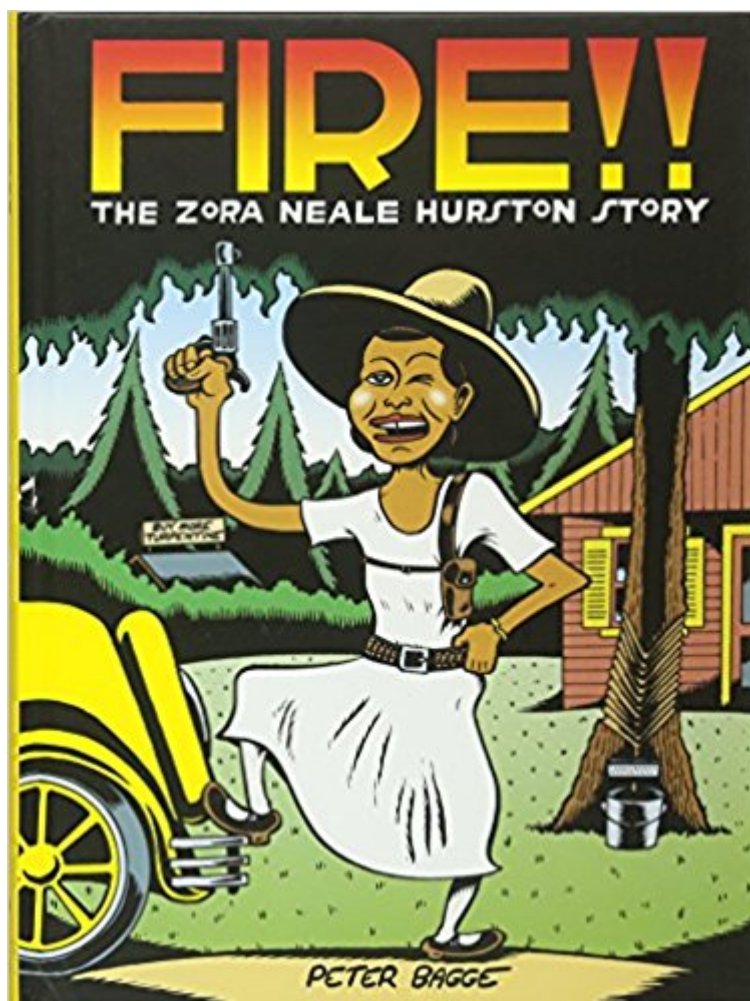


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# Fire!!: The Zora Neale Hurston Story



## Synopsis

A bold retelling of the life of the *Their Eyes Were Watching God* author Peter Bagge has defied the expectations of the comics industry by changing gears from his famous slacker hero Buddy Bradley to documenting the life and times of historical 20th century trailblazers. If Bagge had not already had a New York Times bestseller with his biography of Margaret Sanger, his newest biography, *Fire!!: The Zora Neale Hurston Story*, would seem to be an unfathomable pairing of author and subject. Yet through Bagge's skilled cartooning, he turns what could be a rote biography into a bold and dazzling graphic novel, creating a story as brilliant as the life itself. Hurston challenged the norms of what was expected of an African American woman in early 20th century society. The fifth of eight kids from a Baptist family in Alabama, Hurston's writing prowess blossomed at Howard University, and then Barnard College, where she was the sole black student. She arrived in NYC at the height of the Harlem Renaissance and quickly found herself surrounded by peers such as Langston Hughes and Wallace Thurman. Hurston went on to become a noted folklorist and critically acclaimed novelist, including her most provocative work *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Despite these landmark achievements, personal tragedies and shifting political winds in the midcentury rendered her almost forgotten by the end of her life. With admiration and respect, Bagge reconstructs her vivid life in resounding full-color.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Peter Bagge's *Fire!!* is thoroughly researched and eminently readable. Weaving together the

complex tapestry of Zora Neale Hurston's life (and featuring accurate-and-entertaining cameos by Langston Hughes and Alice Walker, among others), this graphic novel is both insightful and fun to read – a rare combination." – Tami Navarro, Ph.D. Barnard Center for Research on Women, Columbia University "Zora Neale Hurston was always larger than life, colorful – the ideal subject for graphic work. Here comes Peter Bagge's well-researched interpretation of her talent, persistence, contrariness, and just Zora-ness in *Fire!!*. Here's Zora laughing, also looking mean and impressive." – Missy Dehn Kubitschek, Professor of English and Africana Studies, IUPUI "From its cover image on, Bagge's *Fire!!* presents Zora Neale Hurston's story in a format worthy of its subject. Vibrant and humorous, this comic book is as an homage – "warts and all" – to a heroine who lived her life as an adventure fueled by intellectual curiosity, and creative desire." – Glenda R. Carpio, Professor of English & African and African American Studies, Harvard

Peter Bagge is the 2014 USA Rockefeller Fellow in Literature. He is the Harvey Award-winning author of the acclaimed 1990s alternative comic series *Hate* starring slacker hero Buddy Bradley and a contributing editor to *Reason* magazine. A graduate of the School of Visual Arts in New York City, he got his start in comics in the R. Crumb-edited magazine *Weirdo*. Bagge lives in Seattle with his wife Joanne, daughter, and three cats.

I don't normally read "graphic novels," but I was very impressed with this work. I devoured it in one sitting. The extensive notes at the end are also excellent, explaining further many of the episodes and people referenced in the main body. Bagge is also honest in stating and defending his interpretations.

I'm a big fan of Peter Bagge from way back to his *Weirdo* and *Neat Stuff* days and I'm enjoying the twists and turns of his artistic career. I enjoyed his graphic novel biography of Margaret Sanger, but was a little bit leery of his subject choice for his second biography. Then, I thought of the marvelous mini-biographies that Robert Crumb did of blues men and others unlikely subjects like Kraft-Ebing and Kafka and realized that it all made sense. As much as I enjoy Bagge's always lively art, I found myself much more impressed with his copious notes and photos at the back of the book. Honest analysis and entertaining commentary. This book is highly recommended for both the diehard Zora Neale Hurston fan and the reader who is a blank slate on the subject.

Once again, Peter Bagge provides humor and insight into a historical figure! If you are a fan of Zora Neale Hurston- you'll treasure this book! And if you have never heard of her, THAT DOESN'T MATTER - because you'll have so much fun reading it! Bagge did a wonderful job in writing about and illustrating her life! SIMPLY AMAZING!

The cartoons are so compelling and the notes in the back are fantastic. Highly recommended!

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