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CHAPTER 1

EARLY LIFE

WHO IS KACEY MUSGRAVES?

Kacey Musgraves is a country music singer and songwriter. Her birthday is August 21, 1988. She was born in Golden, Texas. This is a small town about 75 miles east of Dallas. Around 200 people live there. Many of them work on farms. Until Kacey became a star, Golden was best known for growing sweet potatoes. Every year there is a festival to celebrate the crop.



WHO IS MAREN MORRIS?

About 100 miles west of Golden is the city of Arlington, Texas. Maren Morris was born there on April 10, 1990. Like Kacey, she became a singer and songwriter. Arlington is much bigger than Golden. It has a population of around 400,000. The big cities of Dallas and Fort Worth are nearby. Other musicians have come from Arlington. Pentatonix, an *a cappella* group, started there.



PRINT SHOP

Kacey's dad, Craig, owns a small printing business. Her mom, Karen, works there too.

Karen is also an artist who paints and sculpts. Their shop is near Golden, in the small town of Mineola.

Kacey grew up helping around the store. Kelly is her younger sister. She is a photographer. Like Maren, Kacey is the oldest.



COUNTRY SINGERS FROM TEXAS

Over the years, many country music singers have come from Texas. One was Waylon Jennings. Much of his music came out in the 1960s and 1970s. Both Kacey and Maren like his traditional style.

More recent stars are from the Lone Star State too. In 2013, Danielle Bradbery won season four of *The Voice*. Sundance Head was the winner in 2016. The duo Maddie and Tae met in Dallas. Although Tae is from Oklahoma, Maddie is from Sugar Land, Texas.



Sundance Head



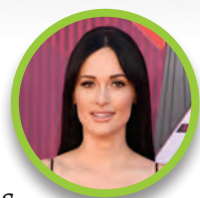
HAIR SALON

Maren's parents are Scott and Kellie. Like Kacey's family, they own their own business. It is a hair salon called the Maren Karsen Salon. They named it after Maren and her younger sister, Karsen. Growing up, Maren spent a lot of time helping out at the business. As a teenager, she worked at the salon's front desk.



THE BUCKAROOS

When Kacey was nine, she and her sister performed with the Cowtown Opry Buckaroos. This was a children's singing group. "It was run by this group of older people that just really loved country-western music," Kacey told *The Fader*. "They would mentor younger kids to get out of their shells." Every weekend, Kacey's parents would drive the family to Fort Worth. That's where they performed. All the kids in the group wore red bandanas and blue jeans.



SINGING KARAOKE



Maren's parents would host parties for their employees. Often, they set up a karaoke machine so everyone could sing. One night, Maren lifted the microphone to her mouth. She started to sing LeAnn Rimes's song "Blue." Her parents were in another room. They thought someone had turned the radio on. Suddenly, they realized it was their daughter. The girl was around nine years old. Singing karaoke at her parents' parties was enjoyable. "I was mostly just goofing around. It was just fun," she told *HuffPost*.

KARAOKE AND COVERS

In the 1970s, the first karaoke machines were made in Japan. These machines play music. People sing along with a microphone. The music is instrumental. This means there are no recorded vocals, just instruments. Usually these are covers of well-known songs. Many singers got their start singing covers of other people's music. Social media lets artists post their music so others can hear. It reaches a wider audience.

WESTERN SWING

Before joining the Buckaroos, Kacey already had experience singing in public. Her interest in music had started at a young age. By the time she was eight, she was already performing. Kacey sang western swing music. These are country classics. Her parents drove her around the state of Texas so she could sing.





TEXAS CIRCUIT

Maren's first experience performing was in Johnnie High's Country Music Revue. This was a long-running weekly variety show in Arlington. It was where many famous singers got their start. "That was my first time being onstage in front of an audience with people behind me, and I think that just changed my life," she told the *Dallas Observer*.

At 11 years old, she started performing around Texas. Like Kacey, this is how she got her start. The two met as teenagers. They often sang at the same places.