



The Liars' Club

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc. or its Licensors. Please see [copyright information](#) at the end of this document.

Mary Karr's memoir, consisting largely of scenes from her East Texas and Colorado childhood, works brilliantly on a number of levels. It is riveting first of all as narrative, a meandering river of humorous, harrowing, poignant and deeply interesting stories. It is poetic as well, its images evoking a gritty physical reality sharply flavored by the locutions of the author's origins. Full of casual violence, dislocation, fragmentation, it is social and psychological drama with a strikingly American slant. At the end, in the deepest and most satisfying sense, it is a fairy tale, telling of the breaking of an old enchantment.

It was in Leechfield, Texas, on the Gulf Coast, that purely by accident Charlie Marie Moore met J. P. Karr, a working man employed by Gulf Oil, and, for reasons which remained mysterious to Mary Karr, abandoned her husband and married him. Leechfield—swampy, vermin-infested, fouled by chemical poisons which produced one of the highest cancer rates in the world, was once voted by BUSINESS WEEK as “one of the ten ugliest towns on the planet.” Into this volatile family, this casualty of industrialism, Lecia Karr and, two years later, the author were born—endangered.

The Liars' Club which gives the book its title was a group of men, including Karr's father, which met to drink, play pool, and tell stories. In this masculine world the author found some relief from the traumas of life at home, a home dominated by a mother so mentally unstable that at one point she was committed to a mental institution. The author, who at the age of seven was raped by an older boy, lived on the raw edge. Yet her spirit was never broken, and the deep feelings she retained for her mother led her, when she was in her twenties, to probe for a truth which set them both free.

THE LIARS' CLUB is moving, deeply enjoyable, and a brilliant testimonial to the value of art.

Sources for Further Study

Los Angeles Times Book Review. July 16, 1995, p. 1.

The Nation. CCLXI, July 3, 1995, p. 21.

New Statesman and Society. VIII, October 20, 1995, p. 39.

The New York Times Book Review. C, July 9, 1995, p. 8.

The New Yorker. LXXI, July 10, 1995, p. 78.

Texas Monthly. XXIII, July, 1995, p. 78.

The Washington Post Book World. XXV, June 18, 1995, p. 3.

Copyright Notice

©2010 eNotes.com, Inc.

The Liars' Club: The Liars' Club

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

No part of this work covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, taping, Web distribution or information storage retrieval systems without the written permission of the publisher.

For complete copyright information, please see the online version of this work:

<http://www.enotes.com/liars-club-mary-karr-salem>