



## **Irritable Hearts: A PTSD Love Story**

*Mac McClelland*

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"**Irritable Hearts** striking candor will win McClelland the empathy she deserves." - *The New York Times Book Review*

## A Buzzfeed Best Nonfiction Book of 2015

"I had nightmares, flashbacks. I dissociated... Changes in self-perception and hallucinations-those are some of my other symptoms. *You are poison*, I chanted silently to myself. *And your poison is contagious.*" So begins Mac McClelland's powerful, unforgettable memoir, *Irritable Hearts*.

When thirty-year-old, award-winning human rights journalist Mac McClelland left Haiti after reporting on the devastating earthquake of 2010, she never imagined how the assignment would irrevocably affect her own life. Back home in California, McClelland cannot stop reliving vivid scenes of violence. She is plagued by waking terrors, violent fantasies, and crippling emotional breakdowns. She can't sleep or stop crying. Her life in shambles, it becomes clear that she is suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Her bewilderment about this sudden loss of control is magnified by the intensity of her feelings for Nico, a French soldier she met in Port-au-Prince and with whom she connected instantly and deeply.

With inspiring fearlessness, McClelland tackles perhaps her most harrowing assignment to date: investigating the damage in her own mind and repairing her broken psyche. She begins to probe the depths of her illness, exploring our culture's history with PTSD, delving into the latest research by the country's top scientists and therapists, and spending time with veterans and their families. McClelland discovers she is far from alone: while we frequently associate PTSD with wartime combat, it is more often caused by other manner of trauma and can even be contagious-close proximity to those afflicted can trigger its symptoms. As she confronts the realities of her diagnosis, she opens up to the love that seems to have found her at an inopportune moment.

*Irritable Hearts* is a searing, personal medical mystery that unfolds at a breakneck pace. But it is also a romance. McClelland fights desperately to repair her heart so that she can give it to the kind, patient, and compassionate man with whom she wants to share a life. Vivid, suspenseful, tender, and intimate, *Irritable Hearts* is a remarkable exploration of vulnerability and resilience, control and acceptance. It is a riveting and hopeful story of survival, strength, and love.

## Irritable Hearts: A PTSD Love Story Details

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Author : Mac McClelland

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## From Reader Review Irritable Hearts: A PTSD Love Story for online ebook

### David says

I've seen a lot of negative things said about this book, but after having read I just can't think we were reading the same book. All the negative comments were pretty much about the same thing, disbelief that what the author went through could cause PTSD or that the author was narcissistic. I just don't get that. The book is a serious opening to a much broader discussion about PTSD and all that we don't know about it. Trauma and trying to cope, it's both highly personal and not and is ongoing despite the best that medicine can currently do. My dad has been fighting PTSD my whole life after he was blown off the top of a tank. His sister? She had lifelong PTSD issues from seeing the wreck he was when he first came back from overseas. I don't think my dad would question this author's credentials or presentation for a moment. He'd understand, and I like to think I do too to at least some extent. It's not pleasant by any means, for obvious reasons, but it's a good book.

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### Beth says

#### Irritable Hearts: A PTSD Love Story by Mac McClelland (Memoir)

This is a remarkable book for several reasons. First, Mac McClelland is an excellent writer and pulls the reader right into her story. Second, McClelland very bravely shares her own worst moments as well as some of her best times. Third, she delves deeply into the causes, symptoms, and effects of Post- Traumatic Stress Syndrome in a way that is both highly readable and easily understood by a non-psychologist lay person. Mac McClelland is a journalist who lived in New Orleans and wrote about the Hurricane Katrina aftermath. She also wrote about the Gulf oil spill that happened soon after that. Then, she went to Haiti to research and right about the effects of the devastating hurricane that struck that very poor country. In Haiti, she saw many horrific sights, and was suddenly sent spinning into a downward spiral of PTSD without really understanding the condition and with little recourse but to try to learn more about it.

This was not an easy book to read although the writing is excellent. In fact, it may be that very excellence that had me setting the book down and walking away more than once. I didn't walk away intending to abandon the reading, but because there was only so much disturbing material that I could handle in one sitting. Nonetheless, I continued to read and learn from McClelland's experiences and her research into the PTSD among military veterans and their families, as well as other trauma victims.

This book would be an excellent choice for a book group that is willing to tackle a tough subject. There are many points that are well worth discussing. It also could be a good choice for a reader who knows someone with PTSD or who is dealing with it personally. For someone who is in therapy, I would recommend discussing it with a therapist before reading the book alone, as it could bring up unresolved or upsetting issues.

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### Karen says

I don't really think my rating on this book is fair. The rating and my enjoyment of the book were completely colored by my work. I spend the majority of each day in session with children and families who have

experienced horrors. Many of them are struggling with PTSD because of it. This is a hard book to read for anyone (hard for me because I consider reading an escape and this one just had me diving deeper into the reality of life for so many people with whom I work) but if you're looking to better understand one perspective of how PTSD torments the mind, then this is a book for you. If you're a therapist, don't touch it unless you're in a place where you have plenty of time away from trauma in your work. It could be a resource for sufferers/supporters of PTSD but could also just be sentence after sentence of triggers. The theme that stood out most strongly for me was how PTSD drives people to compare their trauma with others' and how it can make you feel as if you haven't gone through enough to have "earned" your symptoms. So frustrating! In the end, if I had such a hard time merely reading this book, imagine what it's like to live it or support someone who is! A very brave and difficult work from McClelland. Grateful it exists to help normalize PTSD and reduce the enormous stigma surrounding diagnosis, symptomology and the ways people cope to survive.

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### **DeB MaRtEnS says**

I loved Irritable Hearts. Mac McClelland has written a raw memoir of her experience with PTSD. Apparently it is a contentious book, harshly criticized by those who need the "true crime" version of details as "proof" of McClelland's story. For me, however, the "proof" IS the story, the reactions, the grief, the searching for answers, the disbelief that one's person could betray oneself so terribly, the awful reality of PTSD. PTSD is difficult to understand, for those who have never encountered it, for those who hide it and for those who try to heal from it. Everyone's experience is different. For health insurance purposes, it must be defined around a specific event. For living purposes, it is probably part of a deeply layered coping system stretched beyond its unique and finite endurance. Those who have any experience with PTSD will truly appreciate this book.

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### **Alison says**

(I feel a weird ethical obligation to say that I kinda know the author, or at least I used to IRL. We worked together for a few years (where she worked while doing the reporting she writes of here) and were union officers at that job together, because we're both awesome nerds like that.)

I'm pretty sure this is a book that will divide people, where a lot of people will love it to pieces, a lot will hate it all to hell, and a few in the middle will back away slowly from all of us.

Personally...I loved it. I didn't expect to, I thought I'd just like it, but...for a lot of reasons, it meant a lot to me. It climbed into my heart, and also made my heart want to leap out and into the pages and find its way to the author. People have had some FEELINGS about certain aspects of her work, but a lot of that was based on speculation, on hearsay, on assumptions, and the truth is a lot less salacious or dirty than the general rumors. People also have opinions on the validity of her illness, and seemingly on her worth as a person, a woman, a sufferer, on her right to own and be open about her truth, no matter who she is or what she's done...and seriously, if that's who you are, someone who questions someone else's pain and struggle, who thinks someone should just shut up because of the circumstances of their birth, you need to examine your own life.

But anyway...there is a lot here, and it can be very hard to read, but for me it was also very very poignant and beautiful and helpful. I feel like it might be wrong to say a book was good when it's about so much trauma,

but for me, and I'm sure many others, it *\*is\** good. It's a good thing in our world. Anything that can perhaps introduce a little more understanding and support and empathy into a world so lacking in all these things is a good thing.

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### **Amanda says**

I don't want to trivialize what this writer went through, but I think she was still too close to tell this story. I heard Cheryl Strayed say recently that her husband told her for years to write about the hike that later became 'Wild' but she kept telling him there she didn't know what the story to tell was. It took her 15 years of reflection before she did. I think this writer and this book would have benefited from the same kind of reflection and distance. It felt very scattered to me. It wasn't until the end that I realized that the focus was really supposed to be the 'love story' between her and Nico. I felt like that got lost a bit. I also felt like Nico had some interesting parts of his life that should have been covered a little better so that he could have been a part of the love story too.

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### **Heidi says**

As the book synopsis says, McClelland suffered PTSD after witnessing some horrible things as a journalist in post-earthquake Haiti. The book is mostly about her symptoms and her treatment and is also partly about saying "I told you so" to the people who didn't believe she had suffered anything traumatic.

I felt terrible for McClelland. It's clear that the after-effects of her trauma were far-reaching. She also makes it clear that this could happen to anyone, giving examples of PTSD diagnosed in survivors of Hurricane Katrina and the 9/11 attacks as well as soldiers, journalists, and rape victims. Current treatment isn't terribly effective and sufferers of PTSD struggle to get credibility.

But I had a hard time getting through the book. The writing was awkward, with overly-long sentences that I had to read several times. Pronouns also seemed to get in the way; I can't count how many times I had to read a paragraph two or three times to figure out what the word "they" or "it" was referring to. And the jumps back and forth through time were confusing since they involved the same characters. I'm not normally so sensitive to writing, but this got frustrating. Halfway through I decided I must have accidentally downloaded one of those self-published and unedited Amazon ebooks that I usually avoid, but Goodreads says the book had a publisher.

I'm not sure the book is worth it unless you're quite interested in PTSD.

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### **Lp says**

After starting this book nearly two months ago, I finally finished the other eve. I had to take a break and put it down for a while as I found the author to be somewhat self-absorbed, rambling and a bit dramatic for my taste.

Mac McClelland was diagnosed with Post- Traumatic Stress Disorder after a trip to Haiti to report on an earthquake and its devastating effects. She suffered from dissociation, rage, sadness, depression, suicidal tendencies, addiction. Ms. McClelland is a good story- teller in many ways, which is evident in the fact that

she has done reporting for some top magazines. She was extremely candid and forthcoming about her experience and even addressed the criticisms that she was narcissistic, privileged, and dramatic. In spite of that, the book was powerful as it addressed a very sensitive subject matter in a brutally honest manner. Admittedly, another reason it was difficult for me to get through this book is because it hit very close to home.

Although I've never been officially diagnosed with PTSD, I had an extremely traumatic experience at a very young impressionable age that has definitely had lasting effects. When I was 9 years old, I was riding bikes with my older brother, Chris, 11, when he was hit by a truck and dragged within an inch of his life. Fortunately I was far enough behind and separated by some large bushes that I did not see him get hit, however, I did see him lying on the ground moaning, covered in blood with his head severely cut open. He survived although suffered severe brain damage, could not talk and was a quadriplegic. Being an extremely sensitive, shy child, it most definitely had a tremendous effect on me. Chris needed a great deal of care and attention, so this was the main focus of our family in the years following the accident. Since I was always one to repress any problems and issues and to avoid being the center of attention, I never sought counseling, and although it may have been encouraged, it was never required of me and so I really never talked to anyone about my traumatic experience and therefore never dealt with or processed it.

In my teens I had much anxiety, and experienced some dissociation, depression and sadness. I became addicted to cigarettes. I did have some small rages, but nothing particularly notable that I can recall. I was involved in many activities, including suburban 4-H, a drug prevention program, and various sports activities, which all helped tremendously. I had my bicycle, which I still loved to ride in spite of the related trauma, and books which provided me with an escape from reality and the great underlying sadness. And music, which has always been incredible love and a major lifeline of mine.

Once I moved away from home for college and was left to my own accord is when the PTSD really started to rear its ugly head, mostly in the form of addiction, still to cigarettes, and then to alcohol and such. The anxiety got worse and also I started to have serious depression, including suicidal thoughts and feelings. I attempted to see a therapist while in college but it was an old man in a suit with a clip board and very generic, text book questions, so I only went once and gave up.

The worst of it happened throughout my twenties when I was in a relationship with a very patient, kind, wonderful man. In retrospect, I suppose trying to get close to and be in a loving relationship really brought out all the repressed PTSD related feelings and emotions from my childhood. I not only continued to struggle with addiction, but started having many blind rages, sometimes at the drop of a hat. Typically the blind rages were followed by suicidal episodes of swallowing a large bottle of pills. Although we were way too young and I was obviously not even close to ready, we got married. After many chaotic, tumultuous years, almost all a result of my PTSD, I finally went to therapy. Well, we went to therapy. It was a marriage counselor. She was wonderful and I often say she pretty much saved my life. From the first session she said the rages and suicide attempts needed to stop, and they did. For the most part. Finally addressing some of those repressed, deep seeded emotions and issues that were related to Chris's accident and the PTSD was the beginning of what has been a long journey of healing.

Sadly as I got better, my marriage unraveled. I needed to stand on my own two feet which I had never done as I was always on shaky ground. Although it was empowering and necessary for me, going through a divorce was at the same time very traumatic in many ways and I went on a downward spiral into alcohol addiction to numb the guilt and pain. Even though I no longer had the regular suicide attempts, I did have a few moments, and I did still very much feel stuck in the vortex and black hole of depression and sadness and often wished to die. The anxiety got much worse and started to include panic attacks, which I always

drowned in alcohol. It was about this time that I started to really immerse myself in painting as both an escape and therapy, painting mostly portraits and other pretty sad and dismal scenes which was quite obviously a reflection of how I was still feeling.

Shortly thereafter, my brother, Chris, suffered from congestive heart failure and we knew his days were numbered. We were incredibly fortunate that he lived for almost 25 years after his accident and blessed us all with so much love and invaluable life lessons. After he passed away, I moved from Florida back to Chicago for a year to be with my family. While I no longer felt the weight of responsibility of Chris's accident as I did when I was younger, it most certainly hit me hard and a lot of the PTSD related thoughts and feelings resurfaced. It seems I was either in my apartment, crying, or at the bar, drinking. And forever smoking. My crutches. Thank goodness for my family, which for better and for worse, shit or shine, has always been there for me. And also thank goodness for my bicycle, which at the time I rode for hours a day down the lake front path, and always listening to music; my lifelines.

It was also right around this time that I started to get very sick and have many health issues, likely related to genetic and environmental factors, and exacerbated by drinking and smoking.

After many years dealing with the health concerns and going through countless inconclusive tests, I found a wonderful holistic nurse practitioner who helped me discover that the etiology of my health problems were related to drinking and also likely to food sensitivities. Although drinking was one of my main crutches over the years, tending to my health problems was definitely a priority.

Magically, once I curbed my drinking and pinpointed the foods that triggered various issues, I started to feel like a new person in many regards. In retrospect, I know I had an internal bacterial imbalance, which once that started healing, a lot of the anxiety and depression disappeared, for the most part, as well. I started to feel much more clear-headed and optimistic. It is amazing that once the fog of alcohol, cigarettes and the like is lifted, how much easier it is to deal with any stress, anxiety or hardships in a productive, positive manner.

That said, life and shit happens and there have of course been situations and setbacks that I have attempted to drown. Heartache and break-ups, some work related stress, a bit of social anxiety. I've had a moment of rage here and there, although very few and far between. A handful of times I have had that bottomless pit, sinking black hole feeling. But mostly I am super happy to be alive and feel so fortunate and am extremely grateful for all that I have been blessed with over the years. A wonderful family, amazing friends, a sweet dog, good books, awesome tunes, beautiful surroundings.

Mac McClelland's story is a love story and revolves around meeting a French man, Nico, with whom she fell in love and who helped her tremendously with her PTSD. For a long time now, I've had intentions of writing my story, although in a way I've been waiting for my happy ending to happen first. To fall in love again and live happily ever after.

Well first of all, the research shows that PTSD actually never really goes away and they have recently found that it resides in the actual brain cells versus in the neurons' synapses as they originally thought:  
<http://www.scientificamerican.com/art...>

So I imagine to some extent that I will always be dealing with the PTSD in some sense. Much like a recovering alcoholic is always an alcoholic, I will always have PTSD. The important thing is to acknowledge it, address it, and to find replacement behaviors and ways to deal with the energy and with the symptoms when they arise. For me, a lot of physical activity, especially biking and walking, yoga, these days swimming, sometimes jogging, kickboxing. Lots & lots of books, and music, always.

Also, while I have always loved walking in the woods and being out in nature, in the past few years I have

moved out to the country and have really immersed myself in nature and wildlife, which has been particularly healing and so good for my mind and soul. I read an article recently that stated that 'wild environments boost well-being by reducing obsessive, negative thoughts.'

<http://www.theatlantic.com/health/arc...>

So true!

I have also been practically obsessed with learning birds, wildflowers and other flora and fauna in the past year, and I believe it is no small coincidence that I have also been happier than ever before in my life. The old, nagging negative thoughts have been replaced by learning and thinking of beautiful birds and flowers.

And while I am still waiting for another good, kind, understanding man to come along to ride off into the sunset with, I have had a happy ending in a sense as in the past couple years in particular, I have actually finally learned to love the most important person: myself.

Lastly, I am posting this publicly as I think it is important to share our experiences and stories, especially those related to traumatic events. I have been so fortunate to have amazing people come into my life when I felt most desperate and truly needed it. I would be very happy to be there for anyone who has had or is having similar experiences and needs to talk or share their story as well. The worst thing to do is to repress or ignore it or try to go it alone.

Xo, lcp

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### **Renata says**

I like and respect Mac McClelland as a journalist; I remember when she wrote her first article about developing PTSD after reporting in Haiti (which is partly incorporated into this memoir) and got so much nasty backlash from people who somehow didn't feel that she'd "earned" PTSD or something? UGH.

I loved her honesty about her trauma and all the ways she worked through it, as well as her information about other PTSD patients (interviews and outreach with veterans, spouses of veterans, etc). And the titular "love story" is pretty sweet and kind of bonkers.

I'd recommend it to fans of narrative nonfiction, especially if you're interested in learning more about PTSD/trauma/etc.

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### **Mainlinebooker says**

I really wanted to like this book but reviewing this book was a difficult task. On the positive side I admired the author's writing and her raw openness about her condition and its effect upon her life. However, I couldn't help but question her credibility. Being somewhat familiar with her work, I found it very hard to understand how she was dissociating and crying maniacally and at the same time going undercover to write a piece about working in an Amazon warehouse. In addition, she starts the book by vague comments about being traumatized by an event she observed without specifics to make us understand what specific dangers she had been exposed to. Apparently, the person involved and her lawyer expressed that she had no

authorization to speak about what happened to her, as she had reported specifics in an earlier article. However, that very lack of information undermines the rest of the book. She does present a great deal of valuable information about PTSD and self mutilation but doesn't build enough of a case to make her exposure believable. She did have a very troubling childhood which in itself could have led to severe emotional difficulties but I could not help judging the means and methods she went through to accomplish her goals. Her self portrayal was not very likable...and I had a hard time being sympathetic. I wish I could have been.

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### **Jane says**

This review might come off as self-serving. Reading this book was, for me, incredibly necessary. I have PTSD due to Military Sexual Trauma. I have had my diagnosis for 10 years, though the trauma occurred nearly 17 years ago. Reading Mac McClelland's words, I found myself saying, either quietly to myself or out loud, on nearly every page, "This is every day of my life. Someone understands."

Never have I seen a more accurate depiction of what I go through daily. I kept having to read passages to my husband. He gets it. He signed up for this, to see me through this, just as Nico did for Mac. Their conversations in bed are ones that my husband and I have had regularly.

Of particular interest to me was the wealth of information about somatic symptoms, as well as the admission of the need some trauma survivors have for violent sex, which has been true for me and left me utterly confused and ashamed and hating myself at times. I was also particularly interested in her journey through therapy. The VA info was useful as well, as I am currently trying to find my way through that maze.

Overall, it just made me feel less alone and a little more understood than usual. I want to make everyone I know read this book so that they might better understand me, but I know that's probably selfish.

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### **Meghan says**

*"There's a weird but common misperception about how trauma works that was illustrated by the fight they were having - that trauma exists only in the realm of those who have it worse than anyone else in the world. I myself held this misperception, the way I'd argued with Meredith that it was impossible for me to be traumatized. First, I hadn't suffered anything serious. Second, the circumstances of my life generally caused me little suffering. I was in the bottom of the right-to-suffer caste system; it makes a kind of sense culturally, if not biologically."*

*"According to the contemporary studies, having parents with mental health issues, including depression, is on the list of risk factors that make a person who experiences trauma more likely to develop PTSD. A history of child abuse or neglect is on the list, as are having other mental health problems, and having no good family/friend support system. So is 'being female,' which suggests that the female body is constitutionally unsound, lacking the integrity to withstand trauma when all other things are equal, when in fact it's on the list because being female means*

*being subject to far more threats and violations to boundaries and sexual and physical safety."*

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## **Tinea says**

Great book. Important book. A "thank you for writing this" sort of book.

McClelland is a journalist who experienced trauma while reporting in Haiti, and was later diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. This book is a first-person memoir of the experience of having and healing PTSD, girded by research and resources on the science, psychology, and impact of PTSD in the world and how to heal it.

McClelland masters a delicate balance between wrenching, deeply personal experience and situating that experience within the context of other trauma survivors, particularly sexual assault survivors and soldiers. It's a hard balance and I cringed often in the early pages of the book, which leans more heavily on the author's personal history, but she does this purposefully. First she lays bear the trauma of experiencing trauma, as only a self-pillorying writer can do, critically examining and over-honestly recounting awful nuances of psychological pain. And crazy bitchiness. McClelland is brutal in her unveiling of the way PTSD can turn one into a crazy bitch-- overwhelmed by or deadened to emotion, hypervigilance unveiling itself as anger and self-protective cruelty. I write as one who also has PTSD, whose experiences have embodied so many of the words McClelland was able to write down. Things I can apologize for or give heads up to lovers about, but cannot articulate. Like I said: Thank you for writing.

I embodied similar experiences of suffering and healing in my own PTSD journey that McClelland writes, right down to embracing the explicit consent of BDSM sex as a healing mechanism, testing physical boundaries with a loving partner to demonstrate to myself that no, it wasn't the physical pain of my assault that was traumatizing-- I can handle pain, can embrace good kinds of pain-- it was the violation, the lack of control, the inability to protect myself. For me, BDSM play was a way to explore and differentiate assault and abuse from the act of sex, things that look very much alike but are so very very different. I remember reading the short essay she wrote soon into her recovery and the controversy that surrounded outing the use of violent sex as a healing mechanism-- even as survivors of sexual assault have long explored consensual BDSM play as a means to physically take back ownership of sex perverted by assault. Controversy is intellectually good, and it's worth reading the critiques of whose story is whose to tell, deeply considering the words to talk about the secondary trauma of witnesses and providers of support. But I am so thankful McClelland braved a world of shame and stigma to share her pain and process in all its mess. That's how this shit is. It is messy and complicated, surprising and embarrassing and awful. That's what McClelland captures-- the whole of it.

This book is a treasure because it's not a textbook but it is substantial. I have my list of psych resources I can list off when I have a new lover or am helping a friend. Those books can help someone learn the technical skills of coping. But what I appreciated about Irritable Hearts is that it tells a story of experiencing these textbook symptoms, and it shows the application of the healing process over time, in all its yo-yoing, layered complexity. It shows the difficulty and importance of growing relationships and love as a part of healing despite the ease with which trauma and abuse can transfer and replicate. This is one you can hand someone who cares but does not understand, one that is harsh and scary at times but shows with clarity and honesty the way that, yes, things can get better. It's a lot of work! But you can heal.

One final thought. I understand that it was some legal and care issues that prevented McClelland from fully disclosing the traumatic incident she witnessed that she feels pushed her over into PTSD. That means the things she does share in detail were all sexual assault close calls. This absence was so important. It prevented the reader from comparing herself with McClelland or other survivors, underlining the point that traumatic stress comes about through complex interconnected lifelong experiences of trauma interacting with one or many traumatic incidents over time. It kept the book readable for triggered trauma survivors-- I don't think I could have handled graphic details of sexual violence at the same time I was absorbing all the descriptions of psychological pain. And finally, it pushed McClelland to focus on the "close calls" themselves: sexual terror, as she finally allows herself to call it late in the book.

If you're trying to heal or understand PTSD, I also recommend:

- Trauma and Recovery
- Healing Sex: A Mind-Body Approach to Healing Sexual Trauma
- The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse
- Aftershock: Confronting Trauma in a Violent World: A Guide for Activists and Their Allies
- Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others

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### **Kirsten says**

Regular people, whether they realize it or not, walk around believing, as you cannot make your way in the world without believing, that the universe is holding them.

*Well, the people on our side of the line thought, *the fuck it does.**

^ Only how I have felt my entire life, NBD. In reading other reviews of this book, I think interpreting this as a work of literature is missing the point, because what is happening here is an attempt to advance and normalize the experience of trauma response and PTSD. McClelland wrote this book for other trauma survivors, and she did so in an attempt to counteract the isolation and stigma that accompanies it. I read this book 100% as an honorable effort to advance the normalization of trauma response in a culture that refuses to acknowledge the importance of mental health. Working as I do in a field in which secondary trauma is not only highly possible, but likely, I cannot underestimate the importance of this.

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### **Jessica says**

I try to make it my goal to finish every book I begin to read. I couldn't even finish the book, it was THAT terrible. The author is very narcissistic. I don't know what to say other than this is a terrible read.

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