



Johnny Cash: I See a Darkness

By Reinhard Kleist

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The first and only illustrated biography of "The Man in Black", Johnny Cash, the most famous country singer of all time

Cash was a 17-time Grammy winner who sold more than 90 million albums in his lifetime and became an icon of American music in the 20th century. Graphic novelist Reinhard Kleist depicts Johnny Cash's eventful life from his early sessions with Elvis Presley (1956), through the concert in Folsom Prison (1968), his spectacular comeback in the 1990s, and the final years before his death on September 12, 2003.

Already a bestseller and award-winner in Europe, *Johnny Cash: I See a Darkness* vividly portrays the unpredictable life of a loner, patriot, outlaw, and music rebel, making this unique biography a compelling read for multiple generations of graphic novel and music fans.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Kleist taps into the mythic quality of the Man in Black's rise from impoverished farming in Depression-era Arkansas to his early success in the 1950s, pulling no punches depicting Cash's drug dependency and the gradual erosion of his first marriage thanks to constant touring and run-ins with the law. He takes readers through Cash's evolution as an artist whose work and social consciousness reflected the changing and volatile times in his troubled country. There are few figures in the history of 20th-century American music whose impact and appeal bore the resonance of Cash's, and this stark and stunning graphic novel—winner of several awards in Europe—is a marvel of visual storytelling that does great honor to both his distinctively American epic of triumph and tragedy and to the universality of the songs he sang. A solid winner from cover to cover, this effort is highly recommended for just about anyone intrigued by an American icon. (*Nov.*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Kleist double-frames his starkly drawn, fluidly imagined graphic biography, the winner of three European awards, of country-music star Cash. The outer frame is provided by the scenarios of two lowering country perennials, Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues" and "Ghost Riders in the Sky," which Kleist visualizes so powerfully that the curiously off versions of the songs' lyrics (perhaps re-Englished from German translations) can almost be overlooked. The inner frame homes in on the book's ostensible narrator, Folsom inmate Glen Sherley, whose song "Greystone Chapel" Cash added at the last minute to his famous 1968 recorded performance at the prison. (A brief flash-forward to Cash in his latter years, choosing repertoire for his American Recordings, forms a handsome buffer between the two frames' closing parentheses.) The book covers Cash's earlier life, from Depression-era childhood to the Folsom performance, but since the only major development of his career missed is his gospel period, it satisfies pretty keenly, not least because Kleist, whose style suggests Will Eisner heavily affected by film-noir lighting and composition, segues often and beautifully between the life of the man and the lives in his songs. --Ray Olson

About the Author

Reinhard Kleist is a multi-award-winning graphic novel author and artist. His previous books include *Havanna*, *Lovecraft*, and *Amerika*. He lives in Berlin.

Users Review

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