



# Minor Characters: A Beat Memoir

*Joyce Johnson*

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**Minor Characters: A Beat Memoir** Joyce Johnson

**Jack Kerouac. Allen Ginsberg. William S. Burroughs. LeRoi Jones.** Theirs are the names primarily associated with the Beat Generation. But what about **Joyce Johnson** (nee **Glassman**), **Edie Parker, Elise Cowen, Diane Di Prima**, and dozens of others? These female friends and lovers of the famous iconoclasts are now beginning to be recognized for their own roles in forging the Beat movement and for their daring attempts to live as freely as did the men in their circle a decade before Women's Liberation. Twenty-one-year-old **Joyce Johnson**, an aspiring novelist and a secretary at a New York literary agency, fell in love with **Jack Kerouac** on a blind date arranged by **Allen Ginsberg** nine months before the publication of **On the Road** made Kerouac an instant celebrity. While Kerouac traveled to Tangiers, San Francisco, and Mexico City, Johnson roamed the streets of the East Village, where she found herself in the midst of the cultural revolution the Beats had created. **Minor Characters** portrays the turbulent years of her relationship with Kerouac with extraordinary wit and love and a cool, critical eye, introducing the reader to a lesser known but purely original American voice: her own.

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