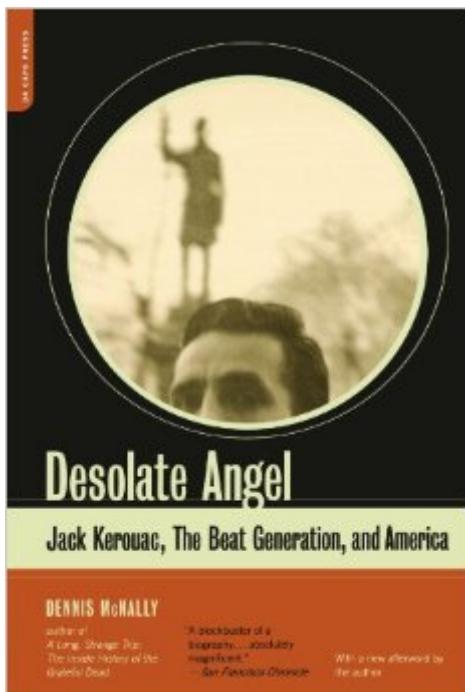


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Desolate Angel: Jack Kerouac, The Beat Generation, And America



Synopsis

Jack Kerouac—"King of the Beats," unwitting catalyst for the '60s counterculture, groundbreaking author—was a complex and compelling man: a star athlete with a literary bent; a spontaneous writer vilified by the New Critics but adored by a large, youthful readership; a devout Catholic but aspiring Buddhist; a lover of freedom plagued by crippling alcoholism. *Desolate Angel* follows Kerouac from his childhood in the mill town of Lowell, Massachusetts, to his early years at Columbia where he met Allen Ginsberg, William S. Burroughs, and Neal Cassady, beginning a four-way friendship that became a lifelong obsession. Kerouac's frenetic cross-country journeys, experiments with drugs and sexuality, travels to Mexico and Tangier, and years of failure, frustration, and depression are recounted with detail and sensitivity. *Desolate Angel* is a harrowing, compassionate portrait of a man and artist set against an extraordinary social backdrop.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (13 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

I can't believe more people haven't written reviews of this book! It's essential if you're a Kerouac fan. It's by far the best-written word pictures of the bigger world Jack lived in. In fact, based on how well it was written and the accurate big picture it captured, Jerry Garcia found the author and brought him in to do the same thing for The Grateful Dead as their official biographer. [see *A Long Strange Trip*] I've got pretty much every Kerouac or Beat bio published, and other than the oral biography 'Jack's Book' which is in a class of its own because its just a bunch of quotes, this is the best because of how it marries a passion for the subject with a creative historian's eye. it has the

same graphic, visual enthusiasm of Jack's voice, mind and writing, without being a cheap imitation. hmm, not unlike how Jimmy Herring's guitar playing in the Jerry-less Dead -- creating from the same pool of color and intent, painted with a similarly deft stroke, but unique and only imitative in subtle knowing energy loving ways. The main vision of this work is how it paints the bigger canvas of the cities, culture, and country that Kerouac lived in. Other books may tell the ABCs of where Jack went when, and Jack's own books paint well the person he meets at the roadside coffee shop, but Jack was doing a series of small intimate portraits. Only indirectly and by implication did he write about popular culture and mores, or the politics and global events that were shaping the nation's mind. This book is only comparable to cultural histories or documentaries on NY or SF or America of say 1940 to 1960.

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