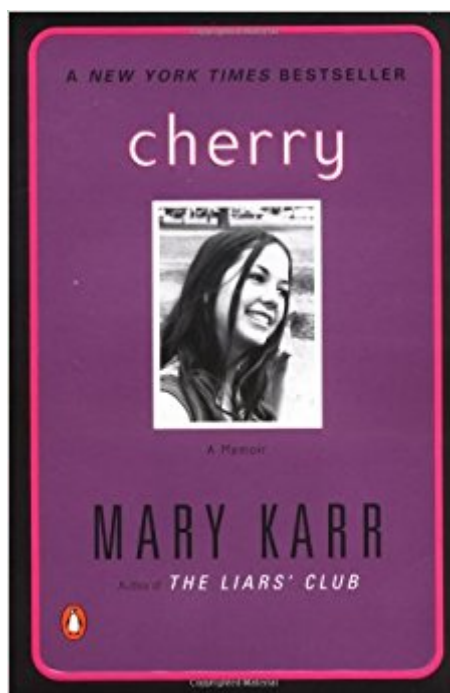


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# Cherry



## Synopsis

From Mary Karr comes this gorgeously written, often hilarious story of her tumultuous teens and sexual coming-of-age. Picking up where the bestselling *The Liars' Club* left off, Karr dashes down the trail of her teen years with customary sass, only to run up against the paralyzing self-doubt of a girl in bloom. Fleeing the thrills and terrors of adolescence, she clashes against authority in all its forms and hooks up with an unforgettable band of heads and bona-fide geniuses. Parts of *Cherry* will leave you gasping with laughter. Karr assembles a self from the smokiest beginnings, delivering a long-awaited sequel that is both "bawdy and wise" (San Francisco Chronicle).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

As a girl idling her way through long, toxically boring summer afternoons in Leechfield, Texas, Mary Karr dreamed up an unusual career for herself, "to write one-half poetry and one-half autobiography." She has since done both, and even when she's recounting a dirty joke, she can't help but employ a poet's precise and musical vision. Her first memoir, *The Liar's Club*, was as searing a chronicle of family life as can be imagined--tough, funny, and crackling with sorrow and wit. Against all odds, its sequel doesn't disappoint. *Cherry* finds the teenage Mary still marooned in a family whose behavior ranges from charmingly eccentric to dangerously crazy. (This, for instance, is the Karr version of a note from home: "Lecia Karr's leprosy kicked in, and I had to wrap her limbs in balm and hyssop. Please excuse her.") But here the focus has shifted to Mary herself, furiously engaged in pissing off authority at every turn: flouting the dress code, dropping acid, running from the cops, falling in love. First love, you may say, heart sinking in chest: what more can possibly be

said about such a subject? Actually, a great deal. To read *Cherry* is to realize how rare it is to find a teenage girl portrayed on her own terms. As a chronicle of female adolescence with all its longings, fantasies, cruelties, and fears, Karr's memoir goes darker and deeper than any book in which the protagonist doesn't end up dead. She turns a savage eye on her own hypocrisies and failings, and we like her all the more for them. We even end up fond of Leechfield, easily the toughest, smelliest, nastiest little burg ever to appear between the covers of a book--"a town too ugly not to love," her father called it in *The Liar's Club*. Growing up in such a place is necessarily about getting the hell out, but it's also about inventing a new identity with which to make your escape. That's the blessing Karr's wise friend Meredith bestows after a particularly harrowing (and harrowingly funny) acid trip: "I see big adventures for Mary. Big adventures, long roads, great oceans: same self." *Cherry* is the story of how Karr begins to acquire that self, however fumblingly--a big adventure for Mary, as it is for all of us, and one we never finish as long as we live. Perhaps that's the book's greatest pleasure of all: it hints there's more to come. --Mary Park --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Readers seduced by Karr's canny memoir of a childhood spent under the spell of a volatile, defiantly loving family in the *Liar's Club* can look forward to more exquisite writing in this sequel focusing on her adolescence in a dusty Texas town. Karr struggles as the talented child of a sullen, dismissive father and an ethereal, unstable mother who studies art and disappears from time to time, functioning more as an ally than as a mother to young Mary, who she encourages to be sexually active. When Mary is locked up in a drug raid, her mother rescues her by charming the judge, an old admirer. Writing in the second person, Karr recounts with disarming immediacy her tenuous childhood friendships, her rocky move into adolescence and sexual experimentation (she describes teenage kisses as "delicate as origami in their folds and bendings"); her troubles with school authority and her early escape into books and language. In one funny and poignant episode, Mary despairs over her dysfunctional family life in a dull town and, influenced by the literature she is reading, makes a half-hearted attempt at suicide, before she resolves to live "as long as there are plums to eat and somebody - anybody who gives enough of a damn to haul them for you." Moving effortlessly from breathtaking to heart stabbing to laugh out loud raucous, the precision and sheer beauty of Karr's writing remains astounding. (Oct.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"*Cherry*" by Mary Karr is one of those rare books which has warranted a second reading by me. It's

a memoir about teenage angst, suffering, coming-of-age in the drug-addled '70s and finding yourself before you lose yourself. The fact that Karr can write so poetically and lyrically and earthy without seeming the least bit pretentious is her most impressive skill. She details her entire adolescence, and reminds us, with her vivid illustrations of feelings long forgotten, what it felt like to be a teenager. Sometimes it's necessary to laugh to keep from crying. To find humor in abject misery is one of the most valuable spiritual tools we have, and Karr has it in abundance. "Cherry" is the second of three memoirs by Karr, and it's by far my favorite one, a tale that is artfully tragic and hauntingly beautiful, and told in a style all Karr's own. David Allan Reeves Author of "Running Away From Me"

I don't know what I was expecting, but for me this is a meandering journey through a fairly unremarkable adolescence. It has been tough to continue to the end, but I am persevering in case something happens that will have justified my time.

But Mary Karr will reveal them to you herself, line-by-line, page-by-page, and in this series, amazingly, book-by-book. As a psychologist, I find I often shy away from memoir, particularly if it's touted as being "confessional", but in Mary Karr's books, I find myself immediately and securely taken into her (surely) unique world(s), but then -- resonating with the truth and the courage and the clarity in her memory and her insights -- deeper into my own, in ways I frankly was not expecting. Karr's vision is just so damn clear and sharp -- unsparing, but tender at every moment, and actually, (as my old friend Ed Hirsch might have put it when I knew him once), thrilling. As someone who has written poetry for years, but hasn't a lick of prose in him, I'm now going to turn to her poetry, which I'm ashamed to say I haven't already known well. This is simply delicious writing, and brave and luminous (black and blue, down and dirty, crazy and brilliant) living writ true. You'll want her to live (and write) forever.

Not as interesting as *The Liar's Club*, but still sharp. She goes for more universal themes in this coming of age story (first love, discovering sex, growing apart from her daddy). I wish she had spent less time describing her endless boyhood crushes (made my eyes roll a bit) and delved more into the years of drug use, where it seems all the fun stuff happened. Her mother, father, and sister all hang in the background like cardboard cutouts; not quite the compelling figures we came to know in her first book. Her mother in particular seems... off. Much more domesticated than the wild woman we came to know in the first book. She practically comes off like a Home Ec. teacher this time around, which makes me wonder if either portrayal of her wasn't tweaked just a little for dramatic

purposes.

Okay book. I wanted to read it because I grew up in the neighboring town that the author is writing about and was curious. I also had previously read her book, *Liars Club*, which was better than *Cherry*, in my opinion.

I loved her first book and this one is written just as well but the subject matter just didn't resonate with me. I know this is a memoir but I didn't see the drugs and all of that "scene" coming. "*Liars Club*" was a much better read for me but if you lived thru the '60's this would be a good book for you.

Mary Carr has a poetic take on her misspent youth as a high potential girl in a low SES town, who falls prey to sex, drugs, and surfing culture. Very amusing and tres trippy read.

I'm only on the first chapter, and lovin' it! First lines of the book: "No road offers more mystery than that first one you mount from the town you were born to, the first time you mount it of your own volition, on a trip funded by your own coffee tin of wrinkled up dollars-bills you've saved and scrounged for, worked the all-night switchboard for, missed the Rolling Stones for, sold fragrant pot with smashed flowers going brown inside twist-tie plastic baggies for. In fact, to disembark from your origins, you've done everything you can think to scrounge money save selling your spanking young pussy." OK, she's in-your-face. But that's what I like. Judgmental readers, just go away. Love this, and go for the ride with her! *Liar's Club* by Mary Karr is also a must-read.

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