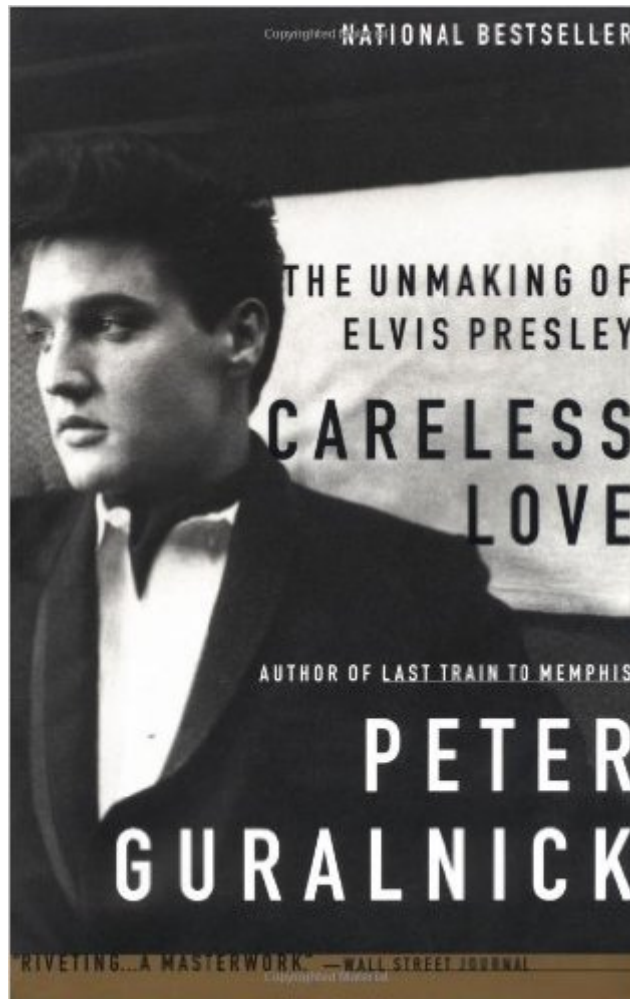


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Careless Love: The Unmaking Of Elvis Presley



Synopsis

Careless Love is the full, true, and mesmerizing story of Elvis Presley's last two decades, in the long-awaited second volume of Peter Guralnick's masterful two-part biography. Last Train to Memphis, the first part of Guralnick's two-volume life of Elvis Presley, was acclaimed by the New York Times as "a triumph of biographical art." This concluding volume recounts the second half of Elvis' life in rich and previously unimagined detail, and confirms Guralnick's status as one of the great biographers of our time. Beginning with Presley's army service in Germany in 1958 and ending with his death in Memphis in 1977, Careless Love chronicles the unravelling of the dream that once shone so brightly, homing in on the complex playing-out of Elvis' relationship with his Machiavellian manager, Colonel Tom Parker. It's a breathtaking revelatory drama that for the first time places the events of a too-often mistold tale in a fresh, believable, and understandable context. Elvis' changes during these years form a tragic mystery that Careless Love unlocks for the first time. This is the quintessential American story, encompassing elements of race, class, wealth, sex, music, religion, and personal transformation. Written with grace, sensitivity, and passion, Careless Love is a unique contribution to our understanding of American popular culture and the nature of success, giving us true insight at last into one of the most misunderstood public figures of our times.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

First and foremost, this is a depressing book. There is a warning in the author's note that the book is about a tragedy, and this is an understatement. Elvis Presely's "fall" was a hard and bitter one. This book outlines events starting in 1960 up to Presely's death in 1977. Things start out looking pretty

good for Elvis as he leaves the army and begins his career almost anew, but as the 1970s emerge, things start to cloud over, and the book follows the downward spiraling vortex that Presley and his somewhat bizarre and almost constantly fluctuating entourage followed up to the end. Along the way, Guralnick allows readers to draw their own conclusions about Presley. Mostly the book outlines details of certain events - sometimes so detailed one wonders if Guralnick was there himself - interspersed with commentary from people who lived through these same events. It is not an uplifting read. One gets the impression that Presley's fame isolated him from pretty much the human race, made him untouchable (reprisals were feared by anyone in his immediate "gang", and it didn't help matters that most of them were on his payroll) and ultimately put him beyond the help of his own family and the people who he thought were his friends. Presley's fame turns horrendously destructive in the 1970s, and some of the stories and anecdotes may make the sensitive reader wince. Some of the stories are just downright strange: Presley's religious enlightenment from seeing an image in the clouds of the face of Stalin turn into the face of Jesus; Presley's determination to secure himself a position of Narcotics officer from President Nixon; the pranks Presley and his retinue play on each other, on audiences, and on themselves; the fact that, as record sales declined, Presley's revenue actually increased.

Elvis Presley is one of those singular cultural figures who naturally and without defiance broke America apart and re-invented it. He didn't come as prophet or destroyer, not as a statesman or reformer, but as a guileless, unpretentious young man blessed with a talent and charisma and drive that leaves us mere mortals agape. In a way, he is like several other men of the era--Kennedy, Brando, Dean, later the Beatles--who created the "youth culture" to which we are (unfortunately) more enslaved to now than ever....Wait a minute--did I just refer to Elvis as other than merely mortal? Not so, and Peter Guralnick's astonishing *Careless Love* finally makes it possible for us to grasp Elvis as human. While other books about him could fill a thousand mausoleums, let them, because Guralnick's two-volume set (the first is *Last Train to Memphis* (1994)), will stand as the definitive biography of this great American. But before you dive in, let me say that *Careless Love*, while beautifully and carefully written, and extra-carefully researched--Guralnick had access to unorganized files in Graceland unlike anyone prior to him--it is dense with factual trivia interspersed with the dramatic events of Elvis' life (and the lives of those around him). This book is not for the casual reader; in its intimate details, vast narrative, and utter lack of superhero worship glitter, this book will probably appeal less to traditional Elvis fanatics than to those seriously interested in this man who became a 20th century phenomenon. Again and again, Elvis is described

as "humble, shy, respectful, hard-working.

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