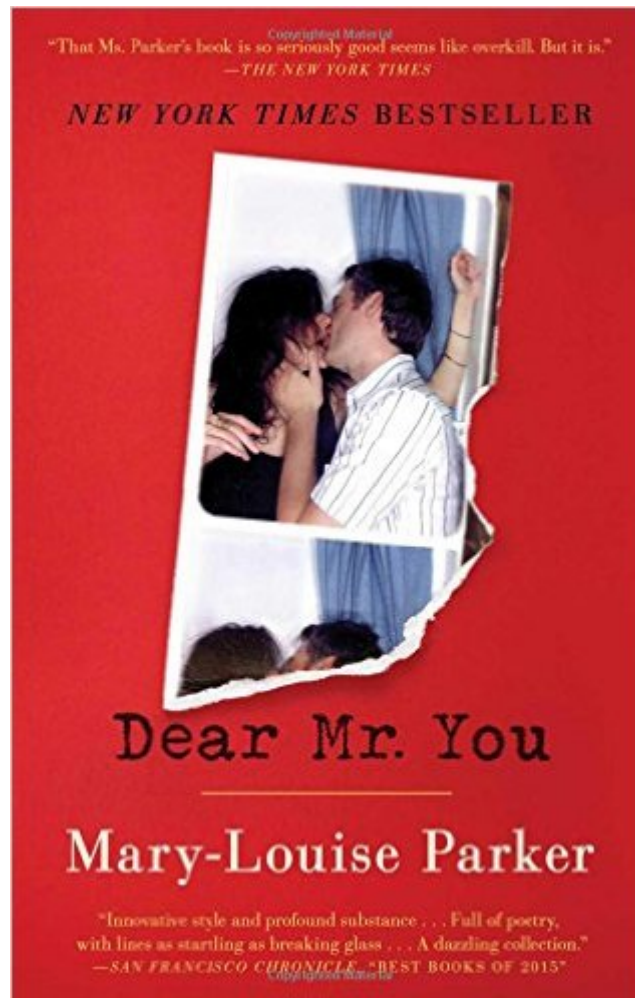


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Dear Mr. You



Synopsis

The bestselling, wonderfully unconventional, "warmly conspiratorial" (The New York Times) literary memoir from the award-winning actress that has received fabulous and wide praise. "There is no one else quite like Mary-Louise Parker" (Elle). An extraordinary literary work, *Dear Mr. You* renders the singular arc of a woman's life through letters Mary-Louise Parker composes to the men, real and hypothetical, who have informed the person she is today. Beginning with the grandfather she never knew, the letters range from a missive to the beloved priest from her childhood to remembrances of former lovers to an homage to a firefighter she encountered to a heartfelt communication with the uncle of the infant daughter she adopted. Readers will be amazed by the depth and style of these letters, which reveal the complexity and power to be found in relationships both loving and fraught.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (204 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

"I'm not one to read books written by celebrities, but I read a review of this memoir that intrigued me enough to give it a try. I was maybe ten pages in when I sat down and ordered five copies for gifts" "my faith in its being a great book was that strong. As I continued to the finish, that view was momentarily tested here and there, but ultimately confirmed. Forget that this woman is a famous actress, forget that she's the sexiest being on the planet, this woman is *deep.* In *Dear Mr. You* Parker has written a series of pseudo-letters to particular men, most of them generically designated ("Dear Emergency Contact," "Dear Yaqui Indian Boy," "Dear Grandpa,"

etc.), who have all been part of or influenced her life. The narrative is in the second person (the subjects are all addressed as "you"), which as it turns out is an elliptical but effective form of storytelling. This approach lends an offbeat perspective, in which the person addressed seems to know more about Parker than she does, while at the same time each letter is equally revealing about both of them. I call the book a memoir, but it defies categorization—it feels like fiction, structured like essay. Really it's just one soul speaking directly to others, with us peering over their shoulders. The writing is simultaneously casual and sophisticated. Offhand sentences thrust you into the heart of life. Tiny telling moments echo with the particular and the universal. Few words are ever wasted. Parker has a fine ear for dialogue and a good grasp of idea, and all of this gets thrown at the page in a way that seems hasty but is really cunning.

I have to be honest: I have many reservations regarding artists who are successful in one particular genre, then feel the need to show off their celebrity and engage in another format that would be considered a stretch for them. I shouldn't; sometimes the result is good, necessary even, a companion piece to some important conversation or public discussion. DEAR MR. YOU is not that. But Mary-Louise Parker, the tempestuous actress of stage and screen, has found an interesting method of creating a memoir onto which readers can position their own experiences. Who hasn't yelled at a lost cab driver on the worst of all our worst nights, or considered what we would say to the humans who would eventually capture the hearts of our children, grown and looking to start their own lives of passion? Parker takes these characters, as well as lovers, friends and hangers-on who have made an impression on her and her family's life, most notably her father and her children, who are sacrosanct to her. In a series of letters to a variety of men in her life, she reveals more about her inner life than in any part she has ever played in public. There are comic moments --- some high, some low --- and drama of an all-American order, including teen drama, mother drama, family drama, and just plain drama. The letters range from remembrances of her life past, as a wild teen, a super fangirl of some unnamed rock star who made a true and exacting imprint in the skin of her growing up, to a note of warning and congratulations to the remarkable man her daughter will end up with (although she doesn't skimp on memories of gay friends and mentors, she assumes, perhaps rightly so, that her middle schooler is straight).

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