



A Tragic Honesty: The Life and Work of Richard Yates

Blake Bailey

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The first biography of acclaimed American novelist and story writer Richard Yates

Celebrated in his prime, forgotten in his final years, only to be championed anew by our greatest contemporary authors, Richard Yates has always exposed readers to the unsettling hypocrisies of our modern age. Classic novels such as *Revolutionary Road* and *The Easter Parade* are incomparable chronicles of the quiet and not-so-quiet desperation of the American middle-class. Lonely housewives, addled businessmen, desperate career-girls and fearful boys and soldiers, Yates's America was a panorama of high living, self-doubt and self-deception. And in the tradition of other great realistic writers of his time (Fitzgerald and Hemingway, Cheever and Updike), Yates's fictional world mirrored his own. A manic-depressive alcoholic and unapologetic gentleman, his life was a hornets' nest of childhood ghosts, the horrors of war, money woes, and ebullient cocktailled evenings in New York, Hollywood, and the Riviera.

A Tragic Honesty is a masterful evocation of a man who in many ways embodied the struggles of the Great American Writer in the latter half of the twentieth century. Fame and reward followed by heartbreak and obscurity, Richard Yates here stands for what the writer must sacrifice for his craft, the devil's bargain of artistry for happiness, praise for sanity.

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