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Tennessee Williams called Jane Bowles "the most important writer of prose fiction in modern American letters." John Ashbery said she was "one of the finest modern writers of fiction in any language," consistently producing "the surprise that is the one essential ingredient of great art." Here, available again, is the only biography of this powerful writer.

A Little Original Sin: The Life and Work of Jane Bowles Details

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From Reader Review A Little Original Sin: The Life and Work of Jane Bowles for online ebook

Joey Comeau says

This book, along with "Beautiful Shadow: A Life of Patricia Highsmith" is one of the best biographies I've ever read. Compellingly written, and about a fascinating subject - Jane Bowles. A truly queer woman, and the author of Two Serious Ladies.

Peter says

A terrifically detailed bio of a very troubled, psychologically tortured 'artist'. Ultimately, a tragic life of a somewhat self-destructive, toxic personality.

Simon Bate says

an interesting and strange life...good to read if you enjoy her few writings....and it must be nice to have a friend like Libby Holman who keeps sending you money !

Jana says

A Life worth knowing about. Not easy being the partner of Paul Bowles who glided seamlessly through life with his great erudition, talent and charm, however, Jane might have been an even better writer than her husband in another circumstance?

Lady R.E. Miller says

What I learned from this book:
Jane Bowles was quite a character. She suffered from chronic writer's block. She also liked pinball.

Rj says

On the reading front in my attempt to descend into the world of Alfred Chester I just finished Millicent Dillon's A Little Original Sin: The Life and Work of Jane Bowles (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1981). Its funny years ago when I began reading about the wonderful life of expats in Morocco I always came across stories about Jane Bowles but had never followed any of the texts back to her. Instead I was drawn in by the boys and their sexual escapades with Moroccan men. As I have aged, and my recent discovery of Alfred Chester has brought full circle back to those expats again, but now I am coming at them

through the life of Jane (she has entered the pantheon of the monstres sacrés that roll around my head). There is something mesmerizing and inviting about the affect she had on everyone who knew her. Dillon's biography does a really good job, sometimes with too much detail of contextualizing her life and her work.

Zazou says

Mis impresiones en: <http://bibliomaniasydesvarios.blogspot.com>...

Pentimento says

este tiempo estoy sumergido en la fascinante, agitada y tragica vida de esta dama y su compañero el gran Paul Bowles!

Jane Chakrathy says

Was not familiar with JB or her work, picked up this book and was quite surprised about her life, her talent, her self destruction and of course hedonistic lifestyle! Good read, but a bit sad last two chapters.

Rod says

i coveted this book. it took me to the almost invisible paths of a foreign world.

Thombeau says

I read this in 1982 and absolutely loved it. Reading it again all these years later I love it that much more. An excellent bio.

Iñaki Tofiño says

INSOPORTABLE. No sé si ha sido el libro, la traducción o la pobre Jane Bowles, pero el libro me ha parecido una memez, una sarta de información sin sentido, de viajes, fiestas y enfermedades que echan para atrás a cualquiera.

Mary Shanley says

Jane Bowles was one of the great writers and personalities of the ex-patriate society in Tangier. She mingles

with great authors and playwrights, composers and her Moroccan lover, Cherifa (who was rumored to have put black magic in her room, which contributed to her demise.)

Avery Cassell says

A Little Original Sin is an excellently written biography about the novelist, playwright, adventuress, and debauched dyke, Jane Bowles (b.1917 - d. 1973). I have a weakness for this era, wild women, and the Middle East, and this only fed into my obsessions. One of Jane's lovers was a butch Moroccan grain-seller, Cherifa. Jane was introduced to Cherifa by her bisexual composer husband, Paul Bowles (Paul eventually took up with his driver.) There were rumors that Cherifa was a witch and poisoned Jane to keep her under her spell...rumors that Jane encouraged. Read this book. Jane is an interesting writer and an important person in LGBTQ history.

Paul Bryant says

There were more than a few odd things about Jane.

She fell off a horse at the age of 15 and broke her leg. Then she got TB - **in her leg**. Which wouldn't heal. So she was sent off to a Swiss sanatorium, where she learned French & continued her education in French, whilst her mother swanned about in Paris. The TB leg took two years to get a bit better - **she was in traction most of the time** - and then it didn't heal. So to alleviate the pain they **fused her knee**, so **she had a stiff leg all her life**.

The family were non-practicing Jews. She figured out she was gay quite quickly, and what with that and the leg, she was prone to calling herself "**Cripple the Kike Dyke**". Which is one of those things where it was okay for her to call herself that but probably, I'm guessing, not alright for someone else to call her that.

She married a gay guy called Paul Bowles. They gave the straight thing **a fairly half-hearted go**, but then they opted for staying married but being separate. They did love each other, in an unusual kind of way.

The Bowleses were kind of pre-beats even though Paul Bowles looked like **Young Businessman of the Year 1949**. (Sometimes Jane also looked like Young Businessman of the Year 1949. She liked men's attire.) They couldn't sit still. They had to be off somewhere exotic or in New York, one or the other. Eventually they decamped for Morocco and stayed there, falling in love with the locals and stoning themselves out of their brains on the local hashish. They were ill a lot.

This biography says Jane wasn't an alcoholic. On Wikipedia it says Jane was an alcoholic. Given the number of pages drinking takes up in this biography I'm going with Wiki.

She wrote a weird novel (Two Serious Ladies - one reviewer said that **to try to explain the plot of this novel was to risk one's sanity**), a weird play and six weird short stories.

That's it.

THE BROTHEL ANECDOTE

They were in Guatemala and Jane got to drinking with some students who expressed a desire to visit a brothel. Jane persuaded them to take her, she was curious. At the brothel, after they got there, a big guy with a pistol in his belt came in. He was the chief bodyguard of the dictator of Guatemala. He looked around the room and pointed to Jane and said "I want that one." Everyone said "No, that is a tourist." The big guy said "I want that one."

Now that's what I call a **sticky moment**.
