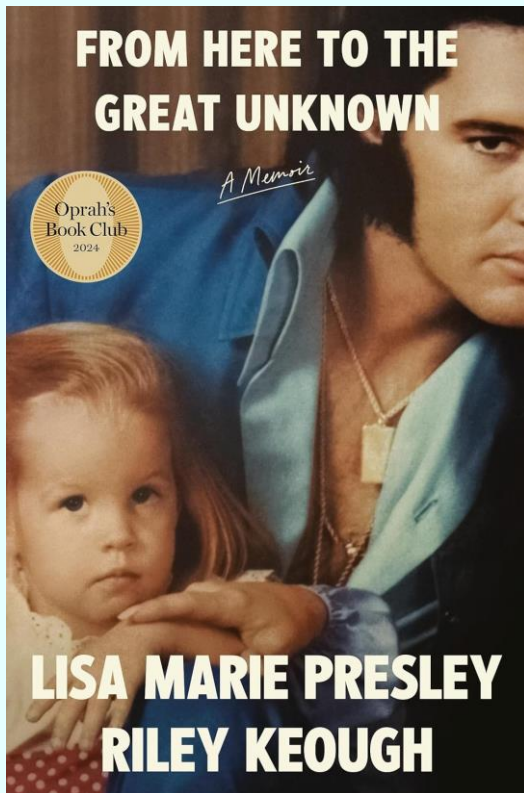


Allison's Book Corner
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From Here to The Great Unknown: A Memoir

by Lisa Marie Presley and Riley Keough

(Penguin Random House, 2024)



Do you remember when you first heard the name Elvis Presley? It may be hard for you to remember, because Elvis and his music are ingrained in American culture just like baseball, football, and apple pie. But I remember because my mother's birthday, August 16th, is the day Elvis Presley died. As a little girl, even as we celebrated Mom, there were many people on television weeping and lining up for hours at a place called "Graceland." As a six-year-old, you do not quite understand the public spectacle before your eyes. Of course, I grew to understand, and Graceland confirms that more than 600,000 people visit each year. It is the second most-visited place in the United States (the White House being the first.)

The King of Rock 'n Roll was also a father. Upon his death he left behind a nine-year-old daughter, Lisa Marie, whose entire life was marked by his death. Lisa Marie Presley was writing this memoir when she died in early 2023, and her oldest daughter Riley Keough finished it for us. **Whew, this is a small book that packs a punch.** I read it in one evening because I could not put it down. Elvis fans will naturally gravitate toward this memoir, but I urge those who are not Elvis fans to add it to your reading list. Each chapter is divided into Lisa Marie's voice and Riley's voice. The voices are depicted in different fonts. The first big surprise is that Priscilla Presley and Lisa Marie were estranged for most of Lisa Marie's life. I am the first one to say that being a mother is a very hard job. I am

not excusing or defending any of Priscilla Presley's behavior as described in this memoir. However, we must remember that from age fourteen to her late twenties, Priscilla Presley was with Elvis. Like most of us, at age fourteen I was in middle school and still living with my parents. I believe that some of Priscilla Presley's behavior was heavily influenced by the fact that she "grew up" with Elvis. In more recent news, Priscilla Presley fought with Riley over the ownership and management of Graceland. Riley won. I will just leave those facts there without revealing anything else.

Researchers say that we can retain distinct memories of things and events by the age of five years old. So, at age nine Lisa Marie was left with memories of many moments shared with her father. Also, the family, (right up to the time of Lisa's death) usually always lived together in one residence. It may seem weird to us, but no one else in the world could really relate to their lives. When they were at Graceland, they lived in a residence/tourist attraction. One of the funnier anecdotes in the book involves Lisa Marie and her two kids at the time getting stuck upstairs in Elvis's bedroom while tourists are walking through the downstairs portion of the house. Security would bring food and drinks up to the room for the family while they waited for tourists to leave.

An entire chapter is dedicated to Lisa Marie's marriage to Michael Jackson. The marriage lasted 20 months. There are a lot of interesting details in this chapter. I will only share one that many may already know: Lisa Marie and Michael Jackson did truly love each other. Riley was also old enough at the time to remember specific things about their relationship that she shares with readers.

Overall, this is a sad tale. This memoir depicts how addiction runs through families genetically. Lisa Marie was able to run away from it for a long time. However, after having a C-section birth of her twin daughters she became addicted to opioids. In rehab, out of rehab - a vicious cycle. Her son Ben (who looked like Elvis) was battling his own demons with heavy drinking. Lisa Marie and her son were both gifted musically. Lisa recorded a few albums and even toured. The specter of Elvis hung over them both. Neither could shake it.

After Ben's suicide, Riley thought her mother would die the next day. Miraculously, Lisa Marie sobered up and became a beacon to grieving families

dealing with addiction. She found inner strength and some peace, eventually. Unfortunately, in 2022 Lisa Marie began experiencing some health problems. She had a hysterectomy. Old surgical scars became problematic. Riley believes these accumulated health issues, combined with protracted grief over her son's death, led to Lisa Marie's death.

Readers, please do not be left with the wrong impression. A whole lot of living happens in these pages. Lisa Marie was truly a devoted mother to her children, and you can feel her love for them throughout this memoir. Many of us live with happiness and grief intertwined; the key is not to let it take us under. Here is why Lisa Marie wrote this book, in her own words:

"I was thinking my main objective would be to help other people somehow. Or to shed light on something. Make a difference somewhere, somehow. I think people have gone through some of the same things I have, and maybe they'll say, "That really helped me."

Lisa Marie Presley's life mattered. Readers, you will not regret spending time in these pages.