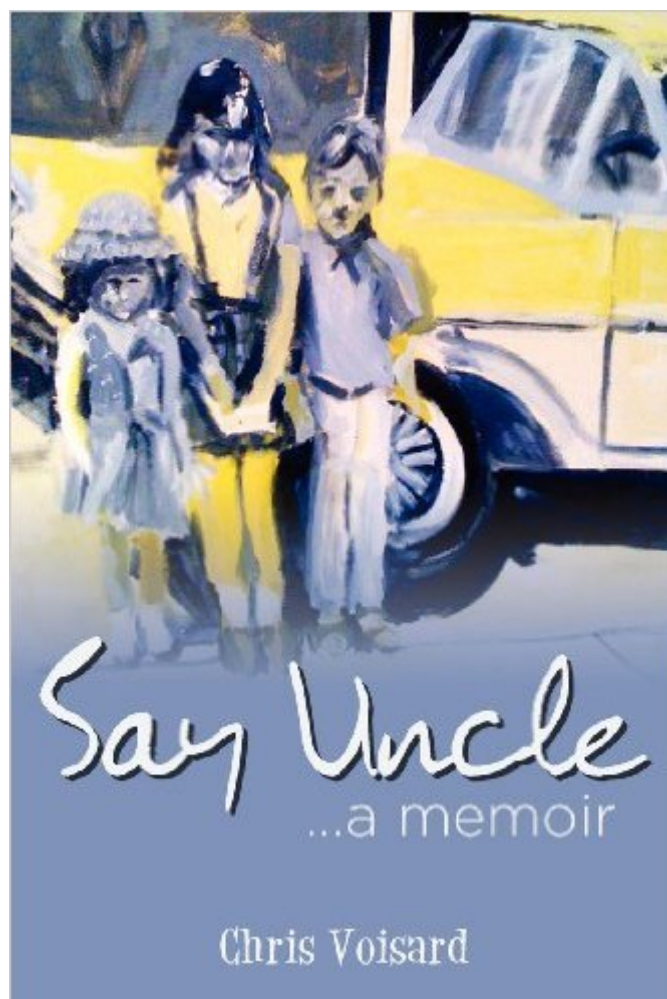


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Say Uncle



Synopsis

When I was growing up, I thought my little brother was my uncle. I also thought my Papa left because of me. Say Uncle not only gives child's eye details of adults who've gone off the deep end, but also turns an unflinching eye on the adult author, showing how patterns of deception pass through generations. My dysfunctional, uniquely vibrant family manages to endure, and Say Uncle shows what it is like to slowly heal and that the detour is the path. This memoir weaves through the silliness of poltergeists, Joey the Fairy, psychedelic wedding cakes, down through ill-treatment and disturbing incest, all without bitterness and with the same kind of irreverent eye Mary Karr uses in Liar's Club. It's more uplifting than Running with Scissors, probably instead like Skipping With Pinking Shears, heartbreaking like Dave Eggar's childhood. I didn't exactly live in Jeannette Walls's Glass Castle; it was rather like a hippie shack on Ellis Island brought up by Grandmommy Dearest. If you came from a less than traditional family, Say Uncle will remind you that you are not alone, and ultimately, love and forgiveness are not only possible, but necessary if we are to heal and grow.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (21 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

The main theme of "Say Uncle" involves a family secret which involves a convoluted web of deception that reads more like fiction than fact. But as they say, truth is stranger than fiction, and this memoir is proof of that. Voisard's grandmother's bizarre request, along with her parent's acquiescence, results in a secret that erodes the family from the inside-out. We learn the Secret early in the book, though Chris didn't actually learn of it - or at least verify it - until she was an adult. Her story is chronological, starting from before her birth, appropriately written in the "voice" of

whatever age she was in the chapter. Much of the early years are embellished with fill-in dialog and scenes, with often whimsical, childlike descriptions or explanations. The reader "grows" up with her, feeling the strain of her "knowing" something terrible - but not sure WHAT - that she just can't articulate until much later in the book. As the story progresses, we see the effects that the Secret has on Chris and her family through the years, aided by her non-responsive, neglectful mother, who is unable to protect her children from other family members who are really calling the shots. Her grandmother is a larger-than-life character, often either a narcissistic manipulator or a protector - depending upon the circumstances. The last two chapters of the book reveal several shocking occurrences, all of which Voisard surmises were the culmination of generations of family dysfunction. I found this memoir riveting, empathizing with the author, and wondering if - and how - this family could be healed.

I really enjoyed this book. I think Chris' style of writing is incredible and she definitely has a story to tell. I loved how the elephant in the room intertwined throughout the story and how Chris finally realized how she couldn't fill, stuff, ignore or hide her hole, but rather let it be. And then her reflections at the end of the book showed that there really is no end to the story, but that her life is just part of the human condition. The story is unique and will be shocking to most. It is emotional too, there was a couple of times I shed a tear. You have many books in you Chris! I can't wait to read the next one!

I loved this novel! Masterful narration that instantly sucked me into the conflicts of an American Family as told through the eyes of an inquisitive albeit at times timid girl who overcomes fears by embracing them. Chris is the author as well as the protagonist in this book and in my mind she adeptly tells her own story with unbiased and at times stark-naked truth. Her penetration into life was insightful for me...that I'm of the opposite sex did not get in the way. Matter of fact, I recommend men read this book and you'll see that girls don't have it any easier than we do, they too have to fight for their position in all the pecking orders. I often laughed out loud, found myself wiping away tears, and a number of times throughout stopped and contemplated not only what she just said, but how she said it: Many of Chris's passages read like poetry, her painter's background burbles into her prose like new flowers on a Spring landscape. Thanks for sharing Chris. You're a gifted writer, and I can hardly wait for your next effort.

MISS VOISARD'S WRITING KEEPS THE TENSION HIGH AND THE READER IN SUSPENSE AS

SHE JOURNEY'S THROUGH HER PAST TO ANSWER AN UNANSWERED QUESTION. HER ABILITY TO WEAVE A CHILD'S SUSPICIONS INTO A MYSTERY IS VERY COMMENDABLE. BRAVO TO MISS VOISARD!!

• is an utterly captivating and, at times, riveting and moving book. It offers, at once, an astute depiction of dysfunctional American family life during the baby boom years, and, for those of us who grew up in that era, an opportunity to retake a trip through our own life of that period. Though Chris's family was far more unconventional than mine, her voice, observations, descriptions of quirky family members, and human behavior in general, were recognizable, even eerily relatable, to me. I too enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of Catholic rituals when I was a girl, travelled out into space in my imagination, bought a used, powder blue VW for my first car (a wagon, \$600), and have a brother in biotech! But while her mother was neglectful and remote, mine could be overly-conscientious and limiting. Even so, and though both their behaviors, no doubt, came from unmet needs of theirs, both resulted in needs of ours going unmet, with lasting effects into adulthood. That is the universality of the story. In addition to a compelling narrative, Chris's prose is both natural, with a protagonist's voice that is completely 'real', and full of gorgeous similes, metaphors and themes that are struck throughout. While much of the journey we take with Chris is on the surface "conscious, reacting to events as they unfold" she dives beneath it, illuminating her inner, often precocious, thoughts and emotions, periodically spiking her prose with startling and surprising insights that are humorous, arresting and empowering. Reading her story, we are simultaneously transfixed by her unique life, comparing and contrasting it with ours, and rooting for this vulnerable and brave soul. She is us.

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