Palo Alto: Stories

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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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