



The River Queen: A Memoir

Mary Morris

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This story of a middle-aged woman's odyssey down the Mississippi River is a funny, beautifully written, and poignant tale of a journey that transforms a life

In fall 2005 acclaimed travel writer Mary Morris set off down the Mississippi in a battered old houseboat called the River Queen, with two river rats named Tom and Jerry--and a rat terrier, named Samantha Jean, who hated her. It was a time of emotional turmoil for Morris. Her father had just died; her daughter was leaving home; life was changing all around her. It was then she decided to return to the Midwest where she was from, to the river she remembered, where her father had played jazz piano in tiny towns.

Morris describes living like a pirate and surviving a tornado. Because of Katrina, oil prices, and drought, the river was often empty--a ghost river--and Morris experienced it as Joliet and Marquette had four hundred years earlier. As she learned to pilot her beloved River Queen without running aground and made peace with Samantha Jean, Morris got her groove back, reconnecting to her past. More important, she came away with her best book, a bittersweet travel tale told in the very real voice of a smart, sad, funny, gutsy, and absolutely appealing woman.

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