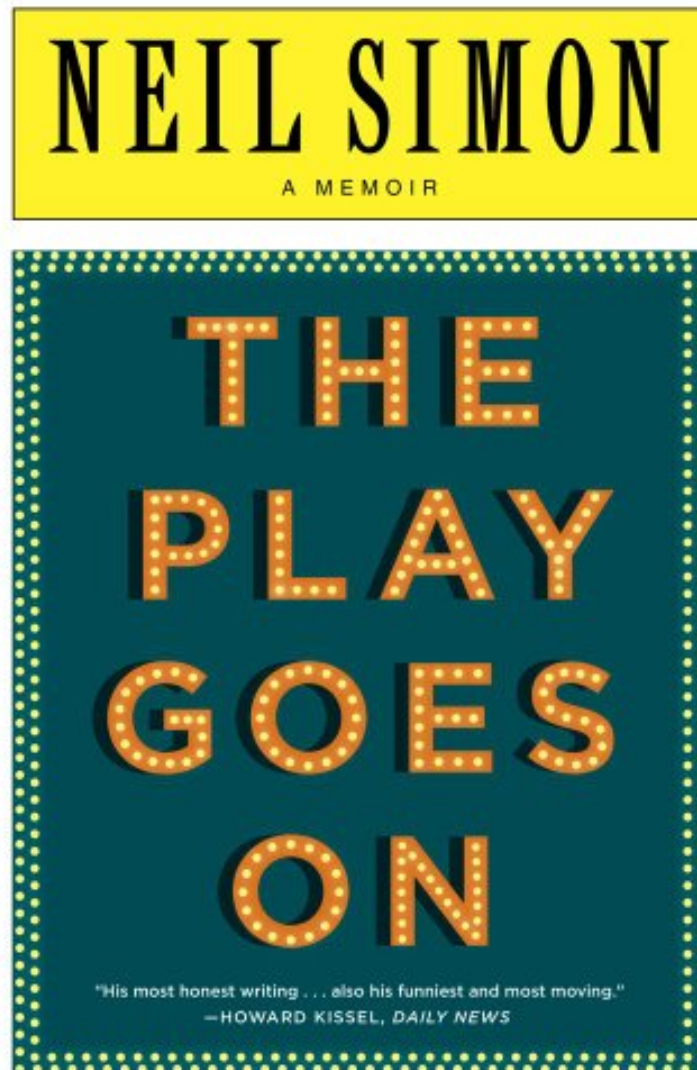


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The Play Goes On: A Memoir

Neil Simon

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Neil Simon : The Play Goes On: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Play Goes On: A Memoir:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. I love Neil Simon!By agheshioI loved this book, but I began to wonder why widower Neil was in such a hurry to remarry and then keep remarrying. But fortunately I know he finally got another gem in Elaine Joyce. Now just keep producing more great plays, Neil.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyable readBy CustomerWonderful enjoyable read on theater, film those who work in the industry. Plus all the behind the scenes stories.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Kindle CustomerI

loved it!!

A revealing and heartfelt memoir of a Pulitzer Prize-winning artist finding joy and inspiration after tragedy. In his critically acclaimed *Rewrites*, Neil Simon talked about his beginnings; his early years of working in television, his first real love, his first play, his first brush with failure, and, most moving of all, his first great loss. Simon's same willingness to open his heart to the reader permeates *The Play Goes On*. This second act takes the reader from the mid-1970s to the present, a period in which Simon wrote some of his most popular and critically acclaimed plays, including the Brighton Beach trilogy and *Lost in Yonkers*, for which he won the Pulitzer Prize. Simon experienced enormous professional success during this time, but in his personal life he struggled to find that same sense of happiness and satisfaction. After the death of his first wife, he and his two young daughters left New York for Hollywood. There he remarried, and when that foundered he remarried again. Told with his characteristic humor and unflinching sense of irony, *The Play Goes On* is rich with stories of how Simon's art came to imitate his life. Simon's forty-plus plays make up a body of work that is a long-running memoir in its own right, yet here, in a deeper and more personal book than his first volume, Simon offers a revealing look at an artist in crisis but still able and willing to laugh at himself.

Despite its somber opening on the day in 1973 just after he buried his wife, Joan, this second volume of Neil Simon's memoirs is frequently as funny as his plays. The real estate agent who shows him and second wife Marsha Mason around Los Angeles reminds him so much of Sunset Boulevard's Norma Desmond, he remarks, "I immediately started looking around the car for the dead monkey." When he phones his brother and says, "Danny, I just won the Pulitzer Prize" (for *Lost in Yonkers*), Danny's response is, "Wait a second, I have to stop the water in my bath." If Simon harbored any malice, some of his wry barbs might really sting. Instead, he's gentlemanly and uncontrite about the failure of his marriage to Mason ("it takes two to untangle," he opines), and even more reticent about his relationship with wife number 3 who was also number 4, which didn't work out either time. Writing plays like *Brighton Beach Memoirs* and *Broadway Bound* sparks more enthusiastic prose, and Simon's gushing about his three daughters is done in a manner so corny it's positively endearing. For a man who believes he became successful "by feeding off my own insecurities and sharing them with a world of people," Simon, at age 71, seems pretty well-adjusted. --Wendy Smith
From Publishers Weekly
Simon begins his hauntingly sad yet often quite funny second memoir (following his 1996 *Rewrites*) in 1973, on the day after the burial of his first wife, who died of cancer. Things look bad at first, as the massively successful American playwright (he's won the Pulitzer Prize and three Tony awards, and written 40 plays and almost as many original and adapted screenplays) can't even get out of bed. It thus comes as a great relief, if also something of a surprise, when Simon meets and marries actress Marsha Mason three months later. In Mason, Simon finds not only an outstanding interpreter of his words (*Goodbye Girl*, *Only When I Laugh*), but also an inspiration (Chapter Two, a play about a widower's second marriage). When his relationship with Mason collapses nine years later, Simon plunges back into a depression that is exacerbated by his first-ever career slump. Eventually, he applies a combination of innovative personal therapies (he spends a lot of time with his dog and shoots a pistol into his swimming pool) and professional luck (he stumbles over a draft of the eventual megahit *Brighton Beach Memoirs* that he had penned several years before) and claws his way out of his slump. His greatest successes still lay ahead (along with another marriage and divorce and remarriage) in the form of his BB trilogy (*Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues* and *Broadway Bound*), featuring his alter ego Eugene Jerome. Simon says that a memoir should serve two functions: "to pass on as much as you're willing to tell" and "to discover a truth about yourself you never had the time or courage to face before." A superb and introspective raconteur, he achieves both goals many times over in this exhilarating book. (Oct.) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From Library Journal
"Just as I never plan what play or film I might write next, I don't plan on what I will write next in these memoirs," says Simon. Well, Neil, it certainly shows. Readers plodding through this second self-portrait will find it hard to believe that this is the same person who wrote *The Odd Couple* and *The Sunshine Boys*. While Simon's stage dialog crackles with wit, his first-person narrative voice is as flat as the paper it's written on. This book picks up where his first memoir, *Rewrites*, concluded; here Simon provides a laundry list of his mid-life achievements, from winning a Pulitzer Prize to marrying and divorcing women in less time than it takes most guys to wear out a pair of sneakers. The book's most interesting moments come when Simon talks about the creative act of writing which isn't very often. Nonetheless, given Simon's enormous popularity, this book is still an important purchase for all public and large academic libraries. --Michael Rogers, "Library Journal" Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.