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# Jazz Age Josephine

Cynthia Phillips

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# Book Review

**Title:** Jazz Age Josephine  
**Author:** Jonah Winter  
**Illustrator:** Marjorie Priceman  
**Reviewer:** Cynthia Phillips  
**Publisher:** Atheneum Books for Young Readers  
**Publication Year:** AaBbCcDd  
**ISBN:** 2012  
**Number of Pages:** 9781416961239  
**Interest Level:** Intermediate  
**Rating:** Dependable



## Review

Have you ever heard of Josephine Baker? Well, after you read this story you will want to know more about her life. This is a biographical picture book that highlights the life of Josephine Baker, born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri in 1906. She is quite a showgirl even at a young age, but black in a time when segregation was a way of life. She works her way onto the stage and after several years decides to move to France for her career. Once in France her career takes off and her dreams are coming true. But being successful isn't enough. She wants to change how her people are being portrayed and treated in the United States. For now, however, she sings, dances and is a success in France. The book also includes a brief life synopsis after the story.

If you are looking for a book to teach about segregation or rising above your circumstances this is your book. The book introduces children to an age in American history that they might not otherwise have heard about, as well as introducing them to a person that they have not known about either. The illustrations do an amazing job of helping to tell the story. There were a few parts in the book that were a bit too strong, such as the reference to "white folks" in a negative way and "black folks" as the victims. Considering the book's target audience it might cause an us vs. them sentiment to arise. The flow of the book was a bit trying as well. It has a sing-song type beat to it that would be hard to read aloud to children for the average storyteller. This book is a chronology of her life up to her fame in France but there are so many more amazing things Josephine Baker did with her life that were not addressed. All in all this is a good book for teaching but maybe not for light reading.

\*Contains mild violence.