

The Inconvenient Child

Sharyn Killens & Lindsay Lewis



Born from a brief liaison between her white mother and her African-American merchant marine father in 1948, Sharyn Killens so shamed her mother and her grandmother that she was raised by friends until she was five, then by the Sisters of Mercy for seven years. Abuse and neglect made living with a family

impossible for the disturbed teenager. She became a street kid in Kings Cross; her mother had her sentenced to dreadful Parramatta Girls' Home, including an horrendous seven months in Hay Institution for Girls for 'misbehaviour'.

Many comfortable people would dismiss Sharyn's story, which includes detention, rape, divorce, two boys to support on a small income, drugs, and being a stripper. But look closely and you will see an intelligent, loving woman blessed with resilience, poise, and the voice that made her a popular entertainer (Sharyn Crystal) on the

Oriana, the *Fairstar*, and in Sydney clubs.

Always wanting to know her father (her mother had told her he'd drowned at sea) she finally got his name from her and began her arduous search. In 1996 she met her father's family before 20 million TV viewers (you can see the clip on YouTube). Here the book becomes saccharine, but triumphant. Sharyn's unique story will sadden, anger, stun and cheer you well after the last page. It confirms the human need to love and be loved.

★★★ RG Miracle Publishing \$34.95
Reviewed by Barbara Baker

