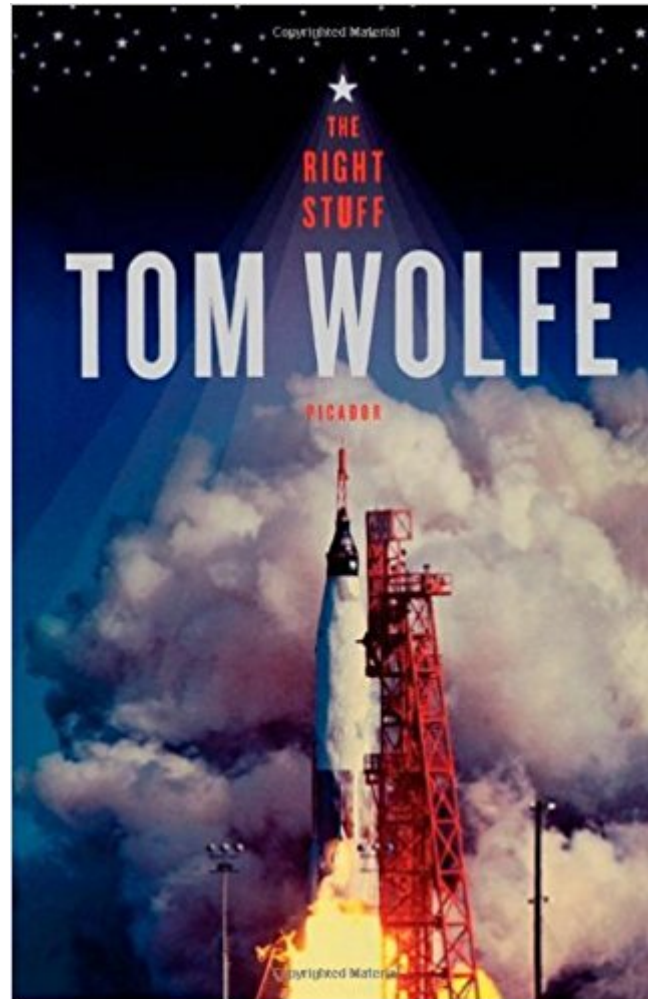




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# The Right Stuff



## Synopsis

From "America's nerviest journalist" (Newsweek)--a breath-taking epic, a magnificent adventure story, and an investigation into the true heroism and courage of the first Americans to conquer space. "Tom Wolfe at his very best" (The New York Times Book Review) Millions of words have poured forth about man's trip to the moon, but until now few people have had a sense of the most engrossing side of the adventure; namely, what went on in the minds of the astronauts themselves - in space, on the moon, and even during certain odysseys on earth. It is this, the inner life of the astronauts, that Tom Wolfe describes with his almost uncanny empathetic powers, that made *The Right Stuff* a classic.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Tom Wolfe began *The Right Stuff* at a time when it was unfashionable to contemplate American heroism. Nixon had left the White House in disgrace, the nation was reeling from the catastrophe of Vietnam, and in 1979--the year the book appeared--Americans were being held hostage by Iranian militants. Yet it was exactly the anachronistic courage of his subjects that captivated Wolfe. In his foreword, he notes that as late as 1970, almost one in four career Navy pilots died in accidents. "The Right Stuff," he explains, "became a story of why men were willing--willing?--delighted!--to take on such odds in this, an era literary people had long since characterized as the age of the anti-hero." Wolfe's roots in New Journalism were intertwined with the nonfiction novel that Truman Capote had pioneered with *In Cold Blood*. As Capote did, Wolfe tells his story from a limited

omniscient perspective, dropping into the lives of his "characters" as each in turn becomes a major player in the space program. After an opening chapter on the terror of being a test pilot's wife, the story cuts back to the late 1940s, when Americans were first attempting to break the sound barrier. Test pilots, we discover, are people who live fast lives with dangerous machines, not all of them airborne. Chuck Yeager was certainly among the fastest, and his determination to push through Mach 1--a feat that some had predicted would cause the destruction of any aircraft--makes him the book's guiding spirit. Yet soon the focus shifts to the seven initial astronauts. Wolfe traces Alan Shepard's suborbital flight and Gus Grissom's embarrassing panic on the high seas (making the controversial claim that Grissom flooded his Liberty capsule by blowing the escape hatch too soon). The author also produces an admiring portrait of John Glenn's apple-pie heroism and selfless dedication. By the time Wolfe concludes with a return to Yeager and his late-career exploits, the narrative's epic proportions and literary merits are secure. Certainly *The Right Stuff* is the best, the funniest, and the most vivid book ever written about America's manned space program. --Patrick O'Kelley --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• Technically accurate, learned, cheeky, risky, touching, tough, compassionate, nostalgic, worshipful, jingoistic . . . *The Right Stuff* is superb. • *The New York Times Book Review* • One of the most romantic and thrilling books ever written about men who put themselves in peril. • *The Boston Globe* • An exhilarating flight into fear, love, beauty, and fiery death . . . Magnificent. • *People* • Absolutely first class . . . Improbable as some of Wolfe's tales seem, I know he's telling it like it was. • *The Washington Post Book World* • Crammed with inside poop and racy incident . . . fast cars, booze, astro groupies, the envies and injuries of the military caste system . . . Wolfe lays it all out in brilliantly staged Op Lit scenes. • *Time* • Splendid . . . It shows our propensity to manufacture heroes, and, just as quickly, to forget them; it shows how a scientific program was exploited for political advantage; it provides a revealing character study of seven exceptional Americans. • *The Saturday Review*

Sherman McCoy, a 39 year-old white Wall Street bond salesman, self described "Master of the Universe" lives on Park Avenue, he is married with a daughter and is a member of high society. He also has a hot chick on-the-side Maria. On their way home one Tuesday night they make a wrong turn and end up in an abandoned seedy side of the Bronx. Two black guys walking down the street offer their assistance "Hey buddy, you need some help?", Sherman and Maria sure they're being set-up, panic and end up bumping into one of them with Sherman's Mercedes and then speed away

without reporting it. It all blows up when one of the black guys turns out to be severely injured and the press, police and the mayor get involved in political issues involving race and class. The writing is so great that even in 2010 a story that was written 20 years ago still seems fresh and relevant. Kudos big time!

This was such a good book that I couldn't possibly sing all of its praises. This gives the reader such a taste of NYC society that the characters seemed they could have been ripped from the headlines. The title sums up the book, the vanity and pride of an assorted cast of characters blowing up in their face- unfaithful Wall St. hot shot, the gold digging girlfriend, the marxist revered rabble rousing, race bating hustler (based on Rev. Al Sharpton or Jesse Jackson), the DA with an election to win, the assistant DA desperate for glory, etc. I don't want to say more but they all tie into each other and in such a colorful way that I didn't want to put it down. Really one of the best works of fiction I've read in awhile. The story line might remind some of the Duke Lacrosse media disaster...

Great story and possibly a great writer. Beginning with the rocket men of the late 1940s and early 1950s and concluding with the NASA astronaut program it spins quite a tale. Enjoyed reading and was hard to put down.

I really enjoyed this book. I never knew the true story behind space flight. It was also interesting to understand what made these men do what they did. The wife's role was also explored in this book as well. I recommend this book to anyone interested in how the United States entered the space race.

Wolfe is one of the best of modern writers. This exciting, complex adventure shows us the vanities and corruption in the cultures of the amoral rich on Park Avenue, the criminal and demagogic elements in the Bronx ghetto, and the self-serving power-hungry members of news media, politics, and courts of law. The book is much more interesting and insightful than the movie! There aren't many heroes among the main characters, but, from the superficial social gatherings of the rich, to the wrong turn of his Mercedes off the expressway into the slums, to the terrifying hours in "unfriendly" jail cells, to the "Law and Order" drama of the courtroom, it's a real 'page-turner' which I found hard to put down. A Man in Full • I Am Charlotte Simmons: A Novel • The Painted Word • From Bauhaus to Our House

I devoured this book; I just finished reading it on the anniversary of the moon landing. This book is a must read for anyone interested in space or for people with sheer determination to succeed & aim high in life

'Bonfire' had my rapt attention through the first 95% of a well written detective/courtroom drama with many facets twists and turns. The fact that the story ended with an epilogue instead of a conclusion left me disappointed but the fault is the reader's since human in life

This is a very well written book, and a good story that keeps you interested. It is much more detailed than the movie, as you might expect. It does keep you guessing as to how it will end. Good read.

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