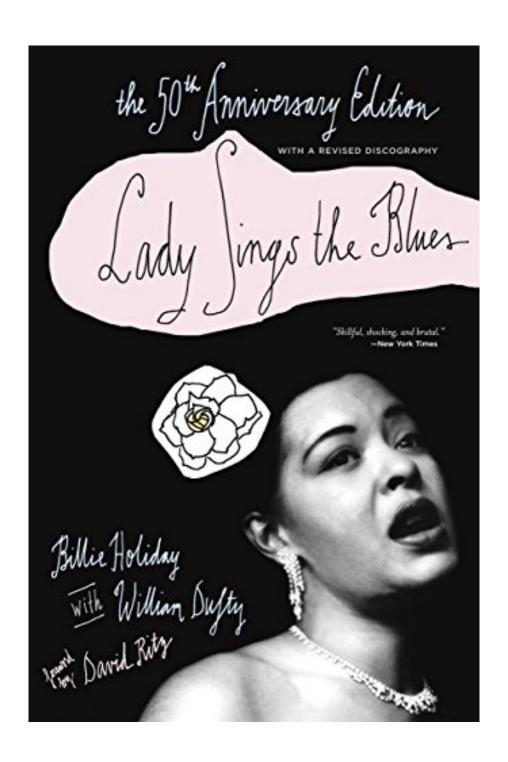


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Originally released by Doubleday in 1956, Harlem Moon Classics celebrates the publication with the fiftieth-anniversary edition of Billie Holiday's unforgettable and timeless memoir, updated with an insightful introduction and a revised discography, both written by celebrated music writer David Ritz.

Lady Sings the Blues is the fiercely honest, no-holds-barred autobiography of Billie Holiday, the legendary jazz, swing, and standards singing sensation. Taking the reader on a fast-moving journey from Holiday's rough-and-tumble Baltimore childhood (where she ran errands at a whorehouse in exchange for the chance to listen to Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith albums), to her emergence on Harlem's club scene, to sold-out performances with the Count Basie Orchestra and with Artie Shaw and his band, this revelatory memoir is notable for its trenchant observations on the racism that darkened Billie's life and the heroin addiction that ended it too soon. We are with her during the mesmerizing debut of "Strange Fruit"; with her as she rubs shoulders with the biggest movie stars and musicians of the day (Bob Hope, Lana Turner, Clark Gable, Benny Goodman, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, and more); and with her through the scrapes with Jim Crow, spats with Sarah Vaughan, ignominious jailings, and tragic decline. All of this is told in Holiday's tart, streetwise style and hip patois that makes it read as if it were written yesterday.

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This was a great book. Although I've heard all of it might ...

By Brandi Paige

This was a great book. Although I've heard all of it might not be true, it's still a captivating book. What I liked most about it is that I actually took and keep to heart some very wonderful quotes that Billie said that really touched me and helped me face some things in my own life. If your expecting a full biography about her life then you might want to read a different book. This was written by her only up to a certain time in her life, so it's by no means a full biography. . . However, she tells some amazing stories about her life and how she came to be from her point of view, which I thought made a wonderful read. I think this is great book to start reading if you have the initial spark of interest in Billie Holiday's life. Keeps you interested and wanting to read more about her!

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful.

Hoodwinked by life...

By Elizabeth Echavarria

I gave this book four stars because when I read about the inaccuracies and false stories in her memoir I just

didn't know how to approach the book. I wanted to read a factual version of her life but I settled for thinking of this book as a work of fiction inspired by the life of Billie Holiday. Reading from another source and confirmed by the book, I learned that this talented woman had a fascinating but tragic existence due to personal abuse with drugs, men, and the injustice of society due to racism and being a woman. It was also tragic how hard she worked and was consistently swindled monetarily from the people (often men) who were suppose to have her best interest professionally at heart. She died with only change in her bank account and an insignificant amount of money on her person (not in the book). I also gave the book four stars because I had some difficulties understanding the urban lingo of the time period, often becoming confused because there wasn't additional explanation for some of the slang used. Overall, the book was an interesting read but a disappointment as far as accuracy.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Lady Sings the Blues

By Karl H Schwerin

William Dufty presents Holiday's biography in her own voice. She is unflinching in describing the difficulties and triumphs of her life. Though she doesn't particularly stress it, her musical achievement is impressive.

One gets the sense that she was uncompromising in acknowledging her identity as a Black woman-sometimes exploited, but just as often standing up for herself. She refuses to be pigeonholed by promoters, associates, the press, or her fans. She acknowledges her addiction to heroin and decries how it came to label her and her experiences with the law enforcement community. She emphasizes her strong desire to get clean and stay clean, in spite of the difficulty of her struggle.

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