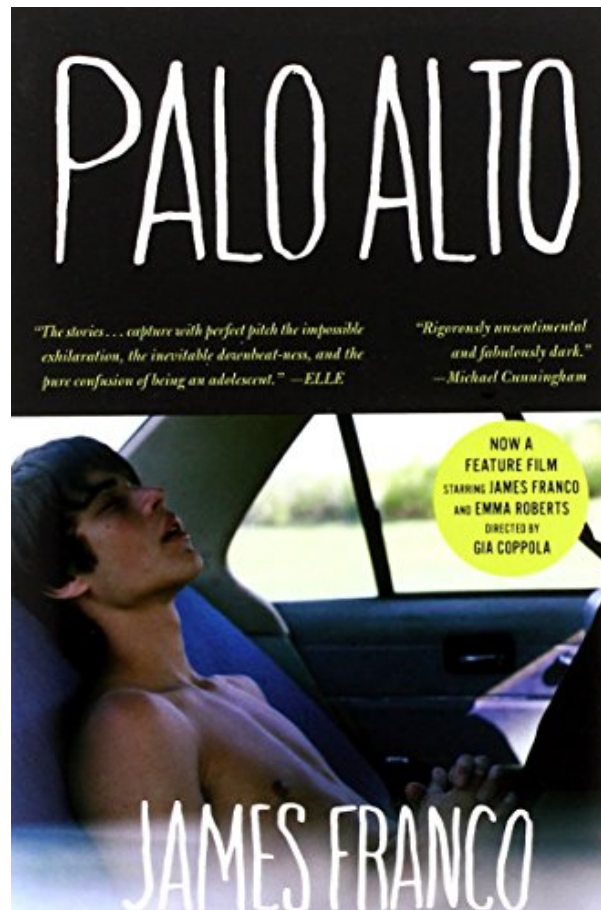
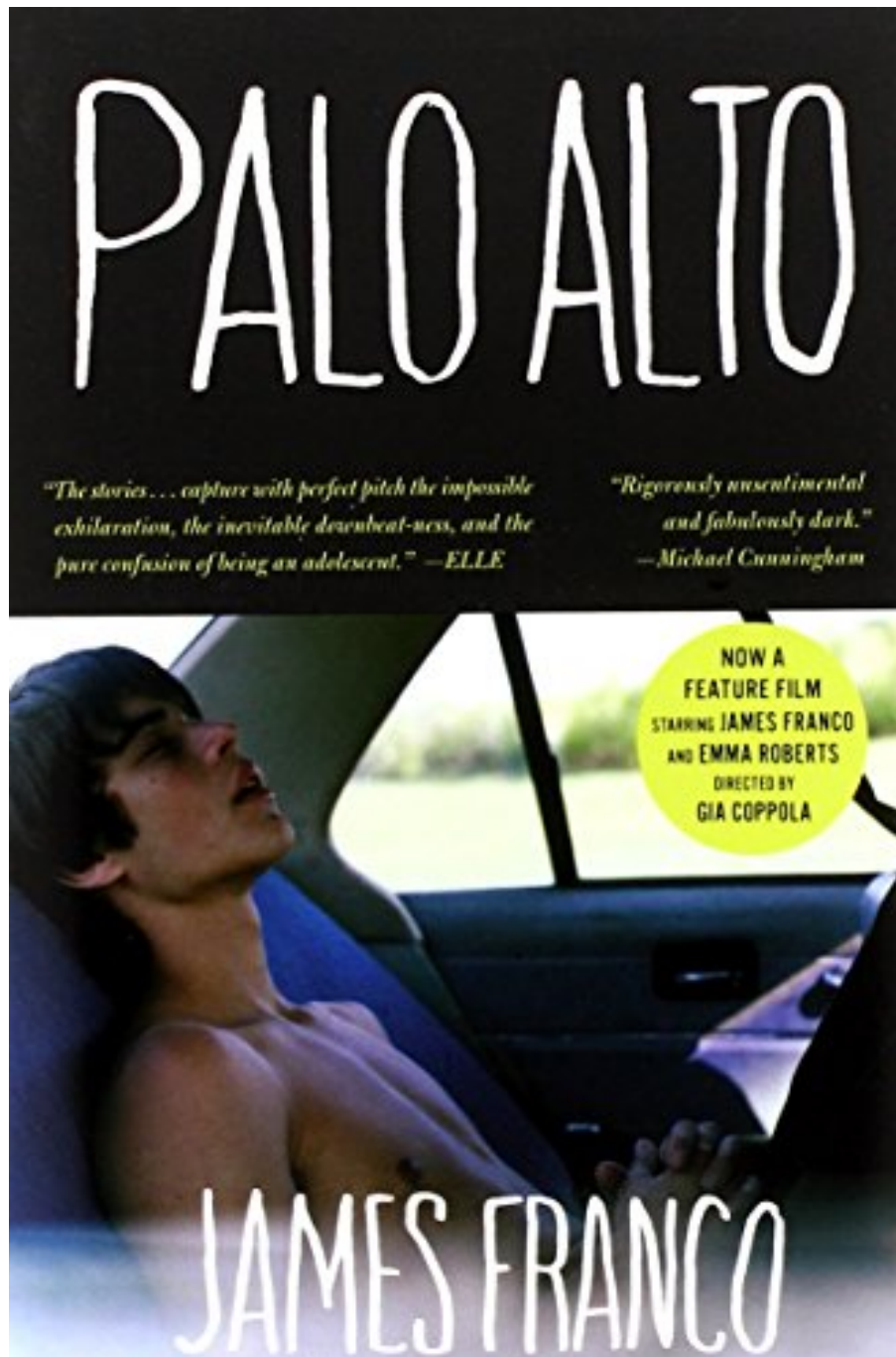


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PALO ALTO: STORIES BY JAMES FRANCO PDF

A fiercely vivid collection of stories about troubled California teenagers and misfits--violent and harrowing, from the astonishingly talented actor and artist James Franco.

Palo Alto is the debut of a surprising and powerful new literary voice. Written with an immediate sense of place--claustrophobic and ominous--James Franco's collection traces the lives of an extended group of teenagers as they experiment with vices of all kinds, struggle with their families and one another, and succumb to self-destructive, often heartless nihilism. In "Lockheed" a young woman's summer--spent working a dull internship--is suddenly upended by a spectacular incident of violence at a house party. In "American History" a high school freshman attempts to impress a girl during a classroom skit with a realistic portrayal of a slave owner—only to have his feigned bigotry avenged. In "I Could Kill Someone," a lonely teenager buys a gun with the aim of killing his high school tormentor, but begins to wonder about his bully's own inner life.

These linked stories, stark, vivid, and disturbing, are a compelling portrait of lives on the rough fringes of youth.

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- Binding: Paperback
- 224 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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153 of 186 people found the following review helpful.

What Doesn't Kill You

By M. Price

I'm pretending hunkosaurus Franco didn't write this. Moving on.

This is the stuff of every Creative Writing class you took as an undergrad. It's all Holden Caulfield crabby and Bret Easton Ellis name-droppy; gruesome with those obnoxious one-liner sentences that are meant to be profound in their brevity. The racial issues are slapped on strangely, and the tone is mushy oatmeal bland. "Killing Animals" was worth reading, but even then, it feels like Ellis fan fiction.

Now I'm pretending Franco did write them. Look my man, you have many rich and successful friends. Many

of whom are writers who like you because you're a cool dude. You're also a hunk. This is working against you. If my mom wrote a book called "imma Real Gud Mama", I'd tell her she was the next Faulkner.

Get some unbiased advice, sweetheart. And call me.

85 of 103 people found the following review helpful.

Franco is unique, but in a totally typical way

By A fellow with a keyboard

James Franco does not want to be considered an actor. He wants to be considered a polymath and an "artist." He is enrolled in something like six highly prestigious graduate programs, including one for filmmaking, one for fiction, one for poetry, one for design, one for creative writing, and a couple for English literature. You would think this would qualify him to write a book.

But there's a problem. The planet's brightest students have to crawl over broken glass to complete one of these graduate programs. How is it possible that Franco can do six at the same time? There are several possibilities. Maybe Franco really is the second coming of Leonardo da Vinci. But here's a line from one of his short stories: "The building is beige, but the shadows make it shadow-color." So maybe not.

It's more likely that Franco is riding some sort of grotesque wave of snowballing prestige, one that attempts to shield him from his quite evident averageness. It's been said that his classmates feel protective of him. In other words, they like him, they're charmed by him, they're pleased to have him in their midst, and they want to shield him from the fact that he's in a million miles over his head.

Franco is unique, but in a totally typical way. He is the cartoonish example of the high-achieving young person who takes 15 AP classes and does 20 extracurriculars in order to look impressive and gain status and admission and acceptance. But it isn't possible to do that many things with any sort of skill or competence. The result is a book that is so vapid and soulless and contrived as to be hard to look at.

43 of 52 people found the following review helpful.

Fish Bowl now

By Leemon

I came across the title PALO ALTO and thought it interesting since I reluctantly moved there as an early teenager and thankfully got out of there as soon as I graduated high school. When I realized it was written by James Franco, who, personally, I don't like or dislike, I was looking forward to a good read. Unfortunately, it wasn't a good read. It wasn't even an ok read. It was the same character pretending to be different characters telling different stories with the same tone and same language. It got quite boring and pointless after the 4th story. The only intriguing thing to me was that there was a lot of name dropping of places and streets in and around Palo Alto. Oh yeah, I remember the Bat Cave! Though I thought it was "The Path" where you could sneak a smoke (and catch your teacher too). I'm just a few years older than Franco and I certainly didn't experience teenage debauchery to this extent.

Palo Alto is a super wealthy and super conservative suburb full of doctors and Stanford professors. Most of the houses are enormous and expensive, half the cars are Mercedes, and the schools are exceptional because the city is loaded. A lot of teenagers became bored of being well to do and having status and high educational expectations to live up to. This didn't come across much at all in the book. These characters just seemed like average, stupid, overly sexed teenagers.

Aside from the location references, why was it even called Palo Alto?

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