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Slouching Towards Bethlehem

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Synopsis

Audie Award Nominee, Short Stories/Collections, 2013Universally acclaimed from the time it was first published in 1968, Slouching Towards Bethlehem has been admired for decades as a stylistic masterpiece. Academy Award-winning actress Diane Keaton (Annie Hall, The Family Stone) performs these classic essays, including the title piece, which will transport the listener back to a unique time and place: the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco during the neighborhood's heyday as a countercultural center. This is Joan Didion's first work of nonfiction, offering an incisive look at the mood of 1960s America and providing an essential portrait of the Californian counterculture. She explores the influences of John Wayne and Howard Hughes, and offers ruminations on the nature of good and evil in a Death Valley motel room. Taking its title from W.B. Yeats' poem "The Second Coming", the essays in Slouching Towards Bethlehem all reflect, in one way or another, that "the center cannot hold."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Slouching Towards Bethlehem is the best book of essays I have ever, by the grace of God, been fortunate enough to own and read. In essay after essay, I found myself saying,"Go on, Joan. You said it, Joan. We are the same, you and I, Joan, etc." That is the type of book Slouching Towards Bethlehem is. Reading it, slowly, meticulously, I felt such a close kinship, a bond, not with the writer but with her words -- so carefully chosen and wonderfully articulated. These essays are not meant, honestly, for teenagers, although, if given a chance, the totality of the book would be most beneficial

for their pliable and socially indoctrinated minds. The purport of this book is something that I can so easily identify with: the disappearance of the past for the establishment of a fragmented, roughly organized new society with newfangled, unaccustomed societal perceptions as well as an aggressive casting off of the traditional value system of those who were born and raised a long time before the emergence of the radical, cataclysmic sixties. These essays explore, through author Joan Didion's own feelings and experiences and the feelings and experiences of those she encountered, the disharmononized emotions of the hippy generation vs the elders of the more reactionary periods, periods where: Free Love, Acid Trips, Groovy, Crystal Snorting Gurus and Muumuu Dressed Followers seemed a complex and social oddity in the hierarchy of those who were deemed, "Not with it, man." What is so nice about these essays is that they are not condescending; there were and are thousands upon thousands of citizens and non-citizens alike who had and have no clue whatsoever as to what the counter-culture represented (me, honestly, being one in that vast catagory).

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