

Play It As It Lies

Nick Hoffman

WestBow

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Play It as It Lies is a clear, grounded memoir about navigating the uncertainties of illness and aging.

Nick Hoffman's candid memoir *Play It as It Lies* is about how his relationship with his father was shaped by illness, distance, and faith.

Hoffman's father faced late-stage prostate cancer and Alzheimer's disease, and these events are framed within a broader personal and family history. Indeed, the narrative moves between medical developments in the present and earlier memories, including Hoffman's childhood experiences, family struggles, and formative influences. Conversations, hospital visits, and moments of uncertainty are documented alongside reflections on mortality, belief, and the meaning of sustained connection over time.

Evinced a clear commitment to documenting the process of sickness and aging, the text does an able job of presenting illness as an evolving condition that reshapes a family's daily lives, relationships, and perspectives. Moments of humor, fear, and routine coexist, resulting in a textured account of caregiving and reflection. Hoffman's and his father's interpretations of adversity are well pronounced, and the book's themes are developed with care, including its recurring motifs of time, faith, and persistence.

Golf also operates as a guiding metaphor in the text, supporting the central idea that life requires adaptation to circumstances beyond one's control. However, though the book's frequent digressions into backstory are used to build a layered understanding of Hoffman's relationship with his father, they also compromise the book's momentum. Extended passages detailing the family's lineage situate Hoffman's father's illness within a generational continuum, though the pace slows as such histories stack up. Further, the book's transitions are abrupt, moving from scenes of medical urgency to reflective anecdotes.

Hoffman's father is well fleshed out in terms of his voice, habits, and responses to adversity. He exhibits humor and resilience during treatment, and the book covers the side effects of his chemotherapy in an attentive manner. His exchanges with Hoffman emphasize consistency and care; most close with "I love you."

Beyond these tender moments, though, the prose is more direct and functional, even journalistic. Rhetorical questions and familiar cultural references enliven it, as with nods to music and scripture. Some clichés arise, though, as with a discussion of the value of time: "For my money, time is the most precious commodity we have." Further, some thematic points are emphasized to excess and with limited variation, causing later sections of the book to drag.

Play It as It Lies is an intimate memoir about illness, memory, and family devotion.

JOHN M. MURRAY (May 1, 2026)

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