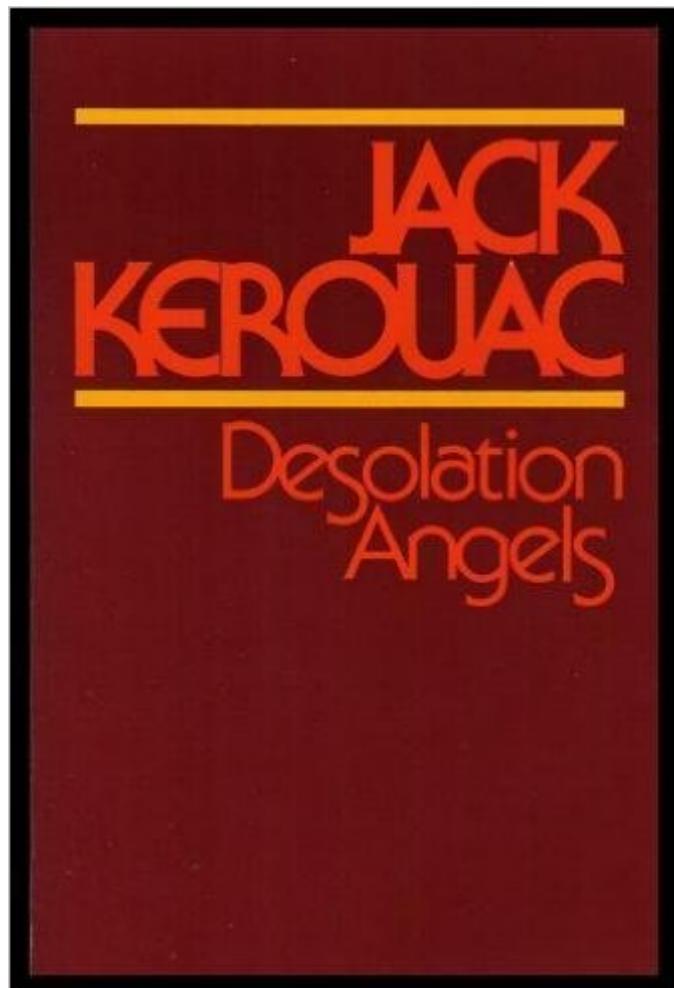


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# Desolation Angels



## Synopsis

With the publication of *On the Road* in 1957, Jack Kerouac became at once the spokesman and hero of the Beat Generation. Along with such visionaries as William S. Burroughs, Neal Cassady, and Allen Ginsberg, Kerouac changed the face of American literature, igniting a counterculture revolution that even now, decades later, burns brighter than ever in *Desolation Angels*. In one of the major cinematic events of 2012, Jack Kerouac's legendary Beat classic, *On the Road*, finally hits the big screen. Directed by Walter Salles (*The Motorcycle Diaries*; *Paris, Je T'Aime*) and with a cast of some of Hollywood's biggest young stars, including Kristen Stewart (*The Twilight Saga*), Sam Riley, Garrett Hedlund, Kirsten Dunst, Amy Adams (*Julie & Julia*, *The Fighter*), Tom Sturridge, and Viggo Mortensen (the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Road*), the film will attract new fans who will be inspired by Kerouac's revolutionary writing. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

## Book Information

Mass Market Paperback: 366 pages

Publisher: Perigee Trade (March 28, 1978)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0399503854

ISBN-13: 978-0399503856

Product Dimensions: 7 x 1 x 5 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (57 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #995,731 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #70 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Movements & Periods > Beat Generation #32685 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary

## Customer Reviews

This book may come as a real shock to those whom have a preconcieved notion about what the "Beats" were all about, and it may also be a shock for those more familiar with the jubilant ecstatic life affirmations of *On The Road* or even *The Dharma Bums*. In this book Jack goes on the road (with Mom), has sex with a fourteen year old mexican prostitute, meets up with a Neal (Cody) whom is a far fly from his *On the Road* days and is tied down with a wife + three kids and a job, meets Salidore Dali + William Carlos Williams + Carl Sandburg, gets his book published, is constantly compulsively depressed, has a paradigmatic consciousness flip after a huge dose of opium, meets up with junkie

Burroughs in Tangiers (whom is lovelorn over Ginsburg), and kicks Buddhism down a notch for a more hardcore return to Christianity. As others have noted, this book follows directly after the Dharma Bums and that book should be read first. What follows is Jack's experiences on the mountain which, contrary to his expectations in Dharma Bums, is almost like a nightmare prison sentence. After he leaves the mountain, we enter into the first half of the book (his return to California), which is a bit ponderous and slow (but never boring). We are treated to a torturous description of his day of betting at a race track with Neal and Corso. The book picks up speed bigtime when he goes back on the road and then travels internationally. His prose is brilliant and poetic and his observations remarkable and I think this book is brilliant; but it is also tremendously sad, deeply frustrated and lost, spiritually drained and destitute, and there is little ecstasy to be had.

Somewhere in the 409 pages of this book you'll find buried a truly great work of American literature. It is hard to fault Kerouac for his devotion to spontaneous and unedited writing; though these methods imposed limitations on what he could accomplish as a writer, they also contributed to what makes his books so fascinating. If Jack had lived in Hemingway's time, he would have submitted Desolation Angels to the publisher and would have been handed back a 300 page masterpiece. The most problematic section is the first one, "Desolation in Solitude." I understand that Kerouac wanted to convey the sheer insanity of his isolation as a lookout, but considering that he already devoted about 30 pages to this in Dharma Bums, he essentially retreads the same mystic nonsense for another 70 pages without giving much new insight into his experience. The one interesting bit that comes out of the whole ordeal is the gradual dissatisfaction that Kerouac feels for Buddhism (which, through his interpretation, seems to fall a bit close to nihilism) and his reacceptance of Christianity. But after this first section, things pick up and Kerouac delivers one painfully sad and and transcendently beautiful insight after another (one of my favorites: his frustration at receiving a \$3 jaywalking ticket on the way to a job, costing him half his day's pay-- but you have to read the way he puts it to understand, of course). It is worth noting that Desolation Angels really is two different books written almost 5 years apart. The first half he wrote while in Mexico City (during events he describes in the second half, Passing Through), while the second half was written in Florida (I think) while he lived with his mother.

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