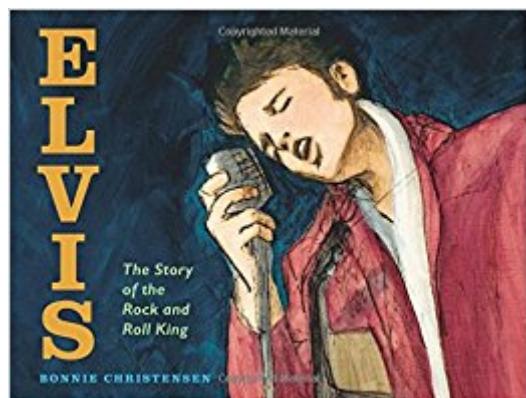


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# Elvis: The Story Of The Rock And Roll King



## Synopsis

An only child, a mama's boy—Elvis was a shy kid who struggled to make friends and found comfort singing in church and learning guitar. While in high school, he continued his music but was often ridiculed by students. On a whim, he recorded a song for his mom's birthday at Sun Record Studios as part of a customer promotion. The studio loved it so much that they sent it to local record stations . . . and the rest is history. Here is the story of how a poor kid from Tupelo, Mississippi, became an American legend. A Christy Ottaviano Book

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD690L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co. (BYR); First Edition edition (April 21, 2015)

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Product Dimensions: 11.3 x 10.2 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 stars 4 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #823,604 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #28 in Children's Books > Children's Books > Arts, Music & Photography > Music > Rock #200 in Children's Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Musical #571 in Children's Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 1900s

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

Gr 2-5 •The King may be gone, but this gorgeous picture book biography ensures that he won't be forgotten. With this enchanting and intimate glimpse at a beloved icon, Christensen takes legendary singer Elvis Presley from a child growing up in Mississippi and Tennessee to a young man cutting his first record and taking his first steps into the limelight. The portrait of Presley that emerges will be new to most readers, adult or child. Far from the strutting, hip-swiveling crooner of the stage and big screen, Presley comes across as shy and earnest, a sweetly baby-faced youth. Christensen deftly conveys her subject's vulnerability through softly rendered oil paintings. The inspired choice to use photocollage for the backgrounds imbues the singer's hardscrabble early

years with tenderness, suggesting the nostalgia-tinged look of a 1940s postcard. Written in verse, the text is stripped down; refreshingly free of artifice, it's as soulful as one of the many songs the singer performed. The author touches briefly upon Presley's role in introducing R&B music to white audiences, dropping hints about how music performed by blacks was often dismissed as "race music," but educators may want to provide further context for young readers. Pair this outstanding title with G. Neri's *Hello, I'm Johnny Cash* (Candlewick, 2014) for an up-close look at the childhoods of two founders of rock and roll. **VERDICT** An excellent addition to biography collections, and a superb way to introduce the history of rock to a new generation. •Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal

A San Francisco Chronicle Holiday Book Gift Guide SelectionA Bank Street College Best Book of the Year<sup>®</sup> \* Evocative photo-and-oil-paint collages and a narrative that reads like a series of bluesy prose poems distinguish the late Christensen's atmospheric study of the early life of Elvis Presley. • Publishers Weekly, Starred Review \* An excellent addition to biography collections, and a superb way to introduce the history of rock to a new generation. • Mahnaz Dar, School Library Journal \* The early life of Elvis Presley is presented here in lyrical, yet sometimes sharp-edged prose that brings the singer close. • Booklist, STARRED REVIEW \* Christensen's photo-collage and mixed-media illustrations have just the right touch of folksiness for the subject. . . Christensen wisely focuses on Elvis's childhood and pre-fame years, before the comeback specials and gold-trimmed leisure suits; many young readers will relate to Elvis's unwavering focus on music. • Sam Bloom, The Horn Book \* In the intimate, affectionate voice of a neighbor or acquaintance who might have "known him when," Christensen traces the early years of Elvis Presley . . . viewers get their first true glimpse of the rising star. • The Bulletin \* In addition to being a useful resource for biography reports, the story of Warhol's artistic triumphs despite his social difficulties will prove inspirational for young readers who feel as if they don't quite fit in. • School Library Journal, starred review on Fabulous \* A vital and exciting child-appropriate introduction to an American icon. • Kirkus Reviews on Fabulous \* Evocative photo-and-oil-paint collages and a narrative that reads like a series of bluesy prose poems distinguish the late Christensen's atmospheric study of the early life of Elvis Presley. • Publishers Weekly on Fabulous \* Christensen completes the tale of the guitarist's success with an author's note, a brief paragraph on the Roma people, and a bibliography/discography. She includes enough detail to

give perspective, but it is her lush paintings that so effectively give life to the man's effervescent charm and determined courage. School Library Journal, starred review on Django Christensen supports the inspirational story with rich, vibrant paintings that capture the texture and tone of the landscapes in Django's life: burnt oranges and various shades of brown bring the Gypsy campfires to vivid life, while bright blues shimmering under the sharp yellows of stage footlights depict the electricity of the guitarist in performance. Booklist, starred review on Django

A beautifully-wrought portrayal of Elvis Presley's transition from impressionable child to musical icon. Each page evokes the life events that gave his music the soul that made him a star. The images are memorable in a way that makes it perfect for young minds. Five stars.

A wonderful picture book about Elvis! The art work is superb. The story is concise and factual. A must for Elvis fans young and old.

Summary: This picture book biography focuses on Elvis Presley's early years, growing up in extreme poverty in the south. From a very young age, Elvis was drawn to music, and he was surrounded by a wide range of influences. Even though his town was segregated by race and class, the music of jazz, blues, and gospel was everywhere. When Elvis was 13, his family moved from Mississippi to Memphis, and he learned to play guitar. A few years later, he managed to get a recording session with Sun Records. It was turning into a disaster, when Elvis started singing "That's All Right", a Delta blues song he infused with country and gospel. That song became a hit, and Elvis Presley was on his way. Pros: Kids today may see Elvis Presley as something of a joke, and this story really humanizes him, portraying him sympathetically as a nervous kid who loved music. Cons: The story ends at the beginning of Elvis's career, which may leave the reader wanting to know more.

We borrowed this book from the library, and sadly this story fell completely flat. The story seems to be all over the map, adding superfluous details and leaving them out completely at other times. The story starts with segregation issues in the 1930's; and although an important fact, it adds simply nothing to the actual story of the "making of the Rock 'n Roll King." The recording studio paragraph is especially confusing, as Elvis makes a record, they like his voice, but don't need a singer. Elvis comes back every week to see if they need a singer, still nothing. Suddenly, they need

a singer and call Elvis (we actually had to reread the paragraph several times as we simply couldn't find the story line anymore). The lines between relevant and irrelevant details get crossed, jumped, or just ignored so many times, a potentially good story fell apart and robbed the King of his crown. It felt like a wooden roller coaster, that whips you around, going fast, then coming to a grinding halt, tossing you left and right and in the end you're merely left with a sore back and aching teeth, wishing you never got on. A good story to tell, but needs some editing and needs to be adjusted for its audience of children under 10.

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