmith] has created a world of her own--a world claustrophobic and irrational which we enter each time with a sense of personal danger." --Graham Greene

"Patricia Highsmith's novels are peerlessly disturbing . . . bad dreams that keep us thrashing for the rest of the night, with the sense that an awful possibility has been articulated only to be left unresolved." --**The New Yorker**

"One of our greatest modernist writers." --Gore Vidal

From the Trade Paperback edition.

Review

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