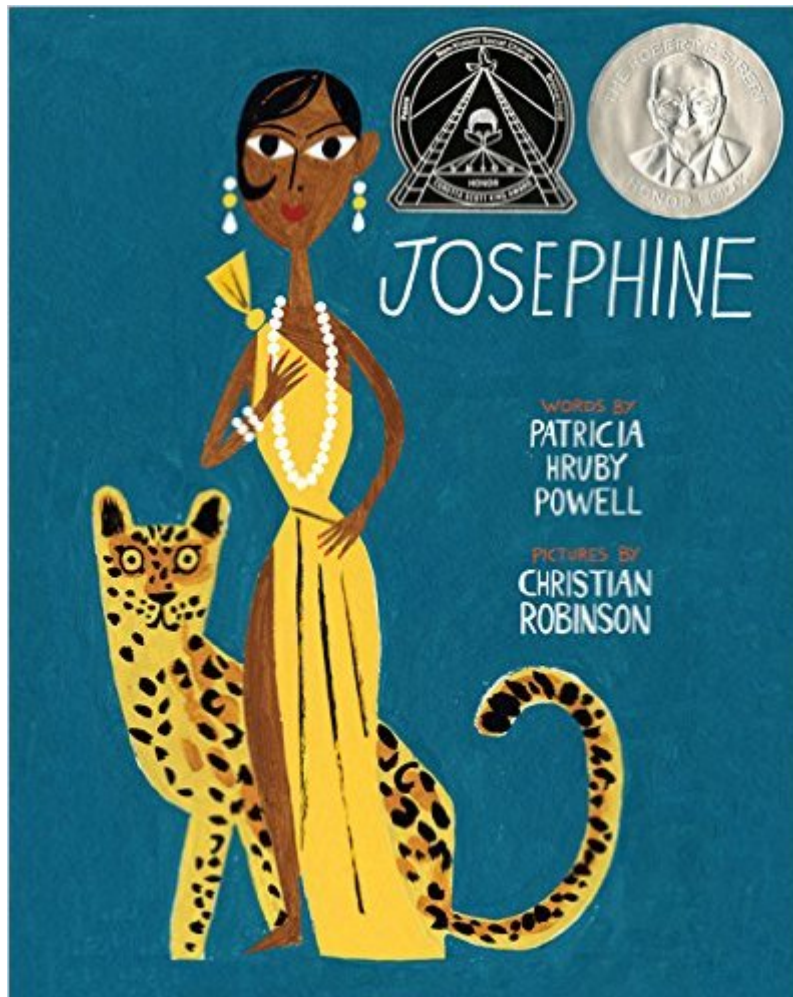


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# Josephine: The Dazzling Life Of Josephine Baker (Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books)



## Synopsis

Coretta Scott King Book Award, Illustrator, Honor Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Award, Honor Boston Globe "Horn Book Award, Nonfiction Honor Parent's Choice Award Wall Street Journal's 10 Best Children's Books of the Year List Bologna Ragazzi Nonfiction Honor 2014 In exuberant verse and stirring pictures, Patricia Hruby Powell and Christian Robinson create an extraordinary portrait for young people of the passionate performer and civil rights advocate Josephine Baker, the woman who worked her way from the slums of St. Louis to the grandest stages in the world. Meticulously researched by both author and artist, Josephine's powerful story of struggle and triumph is an inspiration and a spectacle, just like the legend herself.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 790L (What's this?)

Series: Coretta Scott King Illustrator Honor Books

Hardcover: 104 pages

Publisher: Chronicle Books (January 14, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1452103143

ISBN-13: 978-1452103143

Product Dimensions: 8.2 x 0.7 x 10.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.5 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (41 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #57,541 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Performing Arts](#) #72 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Women](#) #105 in [Books > Children's Books > Biographies > Multicultural](#)

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

## Customer Reviews

At the American Library Association's mid-winter Conference I spotted this new book on Actress/Singer Josephine Baker. It was one of a number of books on black female singers that I discovered. (The others are bios of Ella Fitzgerald and Billie Holiday, both of which I reviewed on this week). Since I often write about early jazz and musical theater, I was very familiar with Baker. In fact, last year I reviewed another children's book on Baker titled *Jazz Age Josephine*. This new book is both thicker and has a lot more text than *JAJ*.

Both, however use "jazz age style" illustrations. The author of the text "Patricia Hruby Powell" did a lot of research, based on her notes in the back of the book. Through the 104 unnumbered pages Powell tells Baker's story from when she was young and poor until when she was old (and poor again, after adopting 12 multi-ethnic and multi-racial children and spending money to raise them). She writes in a "jazzy" style of non-rhyming narrative, not always producing grammatically correct sentences. But that's a style and, when read aloud, it reflects Baker's jazz-age persona. I did find it interesting that the author used the words "negroes", "colored" and "blacks" to describe Baker and her ethnic origin, with no consistency. There was a lot of racism in Baker's life in America (though not in France, where she had her biggest success and spent her later life). And, the honest discussion of this makes the book useful in explaining race relations to children. Though the author may be trying to show Baker as a role model for children, reading the text she presents shows that this might not be the best use for this book. First, she runs away from home to join a travelling vaudeville act. He asks her to sign to "cross (her) heart and promise not to tell Mama." After leaving with the show. In Philadelphia, she gets married just before heading to New York for an audition (in the Sissle & Blake musical "Shuffle Along") which she gets. Her husband (Willie Baker) is not mentioned again until we read 20 pages later (after she returns to America from France) that "The very first thing, she divorced Willie Baker" ended that long-ago marriage. After reading the 3 reviews posted here before mine and seeing that these reviewers had never heard of Baker before I'm glad that this book brought this amazing performer to their attention. She only made three films and they are all available on DVD and I highly recommend them. (But be aware that all were made in France, are in French (with subtitles) and here dances are nearly always topless. So, I'll join the others in giving the others five stars. Four are because I liked the book and one because adding it will bring more attention to Baker. I hope you found this review both informative and helpful. Steve Ramm "Anything Phonographic"

This book is just too good to be true. I was so surprised at the wonderful illustrations that matched the text. The life of Josephine from her childhood intertwined with her adult life. I could not put the book down. Read it and you will be delighted..

This book is BEAUTIFUL. It is a HUGE picture book (104 pages!) with fun and tremendously colorful illustrations. There wasn't a page I turned that was anything other than beautiful - even the pages

without illustrations. The book could easily be heavy for young kids (depending on the child), as it encompasses Josephine's entire life from living in the slums and having to be Santa to her siblings, to her death. It includes her journeys around the world as a dancer and a spy; how she dealt with segregation throughout her life and fought through it; and her "rainbow tribe" of twelve adopted children from different countries. Josephine not only adopted children from other countries but raised them in their own religions! I found the book riveting. It is profoundly sad that I had never heard of Josephine Baker until reading this book. It shows exactly why Multicultural Children's Book Day is so very important. Patricia Hruby Powell tells the story well, and her level of research shines through the verse which is artfully displayed using different fonts. There are breaks in lines that seem almost wrong - but work here. My daughter (10) enjoyed the book very much. Her review may be brief, but it is more than we get for most books. Here is what she has to say: Josephine was more of a grown up book than I was expecting. It was overwhelming with how much information is in the book. I enjoyed the illustrations and how she was a spy. I am still a homeschooling mother at heart, I guess. If I had this book while homeschooling, I could do studies off of it for a couple of weeks easily. There are so many fantastic topics covered in this book that I would want to have lessons around. I'm sure I missed some but take a look at my quick list: ~Poetry ~Music (Ragtime, Trombones, Tuba, Fiddle) ~Dancing (Charleston) ~Geography: Saint Louis, MO; Mississippi River; New Orleans; Philadelphia, NYC, Paris, France, Germany, Russia, Egypt, Sweden, South America) ~Vaudeville ~What it would be like to have six people live in a shack ~Segregation (The largest theme of the book - how segregated America was while France had no such thing.) ~Traveling by train ~Traveling by ship ~What it means to "steal the show." ~Leopard (Exotic Pets) ~War ~The Red Cross ~Spies ~World War 2 ~Adoption The illustrations complement the verse beautifully. There are a few free printables available at the publisher's website. It is always nice to have activities to go along with a book.

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