

Lit: A Memoir (P.S.)

By Mary Karr

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The Liars' Club brought to vivid, indelible life Mary Karr's hardscrabble Texas childhood. Cherry, her account of her adolescence, 'continued to set the literary standard for making the personal universal' (Entertainment Weekly). Now Lit follows the self-professed blackbelt sinner's descent into the inferno of alcoholism and madness--and to her astonishing resurrection. Karr's longing for a solid family seems secure when her marriage to a handsome, Shakespeare-quoting blueblood poet produces a son they adore. But she can't outrun her apocalyptic past. She drinks herself into the same numbness that nearly devoured her charismatic but troubled mother, reaching the brink of suicide. A hair-raising stint in 'The Mental Marriott,' with an oddball tribe of gurus and saviors, awakens her to the possibility of joy and leads her to an unlikely faith. Not since Saint Augustine cried, 'Give me chastity, Lord-but not yet!' has a conversion story rung with such dark hilarity. Lit is about getting drunk and getting sober, becoming a mother by letting go of a mother, learning to write by learning to live. Written with Karr's relentless honesty, unflinching self-scrutiny, and irreverent, lacerating humor, it is a truly electrifying story of how to grow up--as only Mary Karr can tell it.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

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Karr's longing for a solid family seems secure when her marriage to a handsome, Shakespeare-quoting blueblood poet produces a son they adore. But she can't outrun her apocalyptic past. She drinks herself into the same numbness that nearly devoured her charismatic but troubled mother, reaching the brink of suicide. A hair-raising stint in "The Mental Marriott," with an oddball tribe of gurus and saviors, awakens her to the possibility of joy and leads her to an unlikely faith. Not since Saint Augustine cried, "Give me chastity, Lord-but not yet!" has a conversion story rung with such dark hilarity.

Lit is about getting drunk and getting sober; becoming a mother by letting go of a mother; learning to write by learning to live. Written with Karr's relentless honesty, unflinching self-scrutiny, and irreverent, lacerating humor, it is a truly electrifying story of how to grow up--as only Mary Karr can tell it.

Photos from Mary Karr

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Mary's much adored oil-worker Daddy



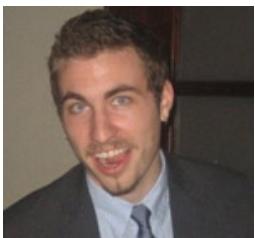
Mary's artist mother, Charlie Karr



Mary, at 22, meeting poet Howard Nemerov



Mary one month before visiting the "Mental Marriott"



Mary, age 17, with sister Lecia, age 19

Mary and young son Dev her Leitchfield *Liars' Club* reading

Mary with family before her Leitchfield *Liars' Club* reading

Mary celebrating the holidays with son Dev

Mary's son, Dev Milburn, in 2009

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Karr performs her brave memoir about alcoholism, getting sober, and getting God in a confident Texas drawl. Readers familiar with *The Liar's Club*, Karr's account of her childhood will find parallels--her descent into alcoholism differs from her mother's addiction only in the details. Karr revisits her past with rare candor and humor, recounting her role in the disintegration of her marriage to Warren Whitbread, the reserved scion of a fabulously wealthy family (whose other members are deliciously skewered here), and her most shameful moments (leaving her feverish toddler to take a long swig from the bottle of Jack Daniels stashed in the oven). When Karr undergoes a hard-won spiritual awakening through the combined efforts of AA; her spiritual director, Joan the Bone; and a stay in the Mental Marriott, listeners will be cheering. A Harper hardcover.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Reviewers agreed that while Karr's memoir could have succumbed to the pitfalls of the addiction-recovery memoir, it rises above the genre. Juicy, evocative, confessional, poetic, and often darkly humorous, *Lit* recounts Karr's dark past in an intimate, easy style. While critics considered *Lit* a seamless addition to her previous memoirs, some expressed surprise that it takes a religious turn. A few also commented that the memoir is tamer and less dramatic than *Liar's Club* and that it contains some abstract sections about Karr's relationships. But in the end, Karr—one of our finest memoirists—remains "unswerving in her determination to face the past and, if possible, transcend it" (*San Francisco Chronicle*).

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ismael Roop:

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