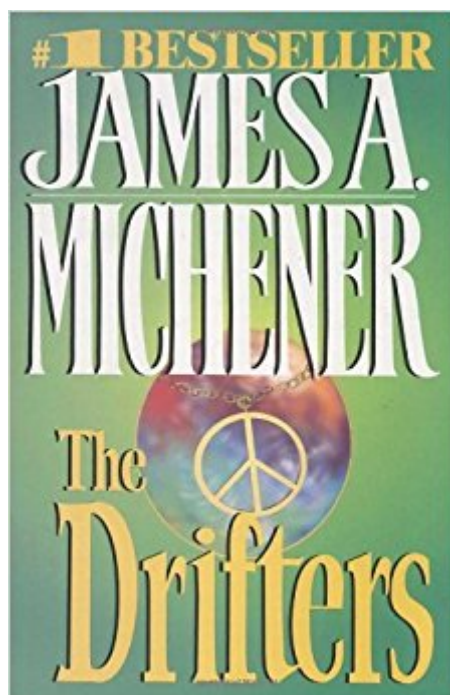


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The Drifters



Synopsis

In this triumphant bestseller, renowned novelist James A. Michener unfolds a powerful and poignant drama of disenchanting youth during the Vietnam era. Against exotic backdrops including Spain, Morocco, and Mozambique, he weaves together the heady dreams, shocking tribulations, and heartwarming bonds of six young runaways cast adrift in the world—as well as the hedonistic pursuit of drugs and pleasure that collapses all around them. With the sure touch of a master, Michener pulls us into the private world of these unforgettable characters, exposing their innermost desires with remarkable candor and infinite compassion. *“Praise for The Drifters”* —A blockbuster of a book . . . full of surprise, drama, and fascination. *“Philadelphia Bulletin”* —Rings with authentic detail and clearly descriptive sights and smells . . . The Drifters is to the generation gap what The Source was to Israel. *“Publishers Weekly”* —[The Drifters] conveys a sense of a new time, a new generation. *“Chicago Sun-Times”* —Michener has slid open a window on the world of the dropout and has spared no effort to make the reader aware of this new world. *“The Salt Lake Tribune”*

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Customer Reviews

“A blockbuster of a book . . . full of surprise, drama, and fascination.” —Philadelphia Bulletin *“Rings with authentic detail and clearly descriptive sights and smells . . . The Drifters is to the generation gap what The Source was to Israel.”* —Publishers Weekly *“[The Drifters] conveys a sense of a new time, a new generation.”* —Chicago Sun-Times *“Michener has slid open a*

window on the world of the dropout and has spared no effort to make the reader aware of this new world.ââ "The Salt Lake Tribune

In his triumphant best seller, James Michener unfolds a powerful and poignant drama of six young runaways adrift in a world they have created out of dreams, drugs, and dedication to pleasure. With the sure touch of a master, Michener pulls us into the dark center of their private world, whether it's in Spain, Marrakech, or Mozambique, and exposes the naked nerve ends with shocking candor and infinite compassion."A superior, picaresque novel...and a revealing mirror held up to contemporary society."JOHN BARKHAM REVIEWS

I am re-reading the Micheners I read years (20-30) ago because I find Michener so incredibly educational. If you care to, you will learn dozens new vocabulary words. You will read about places you might never have heard of before or may never get to see. He always includes a smattering of politics, culture, economics, geography, race-relations and several other subjects entertaining you all the while. The Drifters is a little dated because so much of it was germane to the attitudes or the late 60s. He delved into the drug and music culture from the point-of-view of the 60-something narrator hanging out with a half-dozen young adults ranging from about 17 to late-twenties. (The narrator is a businessman who travels a great deal and knew a couple of the kids incidentally early in the novel.) Despite the fact that I am of the generation of the young adults (I was born in 1950), I found some of the youthful sneering at the old generation's music a little over-the-top. Yes, we thought we had everything figured out and our music was the best and we were going to be the salvation of humanity, but it didn't quite work out that way, And I, as well as many others in my age group, did like music from the 50s and 40s. There was a section where he made the breakthrough from perceiving the young people's music as little more than noise to largely "getting" it. It was interesting to me because Michener obviously went through this in order to write it. The biggest "take-away" from The Drifters is the travel fantasies. I don't know if all the places that were such a big deal then have retained their appeal or evolved into something quite different but they would be magnificent to travel to if they still retain the character from the time. I know bulls still run at Pamplona and I hope that the game preserves in Mozambique haven't been destroyed. They (the characters) explore sites of historical significance and others for little reason more than the beauty or charm of the place. I highly recommend any of the Michener "behemoths". They are usually written in *almost* stand-alone sections so, if you get fatigued, you can take a break and return later.

An intriguing exploration of the mindset of the youth of the 1960's, this novel visits some of the most exotic and alluring locations in the world. In the time of great changes in the American psyche, this novel digs into some of the most compelling issues of the day. Although the coincidences that led to four young people the narrator knew personally would actually meet is quite a stretch, the author works his magic in weaving their lives together in a way you would like to believe it could happen. Typical Michener, it is on a grand scale even though it spans a short time in history. This one is in my top twenty-five and one of the rare books I have read twice - once in the mid-seventies, and again this year.

I first read this book in the early 1970s while in high school - it's the first Michener book I had read and loved it back then. I saw the title recently and decided to read it again and am so glad I did. I had memories of the story - it created a desire to travel Spain which I did right after high school. I love this story all over again and have re-confirmed why James Michener has always been my favorite author.

A summary of this book sounds appealing: James A Michener follows six disenchanted youths at the very end of the 1960s as they drift around Europe and Africa in search of meaning. But the book falls very short. The characters are more like caricatures, the historic landscapes that make Michener so interesting aren't fully brought to life, and some of the drug descriptions are downright silly. But it is worth look at that turbulent time -- of the end of LBJ and the Vietnam War and race riots across America -- from an international perspective and authored by a man (and voiced by a narrator) that studies the counterculture from the perspective of the establishment.

I read this book when it first came out, it was fascinating and I identified strongly with the characters, who were faced with many of the same issues that I was, and this book helped me clarify my thoughts on some of these issues. I have read it again recently with the perspective of over forty years experience and the changes that have come about since then. It was still fascinating, but my opinions on many of these issues have changed radically and my views of the characters have changed as well. It had quite a strong impact on my life then, now I wonder why.

The "Drifters" is predictable because its author, James A. Michener, is predictable. You know that by reading any book he had written, you have a real treat in store for you. Because he had a career

as a researcher before turning writer, Michener's books provide some of the best historical/fiction reading one could find. Once you have read one of his books, like me, you are hooked. My bucket list includes reading every book Michener has written. The only difficulty I have with Michener's books, is that they are so enjoyable that I keep rereading them. His "Centennial" I must have reread six times, likewise with "The Source," "Texas," "Hawaii," "Caribbean," "Poland," and also with "The Novel" to name just a few. My least favorite was "Tales from the South Pacific" for which he won the Nobel Prize.

I love this story and read it 35 years ago for the first time. My time is somewhat limited now so I list to recorded books more than read. I was very disappointed when I heard the reader ROBOTICALLY read through all the characters and scenes in this book without a hint of emotion in any of them. I have had to steel myself to this terrible performance in order to follow the story and it really takes away the charm of the story for the listener. The story itself is wonderful.

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