



# Heaven Is a Playground, Third Edition

*Rick Telander*

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## **Heaven Is a Playground, Third Edition** Rick Telander

*Heaven Is a Playground* was the first book on the uniquely American phenomenon of urban basketball. Rick Telander, a young photojournalist and former high school basketball player, spent part of the summer of 1973 and all of the summer of 1974 in Brooklyn living the playground life with his subjects at Foster Park in Flatbush. He slept on the floor of a park regular's apartment, observing, questioning, traveling and playing with, and eventually coaching a ragtag group of local teenagers whose hopes of better lives were often fanatically attached to the transcendent game itself.

At times little separates the author and his subjects, both of whom are emotionally linked by their passion for hoops. But as the summer unfolds and even superstars such as the legendary and incendiary Fly Williams are confronted with the realities of ghetto life and the sociological hurdles facing African American males, the joy of the game starts to be seen as the wispy pipe dream it often becomes. Written before cell phones, disposable cameras, and cable TV, *Heaven Is a Playground* is one of a kind—a funny, sad, ultimately inspiring book about Americans and the roots of the sport that they love.

In this third edition, thirty-five years after Telander discovered New York's kings of basketball, the author provides a retrospective of the game and times.

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