



The Year of Magical Thinking (Vintage International)

By Joan Didion

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From one of America's iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion. Joan Didion explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage—and a life, in good times and bad—that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child.

Several days before Christmas 2003, John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion saw their only daughter, Quintana, fall ill with what seemed at first flu, then pneumonia, then complete septic shock. She was put into an induced coma and placed on life support. Days later—the night before New Year's Eve—the Dunnes were just sitting down to dinner after visiting the hospital when John Gregory Dunne suffered a massive and fatal coronary. In a second, this close, symbiotic partnership of forty years was over. Four weeks later, their daughter pulled through. Two months after that, arriving at LAX, she collapsed and underwent six hours of brain surgery at UCLA Medical Center to relieve a massive hematoma.

This powerful book is Didion's attempt to make sense of the “weeks and then months that cut loose any fixed idea I ever had about death, about illness . . . about marriage and children and memory . . . about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself.”

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

After her husband's fatal heart attack, which came at a time when their daughter Quintana was in intensive care for complications after pneumonia, Didion was labeled "a pretty cool customer" by a social worker because she seemed to be handling these shocks so calmly. Caruso's reading certainly reflects this aspect of Didion's reaction—sometimes her clear, elegant voice seems downright cold, making the listener wish for a little more emotion. The slightly eerie sounds of bells and cello that swell in at occasional breaks in the narration help in this respect, but mostly the audiobook is as straightforward a production as Didion wanted her life to be in that horrible year. Throughout those months, Didion immersed herself in the literature of grief and quotes frequently from poets and writers who helped her come to terms with her pain. Caruso does a good job with these passages, lingering on and highlighting certain phrases that Didion returns to time and again, shifting their meaning slightly as she progresses. Despite trying to write in an almost clinically detached way, Didion's sorrow and anger do break through at times in the book. Unfortunately, Caruso's cool reserve never cracks, so this audio ends up making less of an impact than the National Book Award-winning print edition.

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From [The New Yorker](#)

Didion's husband, the writer John Gregory Dunne, died of a heart attack, just after they had returned from the hospital where their only child, Quintana, was lying in a coma. This book is a memoir of Dunne's death, Quintana's illness, and Didion's efforts to make sense of a time when nothing made sense. "She's a pretty cool customer," one hospital worker says of her, and, certainly, coolness was always part of the addictive appeal of Didion's writing. The other part was the dark side of cool, the hyper-nervous awareness of the tendency of things to go bad. In 2004, Didion had her own disasters to deal with, and she did not, she feels, deal with them coolly, or even sanely. This book is about getting a grip and getting on; it's also a tribute to an extraordinary marriage.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The Year of Magical Thinking is a searing portrayal of personal grief, a vividly documented case study in mourning rather than the kind of modern exercise in self-therapy that, however well-intentioned, is laced with narcissism. As a writer Didion has often demonstrated a keen eye for the loose threads that, when tugged, unravel human lives and institutions. Critics were deeply moved as Didion turns her lens inward to examine her own emotional disintegration, free of clichés and tidy, little life lessons. It is the book's raw honesty and Didion's meticulous reporting and research that allow her memoir to transcend the merely personal and become a universal road map of loss.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nikki Jones:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children right up until adult are different content. As it is

known to us that book is very important usually. The book The Year of Magical Thinking (Vintage International) ended up being making you to know about other know-how and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The publication The Year of Magical Thinking (Vintage International) is not only giving you much more new information but also to be your friend when you truly feel bored. You can spend your personal spend time to read your book. Try to make relationship together with the book The Year of Magical Thinking (Vintage International). You never feel lose out for everything when you read some books.

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