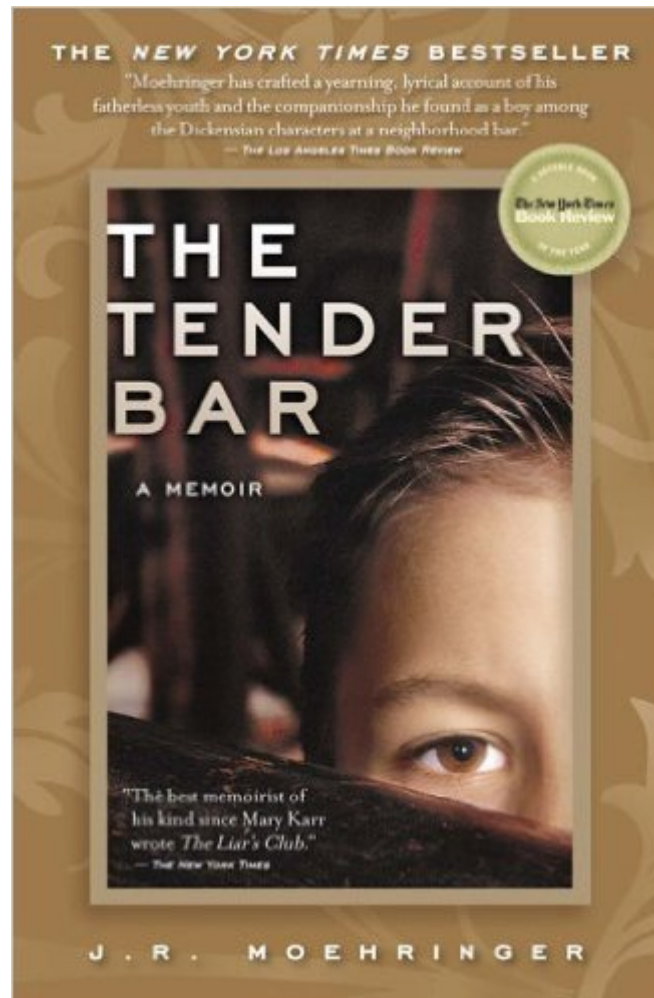


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# The Tender Bar: A Memoir



## Synopsis

The New York Times bestseller and one of the 100 Most Notable Books of 2005. In the tradition of *This Boy's Life* and *The Liar's Club*, a raucous, poignant, luminously written memoir about a boy striving to become a man, and his romance with a bar. J.R. Moehringer grew up captivated by a voice. It was the voice of his father, a New York City disc jockey who vanished before J.R. spoke his first word. Sitting on the stoop, pressing an ear to the radio, J.R. would strain to hear in that plummy baritone the secrets of masculinity and identity. Though J.R.'s mother was his world, his rock, he craved something more, something faintly and hauntingly audible only in *The Voice*. At eight years old, suddenly unable to find *The Voice* on the radio, J.R. turned in desperation to the bar on the corner, where he found a rousing chorus of new voices. The alphas along the bar--including J.R.'s Uncle Charlie, a Humphrey Bogart look-alike; Colt, a Yogi Bear sound-alike; and Joey D, a softhearted brawler--took J.R. to the beach, to ballgames, and ultimately into their circle. They taught J.R., tended him, and provided a kind of fathering-by-committee. Torn between the stirring example of his mother and the lurid romance of the bar, J.R. tried to forge a self somewhere in the center. But when it was time for J.R. to leave home, the bar became an increasingly seductive sanctuary, a place to return and regroup during his picaresque journeys. Time and again the bar offered shelter from failure, rejection, heartbreak--and eventually from reality. In the grand tradition of landmark memoirs, *The Tender Bar* is suspenseful, wrenching, and achingly funny. A classic American story of self-invention and escape, of the fierce love between a single mother and an only son, it's also a moving portrait of one boy's struggle to become a man, and an unforgettable depiction of how men remain, at heart, lost boys.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (520 customer reviews)

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## Customer Reviews

Take one part CHARMING BILLY, a dash of Frank McCourt, add a shot of "Cheers," serve straight up, and you'll have the charming concoction that is THE TENDER BAR. J.R. Moehringer fondly reflects on his youth, however misspent, within the cooling shadows of the town's local bar. In Manhasset, the place to go was Dickens (later renamed Publicans) on Plandome Road. Like the pubs of old, it was the place to celebrate, commiserate and pontificate. Sooner or later, everyone wound up at its door, thanks largely to its kind and commanding owner, Steve. In the mid-seventies, J.R. Moehringer was an adolescent badly in need of a father figure. His dedicated mother worked as many as three jobs to keep them on their feet. His grandparents were concerned but somewhat distant; his grandfather was downright abusive to everyone except little J.R., who was so named after his father, a radio disc jockey who has little to do with his son. Moehringer listens to his late-night radio broadcasts and refers to him only as "The Voice," a far away, unknowable being who flits in and out of his young son's life only briefly. When he and his mother move to Arizona for better prospects and to be near their cousins, he finds himself lonelier than ever. His mother decides to send him back to his grandparents in Manhasset for the summer, and soon he gets his first taste of life around the bar. His Uncle Charlie, at his mother's request, starts taking little J.R. with him on excursions to the beach and to ball games, all of which culminate with a visit to "the Bar." Finally, he finds what he has been looking for --- a family, albeit an unconventional one. Who wouldn't want to glean all he can from guys named Bobo, Joey D. and Colt?

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