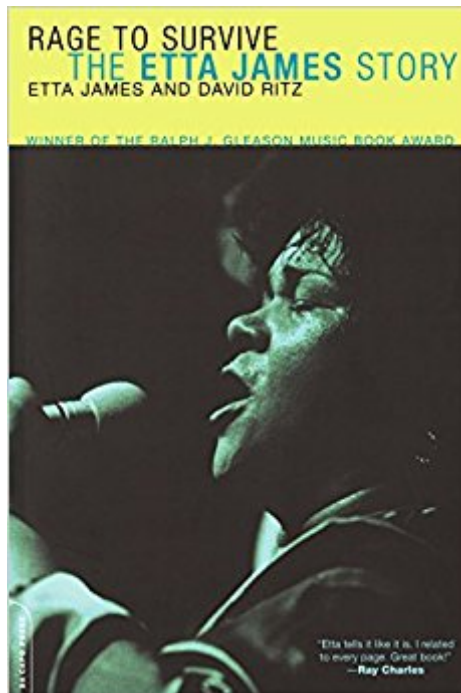




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Rage To Survive: The Etta James Story



Synopsis

One of the great women of American music, equally at home singing blues and jazz, Etta regales us with tales of her chaotic childhood, the stars she has known, and her troubled trip to stardom in this mesmerizing autobiography.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Born to a 14-year-old mother and raised by surrogate parents, blues and R&B star James started singing gospel in church at five, was discovered at 14 and had a rapid rise to fame. Nevertheless, her story is a disturbing saga of drug addiction, jail sentences for writing bad checks and stealing prescription drugs, involvements with the wrong men and anger at a disruptive and unstable mother who has refused to reveal who her daughter's father is. It's easy to see why James says she has been "raging through life." She claims it's the rage that keeps her going. Now, at the age of 56, she reports she has kicked the drug habit, reached an understanding with her mother and settled down with her husband and children, letting off steam by dirt biking. Ritz, who has written biographies of Ray Charles, Marvin Gaye and Smokey Robinson, spent two years traveling with James and listening to her talk about her life. Here he captures the craziness and the pain. Photos not seen by PW. Author tour. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Growing up in south central LA, James stood out at an early age. Her church choir leader tutored

the little girl with the big voice to sing with "vocal fire," and after attracting notice in gospel circles, she had her first chart success with "Roll with Me, Henry," a "pushy little jiveass reply" to rhythm and blues great Hank Ballard's "Work with Me, Annie." Her record's producer was Johnny Otis, one of many other stars she has something to say about. Others include Little Richard, Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, and whiter-than-white Georgia Gibbs, whose "Dance with Me, Henry" covered and outsold Etta's hit. Besides whites stealing her thunder, James encountered underhanded financial dealings, drug abuse and addiction, and transitory love affairs. In other words, her story is a typical black pop-music as-told-to bio, though better than many of the others. Mike Tribby --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

What a life! If you can call it that. Stabbing's, beating's, Con job's, shooting's, shooting up + too much more . These stories overwhelm the stories of her singing career. She wanted drama and got it in truck load's! Besides South L.A., she lived in the Fillmore (San Francisco) where Johnny Otis discovered her. One of her singing buddy's is SugarPie DeSanto which a friend of mine was close to her, way back. On my show I played; "Maybe you'll be there" & "I don't feel sorry" are classic's by Sugarpie. Etta&SugarPie recorded their duo's on the Don Barksdale's Rhythm label. I had listened to all these great singer's she associated with, Jessie Belvin, Little Willie John, Richard Berry ("Louie Louie"), Chuck Berry, Tina Turner, Aretha Franklin, Sly Stone and on and on, The cream of the Crop of R&B and beyond. Minnesota Fat's may have been her PaPa? He would hang out with Willie Best the actor ("High Sierra" etc.) She talks about her singing ballad's with string's and her tough bluesy side. She Idolized her mother, but, wasn't there much. Another woman that was more of a mother than the real one was; Momma Lou , There is too much to tell here. There are ton's and ton's more stories here, within these pages ! ! !

Like many others, I was introduced to Etta James through great songs, like, "At Last," "I Just Wanna Make Love To You," "I'm a W-O-M-A-N," and "All I Could Do is Cry." The woman couldn't just sing the blues - she also lived them. That is beautifully illustrated, here, in *Rage to Survive: The Etta James*. Born to a humble background and a young mother, young Jamesetta Hawkins faced poverty, racism (she was biracial) and also early stardom as a firebrand of a singer. Her talent was made evident early. So was her penchant for mixing it up with deviant and destructive behavior. Etta does not a bat an eye or withhold anything in this amazing account of her soaring ups and plummeting downs. Etta didn't just dabble or "experiment" with drugs - she subsisted on them like they were her food, part of her very being and they shaped the decisions she made with

relationships, living arrangements and many other day-to-day factors. In and out of jail, rehab centers and the arms of bad ass men, this sassy, sexy, sultry songbird lived life to the hilt, before her passing, earlier this year. She also leaves a legacy, with shoes no one can ever fill for eternity. Often imitated, never replicated. Read about her rage to survive. It will shift your way of viewing this amazing woman. A hell of a writer.

Miss Etta James pulls no punches, she shoots straight from the lip and holds nothing back. From her beginnings as Jamesetta Hawkins who's mother that had her at a young age and grand mother who raised her. Believes that Minnesota Fats is her father. Her drug use and bad relationships and abuse from her ex's

Despite all odds, Miss Etta is still with us: read this book if you have the courage to learn what life 'on the road' was like for an entertainer in the 50's and 60's, with the difficulty enhanced tremendously for African-Americans. The debt today's divas owe Etta and others from 40 years ago will never be repaid. The book pulls no punches: white record label owners shafted their acts in every way imaginable, yet there's a snapshot of Leonard Chess that you'll be thankful for. Etta writes of doing heroin with Little Esther, being in and out of jail, being up and down, getting her "X" by joining the Black Muslims, touring with Little Richard, the dangers of driving through Dixie in the late 50's and early 60's with a blond 'do' (and a monkey). There's another reason to buy the book: you can dine out for weeks by sharing the story of Etta's father. The book includes a photo of the two of them side-by-side. Yup, amazing resemblance. And no, I'm not going to tell. Etta did the Letterman tv show a few weeks ago; is still making music. She's a national treasure. When she appeared in Dallas I slipped a note to a member of her crew to pass along, thanking her for all the music that has meant so much to me. If you've never heard Etta, look for that two cd set of her Chess recordings. One listen, and you'll be hunting for a pen and pad to send her the same kind of note.

A must have for any respectable Etta James fan. A step by step look inside her process to fame. A lot of name dropping but that's ok. Easy read. Interesting to know what was going through her mind and where she was in her journey with each of the albums. I love Etta and miss her dearly. Know more about this legend, play her music and introduce another generation...it's your duty, really. RIP Miss Peaches.

Great book! Never knew that Etta James had such a checkered past. Could not put the book down.

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