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Posted on Thu, Aug. 28, 2008

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**KARLA MASS: The week's most talked about book**

**August 29 - September 4**

McClatchy Interactive

Never, ever underestimate the power of a well-written memoir. "Keep the Faith" by Faith Evans with Aliya S. King is one of those unforgettable journeys in print where readers embark on the bumpy roller coaster ride we call life. Evans' emotional passage begins in Newark, New Jersey and ends in Atlanta, Georgia.

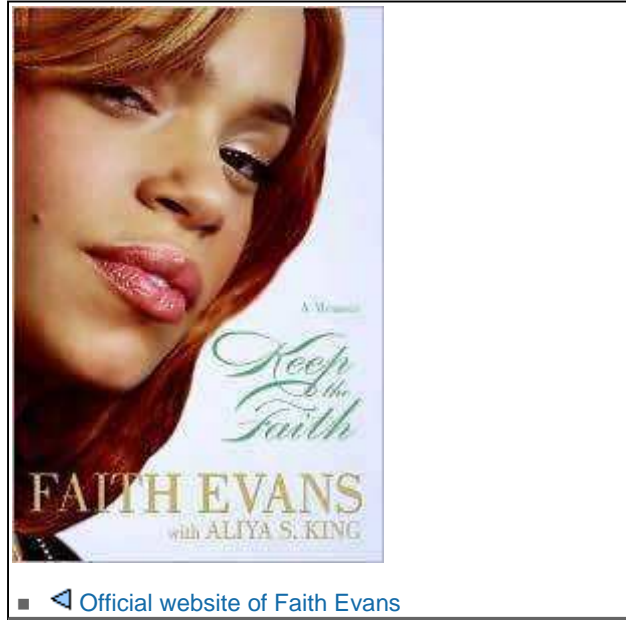
With a name like Faith, a classy title and a hot book jacket, destiny intervenes and a captivating bestseller is in the making.

But what makes a good memoir?

It should portray honesty, personality, an interesting theme and hopefully, at some point, readers will discover something new about the author.

Heart wrenching and personal, an exciting prologue introduces the end of life, but not the legacy of the late Christopher George Letore Wallace (Evan's first husband) who is also known as the Notorious B.I.G. or simply, Biggie.

Next, we meet a young and talented Faith Evans living in a crowded house on Grumman Avenue. Sheltered by her grandparents, she is influenced by music, and not just gospel music, but "forbidden" music like that of artists Joni Mitchell, Jimi Hendrix and Loletta Holloway. And believe it or not, a small Casio keyboard is the beginning of a rising star.



[Official website of Faith Evans](#)

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On her way to the top, Evans would hear over and over again "I didn't know you could sing like that!" But before her rise to stardom, she must first face adversity.

She loves so hard ... she has love for those who aren't even worth loving; and it takes her a while to learn that loving herself is essential. So after soul searching and swallowing her pride, she takes her healing one step further by writing about love, music and life.

And the greatest of these lessons begins with the Notorious B.I.G.

**Love Lessons: Biggie Smalls**

*Big just nodded. He wasn't facing me. But every once in a while he would look over at me, and I noticed that he had a lazy eye. He'd look at me but only the left eye would focus; the other one was still. And he definitely wasn't a pretty boy. But there was still something about him that was magnetic. I just couldn't put my finger on it. Part of it was definitely his self-confidence.*

Evans clears up a few things about the on-and-off-again relationship between her and Biggie. For instance, what exactly attracted her to Biggie ... and no it wasn't the money. He didn't have any ... not when she met him. He didn't even own a car.

Does she know who murdered Biggie?

**Music Lessons: The Industry**

*If 50 percent of the publishing goes to the composer or producer of the original song, the remaining 50 percent is split between the new producer or composer and the songwriters. Here's where it gets tricky: You have to agree with the other songwriters on how much of the percentage you should be credited for.*

She offers advice to an up and coming performer and fan, from Fort Worth, Texas, who recently recorded his first single, "Like Scarface." What's his next step? "He's needs to promote some interest in it," Evans responds. "First, he should secure a copyright. Once he's cleared up that this is his piece of work, he should attempt to garner some buzz."

The first female to sign with Bad Boy Records, Evans finds out the hard way about the music business. You don't always get paid. Faith was about getting paid. And why not? She possesses mad skills when it comes to writing music, not to mention that voice. Her list of collaborators include Al B. Sure, Sean "P.Diddy" Combs, Mary J. Blige, Missy Elliot and Pebbles.

On more than one occasion, she approaches a charismatic and controlling music producer, who today is one of the most successful hip-hop moguls of our time. She requests a songwriter's fee for contributing lyrics and vocals.

Will she get paid?

**Life Lessons: Moving On**

*It's hard to say how I feel about being connected to the legendary Biggie Smalls because it's not going to change. It is what it is. I just have to learn how to deal with it more and more gracefully as time goes on.*

Since Biggie's murder, Evan touts a total of four albums, including "Faith" (1995), "Keep the Faith" (1998), "Faithfully" (2001) and "The First Lady" (2005).

Today, the most important people in her life are her kids. A mother of four, Evans is remarried and her new husband is also part of the music industry, then and now, but minus the drama.

So, what makes a great memoir? An extraordinary testimony that shouts love, pain and the real Faith Evans.

*Keep the Faith: A Memoir*

**Author:** Faith Evans with Aliya S. King

**Publisher:** Grand Central Publishing

**Publication Date:** August 2008



[A chat with Faith Evans: A memoir in the making](#)

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**MORE MEMORABLE MEMOIRS***Michael Phelps: Beneath the Surface***Author:** Michael Phelps with Brian Cazeneuve**Publisher:** Sports Publishing LLC**Publication Date:** August 2008

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*The Legs Are the Last to Go: Aging, Acting, Mothering, and Other Things I Learned the Hard Way***Author:** Diahann Carroll**Publisher:** HarperCollins Publishers**Publication Date:** September 2008

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*Blue Sky July: A Mother's Story of Hope and Healing***Author:** Nia Wyn**Publisher:** Penguin Group (USA)**Publication Date:** August 2008

*"The Week's Most Talked About Book(s)" is a weekly book review and literary criticism column that publishes every Friday. Selected titles are based on popularity, public opinion, research and observation. Questions, comments and suggestions should be sent to book lover and columnist Karla Mass at [kmass@mcclatchyinteractive.com](mailto:kmass@mcclatchyinteractive.com). She is a content producer for McClatchy Interactive.*

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