



Threepenny Memoir: The Lives of a Libertine

Carl Barât

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'Looking back at The Libertines is like catching flashes of sunlight between buildings as you race by on a train. An old film reel where the spools are weathered and worn, leaving empty frames on the screen.'

In the final years of the last millennium, Carl Barat and Pete Doherty forged a deep musical bond, formed The Libertines and set sail for Arcadia in the good ship Albion; a decade later, Carl would emerge from his second band, the Dirty Pretty Things, after one of the most significant -- and turbulent -- rock 'n' roll trajectories of recent times. *Threepenny Memoir* navigates the choppy waters of memory, and gives an inside look at life in the eye of the storm, chronicling how a pair of romantics armed with little more than poetry and a punk attitude inspired adoration in millions worldwide -- and proceeded to tear apart everything they had. With unflinching honesty but real warmth, Carl -- who has recently performed with The Libertines for the first time since 2004, and released a solo album -- looks back at the creative highs and the drug-addled lows of life with both bands, as well as giving an intimate account of the people and places that have informed his songwriting. From Camden bedsits, impromptu gigs and minesweeping drinks in the Dublin Castle to Japanese groupies, benders in Moscow and chatting to Slash, *Threepenny Memoir* charts a fantastic course through recent musical history. And, in the aftermath, Carl reflects on the pressures -- both external and self-inflicted -- that led to each band's demise, and on the challenges and rewards that life as a solo artist now holds.

Threepenny Memoir: The Lives of a Libertine Details

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From Reader Review Threepenny Memoir: The Lives of a Libertine for online ebook

Craig McMullen says

Always good to hear both sides to a story

Stuart Airs says

I enjoyed this for the most part but to be honest it did get repetitive towards the end.

Paula says

No creo yo que sean muy fiables mis estrellitas teniendo en cuenta que es peor que yo hiperadjetivando cuando habla de todos los sitios insalubres que pueden existir en Londres (no he visto a nadie más enamorado de una ciudad) y que menciona a David Niven en A Matter of Life and Death.

Sam says

3.5 stars.

Niklas Pivic says

I did an NME cover with Morrissey once, and Morrissey said, 'To some people I'll always be Morrissey from The Smiths, no matter what else I do. And you'll always be Carl from The Libertines.'

Yes, but these are not the words from a panicked man, even though Carl Barât seems to be frazzled and afraid at times. In a good way, because he lets his emotions go and reveals himself as another person than the confident man onstage, as he says he often comes across as, according to other people.

He writes about his special relationship with Peter Doherty, about the greatness, of the "brown" and other drugs that helped to spoil it all (even though all of the responsibility of that use is of course due to Peter himself), and at the very end, on how they reformed. That actually makes this book seem rushed, as though a deadline was set. I'd love to have read more about the Libertines' reformation after the fact, but then we have Roger Sargent's visual documentary, "There Are No Innocent Bystanders", for that.

Barât delves into what made him and Doherty gel, love and live. The former's heroes - notably Oliver Reed and David Niven - are referred to but mainly, this tome is a book on his own life.

Even though he'd ultimately kick my door in and try to steal my stuff, Peter gave me security and confidence to go out and do that, to believe that I could go out on a limb, even in prosaic, financial matters. When we were really firing on all cylinders and were together then it really felt like no one could touch us, and that nothing else mattered. As much as I try to deflect it, play it down and be English about it, there was a very powerful romance and beauty to our friendship.

Yes, and it spawned The Libertines' brilliant first album with a very good second one.

All in all: reflecting on some Days of Yore while his girlfriend expects their first child, having disbanded Dirty Pretty Things and en route to releasing his debut album, Barât has written a scattered yet very honest book about his life, mostly his musical life, that is.

TLW says

Got a bit cringe worthy in places, but my nostalgic obsession with The Libs and my overwhelming lust for Carl saw me enjoying it anyway. Also, I strongly identified with his feelings on Paris. There's also the occasional laugh out loud moment and really, it's not all that bad.

Kate says

Really enjoyed a slightly different perspective of this familiar story. Sorry to hear straight from the horses mouth how fucked up it all got - but that was fairly obvious anyway.

Would read another five of these - I'm sure he has enough stories to write again.

Jemma Jeanes says

They say 'never meet your heroes', Carl Barât is not quite in the hero leagues but I admire his work. This was a tragic meeting. Laid bare without any music or poetry it confirmed the rumours were true - the 00's were not profound, exciting or groundbreaking. A horrible indictment of everything I suspected was true but had previously refused to believe.

Janitag says

It was nice to finally hear the whole story from Carl's perspective.

A very sad read, even though from time to time I found myself giggling out loud. I absolutely love his romantic style of writing. His love for London made the whole reading experience all the more enjoyable for me and my yearning to be back in England only grew while reading the memoir.

I'm so glad he has found happiness in his life, he deserves it.

Daniel Scott says

Unless you're 15 and/or a big Libertines fan I wouldn't bother reading this book.

Jake says

'Threepenny Memoir' is a welcome chance to hear musican Carl Barat's side of things surrounding his love-hate relationship with fellow 'Libertine' Peter Docherty. The man has a romantic style of writing, and a rare (for a rock star's memoir at least) talent for creating imagery, which makes this book a very easy read. If you're a fan of his, then this book makes for a good companion.

At the start of this memoir, Carl briefly writes about his childhood in one chapter, and quickly progresses to his move to London (clearly a city he loves dearly) to start university, and ends on his career in music up until 2010, when he was releasing a solo album. Along the way, he shares his memories of the people who he has throughout his journey, opens up about his substance abuse and recovery through therapy, and isn't afraid to let his personality come through the pages. There were many times when I couldn't help but feel very sorry for him as he lifts the lid on much personal unhappiness and reveals his often negative state of mind. Although this is essentially a rather sad story for the most part, a chronicle of the darker side of fame, Carl's adventures ensure for more than a couple of laugh-out-loud moments.

Like having a conversation with this cool guy on the sofa, Carl Barat's autobiography is frank, honest and deeply personal. If I had to be critical in anyway, then I would have to say that I would have liked to read more about the inspiration behind some of his songs, but that doesn't take away the fact that is one very readable book. Far from spitting venom at Pete, he speaks of him with a lot of fondness. If you want to hear a different take of the events, then you should give 'Threepenny Memoir' a read. The book contains no photographs inside.

Polina Liberman says

Fascinating read. Fun and heartbreaking, bittersweet.
Memoirs rarely feel like adventures but this one truly is.

Charlie says

Carl seems to be a very unreliable narrator. There's a lot of stuff he's left out, presumably to make himself

look better. He talks about being almost incessantly "off [his] face" on a variety of mind-altering substances that he felt unable to function without; but then he says it was only Pete's addictions that caused the problems in the Libertines and in Pete and Carl's relationship, and acts like his own drug and alcohol use are no big deal.

I tend to be nervous about memoirs, since they are normally less based in reality than autobiographies or biographies. I read a memoir by an aviatrix once, and when I found out later that the majority of what she'd written about her life wasn't even true, I was very upset. Even though I know it's impossible to be entirely objective, I get uncomfortable when there's fabrication in a work that's supposed to be nonfiction.

Throughout "Threepenny Memoir", I found myself wondering if, in addition to leaving things out, Carl was making things up as well, or otherwise twisting things in some way so that he seemed more like a sympathetic character.

Rosemary says

A fairly short read and very enjoyable despite the often depressing subject matter. Carl has a talent for imagery you don't see in most books written by rockstars. Those looking for a detailed picking apart of his relationship with Pete may be disappointed. The book begins, after a very brief chapter on his childhood, with his moving to London to start university and spans his career until 2009. Laid out like that it is incredible to realise how short lived The Libertines really were. However, I still think any fan will enjoy it.
