

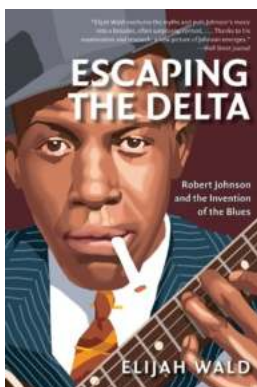
Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues

The history of music is filled with legendary figures who have shaped and defined entire genres. One such figure is Robert Johnson, a Mississippi-born blues musician who played a pivotal role in the creation and popularization of blues music. Johnson's life, shrouded in mystery and myth, has become just as legendary as his music.

The Legend of Robert Johnson

It is said that Robert Johnson made a deal with the devil at the crossroads of Highways 61 and 49 in Clarksdale, Mississippi. The story goes that in exchange for his soul, Johnson was granted extraordinary guitar-playing skills. Whether or not this myth has any truth to it, one thing is certain - Johnson's musical talent was otherworldly.

Born in 1911, Johnson began playing guitar in his early teens. His style was unique, characterized by intricate fingerpicking and a soulful vocal delivery. He drew inspiration from early blues pioneers such as Son House and Willie Brown, but Johnson had a sound all his own.



Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues by Elijah Wald (Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language	: English
File size	: 673 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 425 pages



Johnson's recordings, made between 1936 and 1937, were sparse but powerful. Songs like "Cross Road Blues," "Sweet Home Chicago," and "Hellhound on My Trail" showcased his masterful guitar playing and haunting lyrics. His music spoke to the struggles and hardships of African Americans in the Jim Crow South, embodying the essence of the blues.

The Impact of Robert Johnson

While Robert Johnson's music didn't achieve widespread recognition during his lifetime, his influence can be heard in countless blues, rock, and even modern pop songs. His unique guitar-playing style, characterized by complex fingerpicking patterns and bottleneck slide techniques, laid the foundation for future blues guitarists.

Many renowned musicians, such as Eric Clapton, Keith Richards, and Jimi Hendrix, have acknowledged Johnson's impact on their own playing. Clapton once famously said, "I have never found anything more deeply soulful than Robert Johnson."

Moreover, Johnson's haunting lyrics, often dealing with themes of love, loss, and the hardships of everyday life, inspired countless songwriters. His ability to convey raw emotion through his music is a testament to his songwriting prowess.

The Legacy of Robert Johnson

Tragically, Robert Johnson's life was cut short at the age of 27, likely due to poisoning. His untimely death only added to the mystique surrounding his music. However, his influence had already begun to spread.

In the years following his death, Johnson's recordings gained popularity. His music was rediscovered by a new generation of musicians, and his songs became blues standards. His impact on popular culture cannot be overstated.

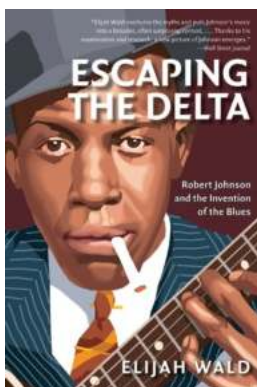
Today, Robert Johnson is recognized as one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century. His contributions to the blues, and to music as a whole, cannot be understated. His music continues to inspire and captivate audiences, reminding us of the power of the blues.

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Robert Johnson, the enigmatic blues musician, stands as a testament to the enduring power of music. His unique guitar style and haunting lyrics have left an indelible mark on the world of music.

While the story of his deal with the devil may be purely mythical, the impact of Robert Johnson on the blues is very real. His influence can be heard in the music of countless artists, and his legacy continues to grow.

Robert Johnson's contributions to the invention of the blues have forever shaped the musical landscape. His talent, passion, and soulful expression have made him an icon, and his music will live on as a testament to the enduring power of the blues.



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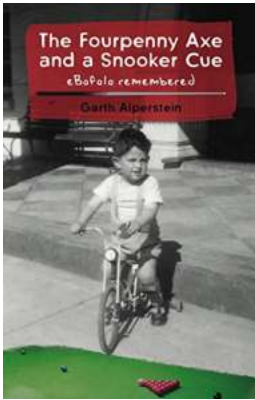
The life of blues legend Robert Johnson becomes the centerpiece for this innovative look at what many consider to be America's deepest and most influential music genre. Pivotal are the questions surrounding why Johnson was ignored by the core black audience of his time yet now celebrated as the greatest figure in blues history.

Trying to separate myth from reality, biographer Elijah Wald studies the blues from the inside -- not only examining recordings but also the recollections of the musicians themselves, the African-American press, as well as examining original research. What emerges is a new appreciation for the blues and the movement of its artists from the shadows of the 1930s Mississippi Delta to the mainstream venues frequented by today's loyal blues fans.



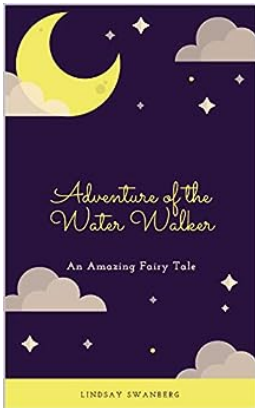
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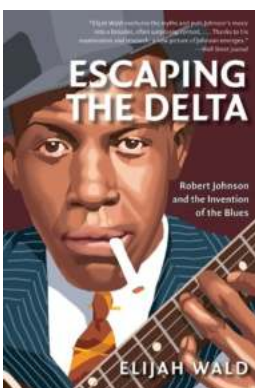
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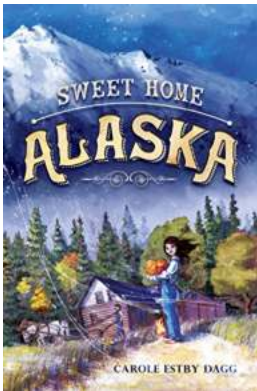
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