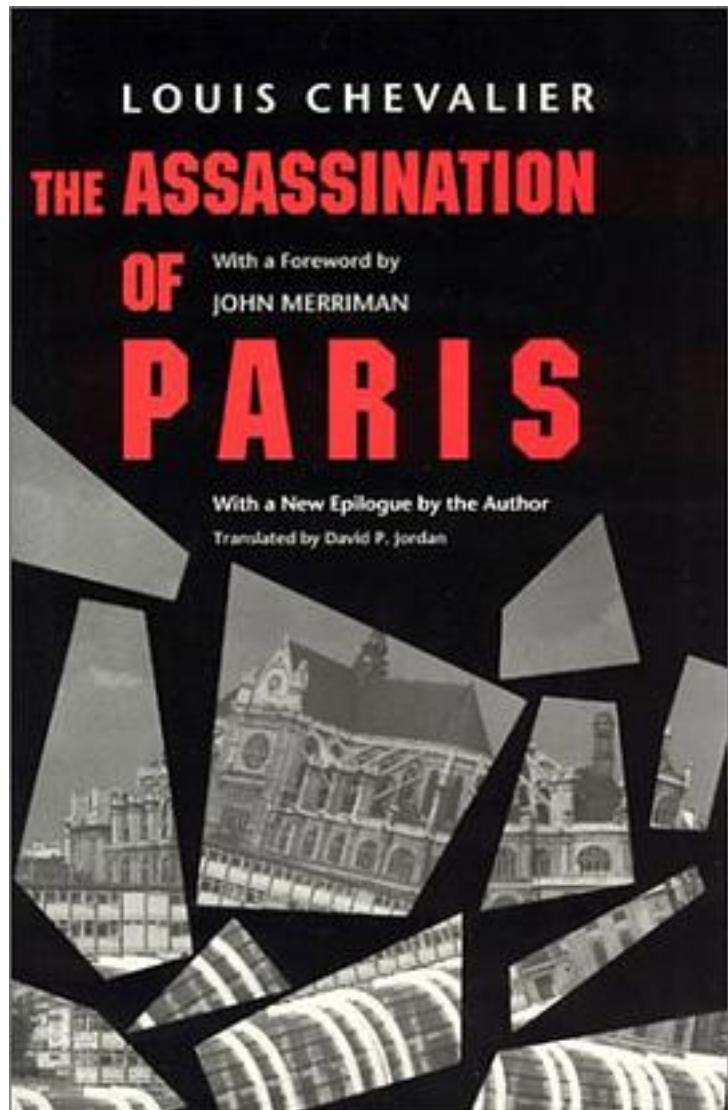


The Assassination of Paris



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Published to controversial acclaim in 1977, The Assassination of Paris describes the transformation of the Paris of Raymond Queneau and Henri Cartier-Bresson; of quartiers of carpenters and Communists and country folk from the Auvergne; of dance halls and corner cafes. Much of Louis Chevalier's Paris faced the wrecking ball in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, as Georges Pompidou, Andre Malraux and their cadres of young technocratic elites sought to proclaim the glory of the new France by reinventing the capital in brutal visions of glass and steel. Chevalier sought to tell the world what was at stake, and who the villains were. He describes an almost continual parade of garish and grandiose plans: some, like the destruction of the glorious marketplace of les Halles for him the heart of the city, were realized; others, like the superhighway along the left bank of the Seine, were bitterly and successfully resisted. Almost twenty years later, we find it difficult to remember the city as it was. And while Paris looks to many much the way it always has, behind the carefully sandblasted stone and restored shop fronts is a city radically transformed--emptied of centuries of popular life; of entire neighborhoods and the communities they housed engineered out to desolate suburban slums. The battle over the soul and spirit of the city continues. This book is not entirely about the loss of physical places. Or a romance about a world that never really was. It is a cautionary tale filled with lessons for all who struggle to protect the human scale, the diversity, and the welcoming public life that are the threatened gifts of all great cities.

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目录:

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