

**HG in THE FILM:** Let's just get the film out of the way first. A 1961 American romantic comedy directed by Blake Edwards and starring Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly. The film was developed soon after the book was published in 1958. Critical acclaim, Academy Awards, \$14m gross revenue, 'Moon River' in the music score and Holly played as an almost-actress-*proto-It-Girl* in an innocent ingénue role.

**HG in THE NOVELLA:** Meet Holly Golightly on the book's pages as the not so innocent escapee of underage marriage who is a sex worker and an accomplice to a drugs gang involved in organised crime.

**THE AI VERDICT:** According to AI this novella is a brilliantly crafted modern classic that leans more heavily into being a story about friendship and nostalgia rather than a traditional love story. Readers looking for an unflinching, beautifully written snapshot of mid-century New York with a highly memorable protagonist will find all of this in 'breakfast at Tiffany's. Despite this glowing praise from AI other readers and critics are not so sure that this unqualified praise is deserved.

**THE PLOT:** The action is placed in Manhattan where a unnamed writer meets a young woman called Holly Golightly, with unusual habits and a strange story which she keeps secret. Holly demonstrates that although she is not the most beautiful girl, she is still able to attract people to her by using that interior charm created by her cheered temper. She can be defined as a good and a bad person at the same time: bad for her kinky habits and good for her heart of gold. She calls herself crazy, but her type of craziness only makes people stick to her and love her more. Her income is partly explained by her visits to Sally Tomato in jail, but her lucrative link to the world-wide narcotics mafia is only fully explained in the book's final pages.

The moment when you finally understand why the book is called "Breakfast at Tiffany's" is the one when you find out Holly's biggest dream and the main purpose in life. The main idea of the book is expressed in Holly's words "Never love a wild thing, Mr. Bell,[...] If you let yourself love a wild thing, you'll end up looking at the sky." In this book, "the wild thing" is a metaphor for Holly, a person who listens only to her heart, breaks the rules and doesn't really care about the future. She is the kind of woman who can't be tamed but who is in a continual search for the place that she calls "home".

In the end Holly's destiny remains unclear and this leaves many questions. Has she forgotten about her friend and that is the reason why she never writes to him? Where did her affairs bring her? Did she find that perfect place where she felt like at Tiffany's?

**IS IT CONVINCING?** For all the flash and colour, none of the characters have real substance. They are all relatively stupid individuals, from the narrator to Holly's ex-husband to Holly's array of lovers. They are all around each other, having sex or getting wasted or being witness to some craziness, but none understands or truly cares for each other. This may be a comment on the social scenes of wealthy New Yorkers, which Capote was well-acquainted with in the mid-20th century, but it lacks the punch of an actual comment because it says nothing except that people are shallow.

Much of what could be key points in the story are just an interesting moment or side remark, like Holly's casual aside that she has had eleven lovers, and she is "not counting anything that happened before [she] was thirteen because, after all, that just *doesn't* count". Considering Holly married at fourteen, this means that she was having sex before she met her husband, possibly being sexually abused by the family that took her in right after her parents died? It is a serious moment that is not touched upon again. Holly's mental illness, her "mean reds", that she copes with by visiting Tiffany's, is glossed over as part of her strange allure. The narrator thinks she's likely to end up in a mental hospital or dead or married or whatever, but he is never concerned about her, just morbidly intrigued by her.

The story makes you wonder what Capote thought of women. As much as all the men in Holly's life obsess over her, none really respects her. The narrator speaks of Holly as if she is a wayward child, ignorant and helpless, yet he craves her admiration. There is one memorably awkward but not remotely sexual scene where the narrator resists an urge to spank a naked Holly as he helps her apply self-tanner and she critiques his writing.

**In conclusion,** is the book not as 'good' as the movie adaptation are they just fundamentally different?