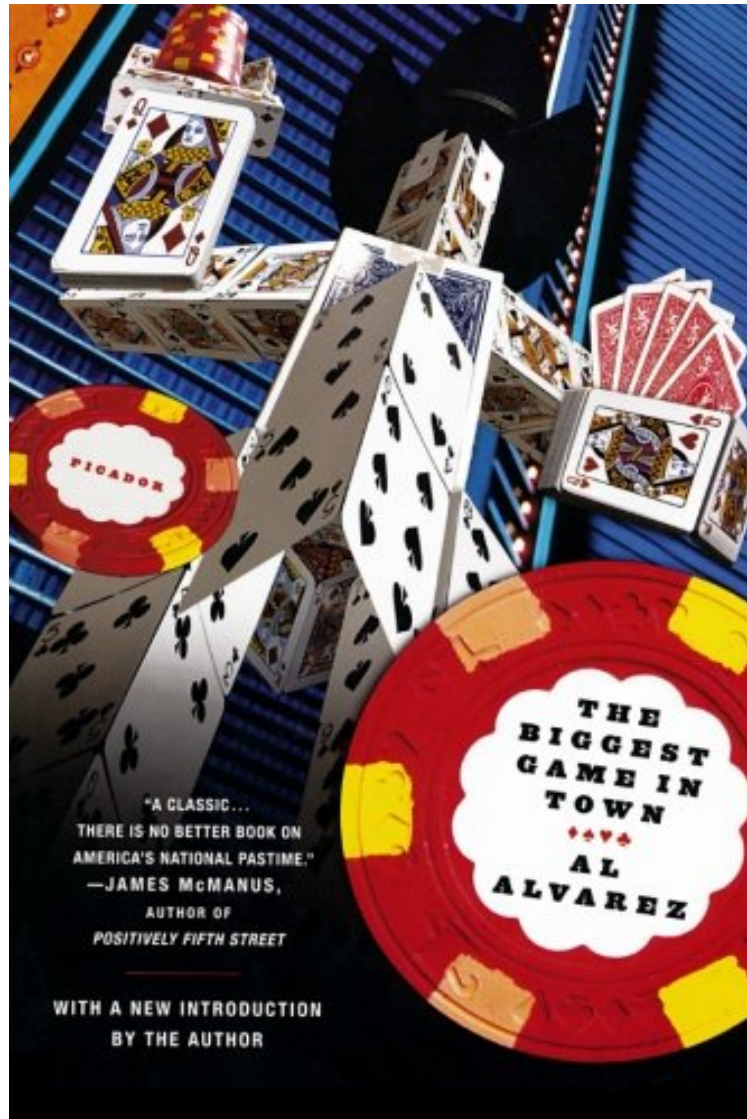


(Ebook free) The Biggest Game in Town

The Biggest Game in Town

Al Alvarez

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#827410 in Books Al Alvarez 2009-02-03 2009-02-03Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .44 x 5.50l, .38 #File Name: 0312428421192 pagesThe Biggest Game in Town | File size: 20.Mb

Al Alvarez : The Biggest Game in Town before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Biggest Game in Town:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lots of insight into a special era...By Rod E. PardeyPoker is a subject rarely treated with eloquence. Pool halls and card rooms rarely produce poetry, in spite of the poetic lives of their denizens. That's why reading A. Alvarez's "The Biggest Game in Town" was such a pleasure - and an essential in gambling lore.Alvarez has been a literary editor, poet, and writer of quality non-fiction since at least the era of his friendship with Sylvia Plath, and apparently, he has always been a part-time gambler. In 1981, his peculiar mix of

talent and perspective inspired opportunity: no one had ever attempted a book like "Town." Given my background, I've always been interested in Vegas stories, and I have a perpetual thirst for stories from the era of poker this book covers. I have played poker with at least two of the people mentioned in this book, and my dad has maintained a near forty-year friendship with Eric Drache, one of the book's main personalities. Drache is one of the most fascinating persons poker has ever produced, and he is a certified legend in Las Vegas, adored by gamblers and non-gamblers alike. He was once called, "the sharpest guy in the gambling business" by none other than Steve Wynn himself. A Poker Hall of Fame inductee, I feel very lucky to know him. He's a man with a rare charisma in a world of the socially inept. And he is leaned on heavily by Alvarez for special insight throughout this book. I was particularly struck by something Drache says on page 75: "So poker is my only security. Some security, though Johnny Moss is a great inspiration: seventy-four years old, still playing every day, and still winning. Even so, I'm thirty-eight now, and I wouldn't want to think my next thirty or forty years are going to be spent in a poker game." To my eyes, that's perfect tragedy. Since I still spend a lot of time in poker rooms, I can tell you Drache is still playing poker nearly every day at the Commerce Casino in Los Angeles, and the boredom and unhappiness he expressed in 1981 seems to show on his face as he continues to "ante himself to death" to this day. That's tragedy enough alone. But the tragedy holds double resonance for me since I am about to turn 38 myself in September. Needless to say, I see the doom Drache saw in 1981 in my own life. And with the benefit of this book coupled with my own experience, I can see that it's a doom that most poker players seem incapable of avoiding. So hopefully I'll find my way out. I've seen many poker players die in the last ten years - nearly all of them in tragic circumstances. And I'm left to wonder, What does it all mean? It seems to me that it could all make a great movie one day, but that could just be my narcissism talking. What do you think? As for the book, Alvarez seems to touch just about every important point, philosophically, into what it means to be a professional gambler. Many of the book's finest insights strike very close to the bone. They are mantras of the profession. They've become a sort of dogma. And they are largely the principles on which I was raised. I continue to work on my own writings on poker. I am keeping notes, jotting down ideas, processing things my dad has told me over the years, and interviewing the people who were there. And just as importantly, I am reading what's been written before me. Mainly interested in the seventies-era Vegas of Scorsese's "Casino," I appreciate "The Biggest Game in Town" as a beautiful and poetic snapshot of a fascinating time and place in American history. But I also see it as ominous warning. Los Angeles, July 30th, 2014 I blog a rod pardey dot com 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Awesome Poker History Book! By Jason If you are a poker history buff then The Biggest Game in Town by Al Alvarez is the book for you! This book was a very enjoyable and easy read and one of the best and most entertaining poker history books that I have read. Alvarez paints a vivid image of downtown Las Vegas circa 1981, the poker scene at Binion's Horseshoe Casino, and of the 1981 World Series of Poker. If you are interested in poker history, this is a great book for you. Alvarez is a British journalist and he took a trip to Vegas in 1981 to write a story about the 1981 World Series of Poker for the New Yorker magazine. Alvarez is a poker enthusiast and he spent about four weeks in Vegas that summer playing poker and covering the top poker players. Doyle Brunson is covered throughout the book and it seems like Alvarez was lucky enough to spend a lot of time with him. Besides Brunson, Alvarez covers many other top players of the day, such as Chip Reese, Jack Straus, and Stu Ungar. In addition to writing about the top poker players of the day, Alvarez writes vividly about the Las Vegas of 1981 and about some of its history. The book wraps up with Alvarez's coverage of the 1981 World Series of Poker Main Event. The book is 167 pages long and reads like a novel. Alvarez is a great writer and the book is a very enjoyable read. As a poker player and a poker history buff, this book was very entertaining. I love reading about guys like Chip Reese and Doyle Brunson in their primes. In poker, the game of the day and the strategy of the day often change, but many things stay the same. Reading about poker history and getting insight into some of the great players during their primes can only help you improve as a poker player. I am not so much referring to strategy or anything like that, but educating yourself about poker history helps provide some context and insight when you play in your regular game. I think reading about poker history is very important if you want to be a long term successful player. The Biggest Game in Town is a great poker history book! - Jason Rothman Editor at [...] 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Best of This Genre By Kimo Kailua I've read a number of the "writer/journalist poker life" genre books. (I'd guess at least six). This is the best written. Yes, I know the book is almost thirty years old. And yes, the references to the Las Vegas of that era are almost quaint. However, I'm one of the very rare, a fourth generation Nevadan, so this takes me back to a time where I thought Las Vegas was really rocking. It's amusing to read about that period in today's context. Alvarez captures the old downtown Las Vegas atmosphere perfectly. It's amazing that some of the poker world characters from that time are still active today. His writing is superb. I've read this genre in the wrong order starting with the most recent books and then moving backward in time as I became fascinated with poker history. I wish I had started with this one so that I had the right chronological flow. Best books of this genre, in my order of preference, (not chronological): "Biggest Game in Town", Alvarez "Positively Fifth Street", McManus "Big Deal", Anthony Holden Don't worry about the age of the book. It holds up marvelously.

Al Alvarez touched down in Las Vegas one hot day in 1981, a dedicated amateur poker player but a stranger to the

town and its crazy ways. For three mesmerizing weeks he witnessed some of the monster high-stakes games that could only have happened in Vegas and talked to the extraordinary characters who dominated them--road gamblers and local professionals who won and lost fortunes on a regular basis. Set over the course of one tournament, *The Biggest Game in Town* is both a chronicle of the World Series of Poker--the first ever written--and a portrait of the hustlers, madmen, and geniuses who ruled the high-stakes game in America. It is a brilliant insight into poker's appeal as a hobby, an addiction, and a way of life, and into the skewed psychology of master players and fearless gamblers. With a new introduction by the author, Alvarez's classic account is "the greatest dissection of high-stakes Vegas poker and the madness that surrounds it ever written" (TimeOut [UK]).

From Library Journal A large portion of this 1983 volume initially appeared in *The New Yorker* as a series of sketches of the cardsharps who annually descend on Las Vegas for the World Series of Poker. The players make for interesting portraits, and Alvarez lets them have their say. Anyone interested in gaming will enjoy this, but others might as well. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. A classic . . . There is no better book on America's national pastime. James McManus, Author of *Positively Fifth Street* Probably the best book on poker ever written. *The Evening Standard* (UK) A magnificent book. Beyond the straights and fullhouses, Alvarez has written a book about people who are extremely good at what they do, and about America. *San Francisco Chronicle* [Alvarez] endows the game with all the desperate fun and wry futility of life itself. *New York magazine* Conveys an understanding of gamblers and their milieu that can appeal to someone who has never seen a casino or doesn't care to. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* Thoroughly entertaining . . . both perceptive and literate. *The Washington Post* About the Author Al Alvarez is a poet, novelist, literary critic, anthologist, and author of many highly praised nonfiction books. From 1984 to 1994, he played regularly in the World Series of Poker. He lives in London.