



Love Me Please! The Story of Janis Joplin

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Janis Joplin's brief, tragic, and spectacular career is recounted in the graphic biography *Love Me Please!*

Beginning with her childhood in Port Arthur, Texas, the book follows Joplin through the difficult and erratic process of finding herself. As she establishes herself as a singer, she faces sexism and insults about her appearance, and her reliance on drugs and alcohol becomes dangerous. Her unique singing style leads to great success, but also more out of control behavior, culminating in her overdose in 1970.

The book positions Joplin among other greats of the blues singer pantheon; it's narrated by the ghosts of Bessie Smith, Odetta Holmes, and Ma Rainey. That musical heritage is emphasized throughout the book, with lyrics floating across panels as they're sung, and song titles and composers listed at the bottom of the page.

Another focus is Joplin's search for inner peace—a quest that leads her to addiction, but also to a series of love affairs with famous figures including Eric Clapton, Jim Morrison, Jimi Hendrix, and Leonard Cohen. Joplin's excitement over her meteoric rise is captured, as are the conflicts between her goals and those of her family, bandmates, and business managers.

The art features excellent likenesses, delivering the look and feel of the psychedelic, hippie era. Its memorable, surreal imagery illustrates the grip of addiction in the form of tentacles that appear throughout, surrounding Joplin and others. *Love Me Please!* is a perfect graphic introduction to the short, shining life of an unforgettable vocalist.

PETER DABBENE (July / August 2021)

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