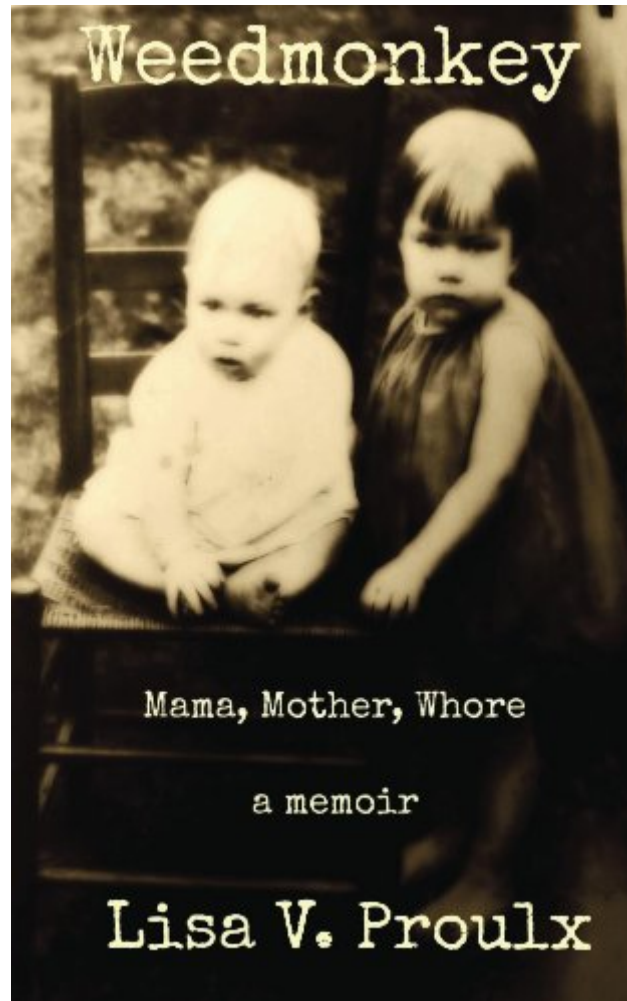




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# Weedmonkey



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## Synopsis

Growing up during the Depression and forced to live in coal mining camps throughout Appalachia, Virgie Hopkins is subjected to child molestation, the KKK, murder, homelessness, starvation, and ridicule for being the daughter of the town whore. Virgie grows up hating her mother who was taken away when she was nine years old and while she was gone, she and her brother were put into foster care, starved, and abused. When her mother returned, she did not know her husband or her children and Virgie could not understand why she had changed. At 16, Virgie made the decision to leave Kentucky and the only life she had ever known after discovering her prostitute mother was having an affair with the young boy Virgie loved. Filled with hatred, resentment, and shame for the woman she called Mom, it was not until her mother's funeral, did she learn the horrible truth, the reason for her change, and the reason why she became the town whore, a weedmonkey. A haunting true story.

From the author: My mother began writing *Weedmonkey* when I was a little girl. In 2006, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer and given three months to live, passing on April 30. On her deathbed, she asked me to finish writing it for her. I hope she is proud of me. WINNER of Honorable Mention in Reader's Favorite 2017!!!

Review by Sarah Rollins for Readers' Favorite: "*Weedmonkey* by Lisa V. Proulx is a moving memoir which tells the story of how a little girl called Virgie was brought into the world amidst the remnants of what was the old south, amongst wealth, judgement, poverty, and injustice. Virgie's mother is considered a town whore, her father works in the mines, and the story continues with Virgie herself left to look after her brothers and sisters, moved from foster home to flop houses, and exposed to situations that you would never dream a young girl (or anyone) should ever be forced to face. Lisa V. Proulx writes with heart and soul as she tells Virgie's story. Her writing style brings you into the story, and for some moments I almost forgot that this was a non-fiction book. Her words pulled you into Virgie's plight and you felt the emotions of the young girl, her hatred for what life had dealt her, her disappointment for what she has missed in her youth, and yet her strength to go on, and become a different person from the mother she knew and grew up with. *Weedmonkey* is a true story which will make you smile and cry as you follow young Virgie, understand her background and her ability to rise above the life she was forced to live. A truly touching memoir, written with passion by the author who undertook this project after it was started by her own mother. A definite must-read for anyone who enjoys books of this era or non-fiction stories that demonstrate true strength."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I just finished the book last night. The true story is very unusual but I guess for the time period for which it is written about-- it is not so strange. The time period is prewar 30s and stops apparently in the mid to late 1990s. The story opens with a funeral and the "Weedmonkey" is about to be buried. There was no definition for weedmonkey given by Lisa V. Proulx the author and daughter. The story begins strangely with the marriage of Virgie's mother to an Indian man and their journey to start a new job in the country. This journey ends with the settling-in of Virgie's mother and father and then Virgie's birth. This part is startling! But....there again for the times it is not so strange that Virgie was born in a cabin. Her birth will startle and surprise you as she was born dead. Her birth reminded me of the birth of my pet, Betsy whose first born pup was born dead with a grey fleshy mask over its head. Being my first pet to give birth I had no idea that I should have removed the covering and most likely that pup would have lived. This book review is hard to tell since there is so much of Virgie's life that is shocking. She struggled with hunger, homelessness, vulgar men who almost attacked her and yet she managed to live and survive. Her mother's way of surviving the poverty of her life was to sell herself for goods that were needed for surviving. The aloneness of that poor family and children was hard to think about. It was one challenge after another for Virgie to survive

in a world that both her mother and father had provided. Her mother became locked into her life style and appetites and the father simply was surviving in his own primitive way. You simply cannot read the story with an attitude of blame. The times and place marked the hardships that Virgie's family had to endure. All along, I felt that Virgie was not aware that her mother and father simply was responding to the "lack" in their environment. Virgie and her brother and sisters were caught up in the web that the time and poverty and place of their life. Virgie made good choices. She was able to see the ugliness that could have shaped her life. She tried to protect herself and her sister from the Uncle molesters that lurked all around her. She said she always ran. What choice did she have? You will have to read this book to understand Virgie's dilemma. All around her was torment and lack. She was always hungry and dirty and she made choices that looked like she was running away but that was the intelligent option open for a clear thinking young girl. Luckily, Virgie's story about her mother ended on a hopeful note. She saw that her mother was truly beautiful though she had died. It was like all the dirt and badness had not touched her mother's truly beautiful soul. I think Virgie had come to the peaceful acceptance of her mother's life and perhaps forgave her mother for making her the daughter of the town hore.

This book is not for the faint-hearted. It is a story of grinding poverty, of love and hate, of ultimate redemption. It is the saga of a girl who could easily have taken the same road as her mother but instead, through personal strength, managed to break the cycle and create a very different life. I live in the same geographical area of Maryland as the author and I hope to find out if she makes personal appearances at our local libraries and other venues. This book was so compelling that I read it in one long afternoon and hope to read other books by her.

I'm very glad I came across such a great memoir! It's been a long time since I've read something as engaging and compelling as *Weedmonkey*, I just couldn't put it down. The plot describes a life and a mother-daughter relationship of a little girl Virgie and her mother, Maud, who was considered a town whore. First of all, you can't help but root for little Virgie, who basically had to take care of her little brothers and sisters while her mother was running around and her father was busy working at the coal mines. Constant lack of money, the growing alienation between the mother and her kids, moving from one town to another - all that could brake anybody, but not Virgie. Every single time she felt hurt or abused, she kept getting stronger and stronger inside and in spite of all the circumstances that seemed to be against her, she became a strong woman, very different from her own mother. Virgie learnt how to make a living, how to take care of herself and what she missed

most of all as a child, how to become a great mother to her own kids. The characters of the book are very real, the life of the small southern towns is described in the way that you basically feel yourself being there, watching all the events developing right in front of your eyes. Great job, Lisa! Definitely five stars, an awesome read!

I feel like I just got a hold of someone's diary and it's private and personal and I really shouldn't be reading it, but it is so fascinating that I can't put it down. This is a book that will make you read far into the night, and you keep telling yourself, "just one more page and then I'll stop" and if you're not careful, the sun will rise and you will still be reading. I can't imagine myself living through some of the events in this book. How could you not become bitter and broken from just trying to endure all of the heartache? The back cover of the book sums up a small portion of the plot, so the reader gets an idea of the inner contents of the book. Read the cover. It will probably pique your interest as it did mine. *Weedmonkey* is a great read. It would also make a really good movie.

This book reminded of my home life growing up in w.v.a During the 50's my father was an alcoholic a coal miner we were very poor. I can relate to the feelings of virgiee. After my father died I had to forgive him for how we were raised. This book was like reliving my life over except for my mother she was A wonderful mother the book was a very good read.

I was attracted to this story because of the time period. My grandmother was born in 1912, so I thought this would remind me a bit of her and her incredible stories. The story was a great one, but I can tell that it wasn't written by the protagonist. The author is telling her mother's stories, so there is a bit of distance when she writes. There isn't too much emotion there. This is also a reflection of the time, most likely. People didn't dwell too much on anything back then. The only thing that truly bothered me about the story was the progression, there was never a moment leading up to a climax. It was just written as if nothing was more important than anything else. Also, the author would jump time periods, which irks me in general. It needs a bit of editing, but nothing major. It's still a great read and I highly recommend it to anyone who loves memoirs.

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Weedmonkey

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