



Play It As It Lays

Joan didion

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A ruthless dissection of American life in the late 1960s, from the author of *The Last Thing He Wanted* and *A Book of Common Prayer*. Somewhere out beyond Hollywood, resting actress Maria Wyeth drifts along the freeway in perpetual motion, anaesthetized to pain and pleasure, seemingly untainted by her personal history. She finds herself, in her early thirties, radically divorced from husband, lovers, friends, her own past and her own future. *Play It As It Lays* is set in a place beyond good and evil, literally in Los Angeles and Las Vegas and the barren wastes of the Mojave, but figuratively in the landscape of the arid soul. Capturing the mood of an entire generation, Didion chose Hollywood to serve as her microcosm of contemporary society and exposed a culture characterized by emptiness and ennui. Two decades after its original publication, it remains a profoundly disturbing novel, an immaculately wrought portrait of a world (California on the cusp of the 70s) where too much freedom made a lot of people ill.

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