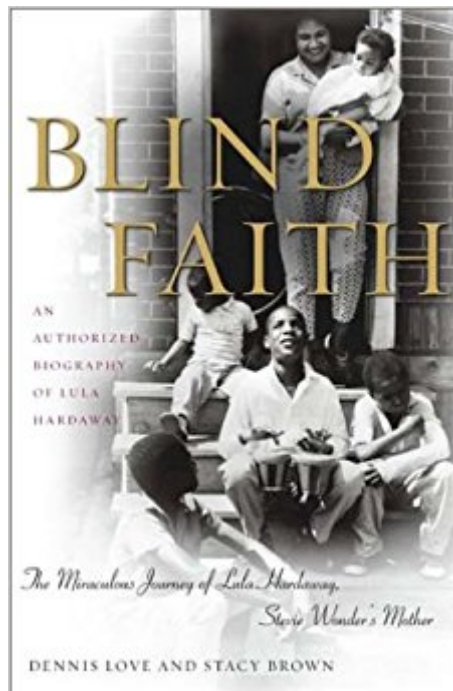




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# Blind Faith: The Miraculous Journey Of Lula Hardaway, Stevie Wonder's Mother



## Synopsis

Hardship, sacrifice, determination, and ultimate triumph are the elements that make up "Blind Faith," the frank and compelling biography of Lula Hardaway, mother of superstar musician and singer Stevie Wonder. Written with her full cooperation and participation, this is the first ever authorized look into the life of the woman who gave birth to and nurtured one of America's greatest musicians/songwriters -- and the struggles that preceded his rise to fame and fortune. To say that Lula Hardaway did not have an easy life is an understatement. It was a constant struggle for self-esteem and emotional survival. Yet survive she did -- a motherless child born in a sharecropper's shack in Alabama, she was passed from relative to relative, unwanted and, for the most part, unloved. As a teenager she was sent to Chicago, where she met a much older man whom she eventually married. Unfortunately, her life then took an even darker turn as he abused her and forced her to work as a prostitute. Determined to build a better life for her children, she started hiding money away, and one day successfully made her escape to Detroit. One of her sons, Stevland Judkins, was blind from infancy. Although he presented special challenges, Lula noticed from the outset that this little boy impressed everyone he met with his outgoing personality, his intelligence, charm, and resourcefulness -- and his incredible musical talent. By age ten, he was playing and singing gospel tunes in church, and then joining adults singing rhythm and blues on the street corners of Detroit. Eventually, word of this young phenomenon reached Berry Gordy, who was just beginning to establish himself as a creative force in Detroit's thriving music scene. Gordy dubbed the boy Little Stevie Wonder, and launched him into musical history when he signed him to his Motown label. Stardom didn't come that easily -- there was the question of what material was best for Stevie, and then the question of what would happen to the twelve-year-old boy's voice when he reached puberty. Fortunately, the voice that emerged was even more musical and more captivating than it had been. Great care was taken in choosing his next projects and the result was a succession of top 10 -- and several number 1 -- hits. By age twenty-one, Stevie had attained greater control of his career and finances by negotiating a new contract with Motown, which gave him complete control over the songs he recorded. What followed was a string of chart-topping albums and some of the most memorable popular music to come from the second half of the last century. Through it all, Stevie Wonder never failed to credit his mother. When "Innervisions" won a Grammy award for Album of the Year in 1973, he refused to accept the award unless Lula would walk with him to the podium. He clutched his mother in front of the auditorium and in front of the millions of people watching on television, proclaiming, "Her strength has led us to this place." Indeed, it was her strength and her belief in herself and in her sons that brought them to that place, to the

very heights of success. It was her drive and her willingness to sacrifice the now for the future -- plus her abiding belief in God -- that saw them through. "Blind Faith" is not only the story of the birth of a superstar but also a stirring testament to a mother's love and determination and a frank and uncompromising look at how one woman's attempt to better her children's lives led to a lasting gift to the world.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

For those interested in the hardscrabble story behind Stevie Wonder, this authorized biography fleshes out some of the facts available elsewhere. This often entertaining book takes the sporadically successful tack of telling Wonder's story largely from the point of view of Lulu Hardaway, Wonder's mother. Beginning with her migration from the backwoods of Alabama to prostitution and poverty in the Northeast, the book then shifts gears to Wonder's struggle from 11-year-old prodigy and dutiful Motown employee to the creator of influential classics such as *Music of My Mind*, *Innervisions*, and *Songs in the Key of Life*. In *Blind Faith* Wonder comes off as an inexhaustible worker undaunted by his blindness--as well as a loving son, a prankster, and a womanizer. Although he has never surpassed his artistic peak of the '70s, this book glosses over the past 20 years, offering a paean to his philanthropy and perfectionism instead. More input from the reticent Wonder would have made *Blind Faith* a more compelling read; instead, Hardaway's story dominates. Although well-written, fans would be better served by a biography that tells Wonder's story in a less digressive fashion. --Valerie Gregory

Love and Brown, two freelance journalists, based this rambling account of the rock 'n' roll legend on interviews they conducted with Wonder and Hardaway, both of whom cooperated with this bio. Blind since birth, Steveland Judkins (born in 1952) was a musical prodigy who, as a child, played for coins on the street. By the time he was 10, he had mastered the harmonica, piano, organ and drums without taking a lesson. After moving with his family to Detroit, he was introduced to Berry Gordy of Motown Records, who signed him to a record contract and nicknamed him "Little Stevie Wonder." After his first big hit, "Fingertips Part Two," Wonder continued to produce hits for Motown until he was 21, when he negotiated a contract that gave him artistic freedom. The authors accurately portray Wonder's amazing musical ability, but they offer little insight into their subject's character other than stressing his good nature and commitment to social causes. More engrossing is their treatment of Hardaway, who was deserted by her parents and endured a childhood marked by poverty and abuse. Calvin Judkins, her husband and father of their children (including Stevie), drank, beat his wife, and forced her into prostitution in order to feed her family. She finally was able to extricate herself from this relationship and support her three children by finding a job that was low paying, but above the board. Love and Brown describe how Wonder greatly improved his mother's life after he became successful, but, unfortunately, they essentially end their account with Wonder's recovery from a 1973 automobile accident. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Written, mostly, by Steveland Morris' mother, this book is an everything you EVER wanted to know about Mr. Wonder. And told with the love, sensitivity, truth and compassion of a mother. I am a fanatical Wonder fan and have been since adolescence. I was very pleased with the content and pleasantly surprised about the many discoveries this book holds. It has been rumored that Steve didn't want the book published, but I certainly didn't consider it damaging. If you love Stevie as I do, you need to buy this one.

Received and well packaged. Earlier than expected. All Discs in beautiful condition. The audio book itself, is spellbinding! The reading by Viola Davis, an extra plus! What an Amazing Journey! Thank You So Much

This book was a biography of the mother of R&B singer Stevie Wonder, and it opens before he was even born and trails the path of his success on up into the late eighties. This wasn't your ordinary 'Black-Success autobiography.' It isn't full of intense racism or oppressed characters who seem

unable to elude inevitable poverty. This story had its share of despairing moments, but the important (and inspiring) thing about this story is that the characters escaped the unfavorable conditions of their lives and rose to become the man we know Stevie Wonder to be today.

Received product in a timely manner. Totally enjoyed the audio book.

My son read this book as part of his 8th grade summer reading. He really enjoyed it and learned a lot about Stevie Wonder's mother.

Still working on reading the rest of the book. Bless her heart!!! She did a great job raising her kids.

I enjoyed this book. So much so that I read it within one sitting. It was just that good. SO good that I wanted more info. It was good to know the REAL deal about Stevie's early life and about Lula, who really went through some ordeals. I loved the aunt who took her in but her "good" husband the "Deacon" was an out and out hypocrite. I just lost respect for him. Her 1st husband (Stevie's father) wasn't much better either. I understood her feelings when Stevie was about to be signed with Motown. You could understand why she wanted to not give him the opportunity, because of her own insecurities and limitations, yet, despite her own misgivings, she overcame them and allowed her son to become one of the most beloved musical geniuses living on the planet today. My only gripe with the book is what became of the other five children she had. What did they do with their lives?? And why did they rush so much at the end with Lula's life? I would have loved to hear more though I understand one's right to privacy. All in all, a good book.

I did like the book, but I was surely disappointed because, I was really looking forward that detailed her life and how she overcame obstacles, and how she triumph through all of her trials and tribulation, and actually, I feel as though I was robbed of a complete story. I would have loved to learn about her other children, and her relationships with them, as well as her relationship with Stevie as an adult. Making the second half about Stevie Wonder, in my opinion diminish her importance as a person. I liked the history lesson about Motown, but I could have read that information anywhere. I really wanted to feel encouragement towards her life. I didn't purchase the book, I got the audio from the public library, which I am very happy because it was definitely not worth \$18.00.

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