



Clearly Now, the Rain: A Memoir of Love and Other Trips

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A memoir about loving someone you cannot save

Serala drank frat boys under the table. She wore saris and ate delicately from plates of curry at family events; elsewhere she wore a lip ring, designer shades, and a cowboy hat and ordered bloody steaks. She wrote volumes of poetry, made amateur films, singlehandedly ran a chapter of Food Not Bombs, and ended up as a fierce advertising agency executive. She often slept less than five hours per week and would, at the slightest excuse, drive from L.A. to New York in a cool 50 hours. In some moments of danger, she split the lips of menacing strangers. And she gave herself over to the casual knives and fists of others for nothing more than another bag of heroin that she had plenty of money for anyway. Clearly Now, the Rain traces the decade-long relationship of Eli Hastings and his friend Serala: from ill-advised quests for narcotics in Mexican border towns through summer road trips, from southern California to Tennessee and on to New York City and Seattle, from 1996 to the very last days of 2004, when Serala's journey concluded tragically at age 27.

Clearly Now, the Rain: A Memoir of Love and Other Trips Details

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From Reader Review Clearly Now, the Rain: A Memoir of Love and Other Trips for online ebook

Kara Weiss says

Memoirs are compelling stories -- that's why they get written. However, the writing of the story almost always falls flat, and for me, ruins the book. Glass Castle is a great example of a story that I wish had been told with a little more finesse. Hastings, however, tells his story with equal parts passion, patience -- he shows himself to be a totally fresh and accomplished wordsmith -- truly incomparable to any other author I can think of.

Sarah says

Beautiful and tragic story of someone struggling with addiction and those that are pained by watching that person struggle. Highly recommend!

Estevan says

What a beautiful story. You know the ending all along but somehow when it comes it hits you right in the gut all the same. With lyrical prose, Eli Hastings takes you on a heart wrenching journey that leaves you exhausted and makes you want to curl up into a ball and think about your life. An utterly stunning read. This book will stick with you for days. Buy it. Read it. Share it. The beauty is absolutely worth the pain. I can't recommend it enough.

Felica Chapman says

I won this book through first reads and oh my let me tell you gave up at chapter four not to be rude but what a mess no storyline that I could grasp what so ever... fail

Rachel says

This was a gripping read. I didn't like having to stop reading. You can tell the author later became a counselor; the depth of reflection is evident throughout.

Sarah says

Eli Hastings allows the reader to ride shotgun as he careens through life after high school. His journey takes place alongside Serala, an enigmatic, tortured spirit who vacillates between intuitive compassion, wild spontaneity, and wretched despair. Hastings reveals the beauty in her vulnerable and unbridled soul, as their

friendship demonstrates the depth and danger of loyalty. The book becomes an addiction, luring readers to keep on until the pages and emotions are exhausted.

Stephanie Andersen says

I was deeply affected by reading this book. Through its lens, I encountered love, friendship, loss, and pain in ways I never have before. I fell in love with the characters and followed them along on their many journeys as if their losses and lessons were somehow part mine. This is a love story like no other I have read. It will shake you up, make you angry, sad, desperate, lost, and hopeful all at the same time. And after you put it down, it will stay with you.

Sierra James says

This book will take you on a profoundly moving trip through heart wrenching territory. Eli Hastings' originality and lyrical prose will capture your soul.

Shaun Mcmichael says

I read it in one day. Eli's portrait of Serala—Eli's friend and lover—compels a reader on. Along with Eli, I was entranced by Serala's sincerity and harshness, allured by her beauty, sympathetic to her tragedy, and, perhaps most of all, angered by her thanatos.

Serala takes her place next to another crooked hero of our city (Seattle)—Cobain. And not just because both died like ciphers in the wet streets, but because both, I believe (perhaps wrongly) share a core flaw—a discontentment with life itself around which all of their drugs, successes and, sadly, the great people in their lives, swirl.

Serala—a near rhyme with Sansara, the endless burning circle of sorrow and spite-filled re-birth—is a force to be encountered. For me personally, Eli's depiction made me admire his courage as a writer, but also, it made me admire THE LOVE between the group of people (friends, family) Eli speaks of. Throughout the happenings of their lives, they are able to drive across a country for the other, able to suffer with and out-drink and out-talk the other in a youthful abandon so resilient it nearly counterbalances Serala's tragedy. Formally, I don't have much to say other than praise—which may bore so I'll keep it short. I sense that the bulk of the last few years work on this has been spent on form and I really think that work paid off. The memoir is focused (almost painfully so) but the narrative arc is strongly felt and propulsive enough to make it grabbing. It allows plenty of room for the banality of life (Samar's sickly kitten; Sasha the dog chewing on a deer spine); yet it links these stray moments thoughtfully to the issue at hand—Serala's demise. The same is true for the way larger events like 911 and WTO concuss into our lives and qualify the minute situation. I admire the clarity and the loyalty to the continuity of theme at work there, to say nothing of the accessibly, lyrical sentences. It's a quality lacking I feel in memoirs written by non-writers and Eli is a writer!

Faydra says

Author, Eli Hastings, merges from teenagedom, into a world all too similar - a college life with the same insular relational drama clouded by drugs and booze, but then he meets Serala, a girl with a new intensity, a darker force he cannot resist, a girl who's presence forces him to redefine relationships and, of course, love.

It's a staggering reality for me, a girl who's parallel life (also a high school c/o '96 grad) took place in bright and perky south Florida, immersed in Baptist youth group culture (a culture not forced on me by religious parents, but self-chosen no less) that transitioned into a similar perky life at a large university where often the worst reality of the day was when I'd scored bad seats to the football game.

So, just the existence of a Serala, is staggering. Because she's not a stereotype (like the junkie mother mentioned in passing, later in the book, who inevitably isn't a stereotype either but who is there to tell her story?) and she's not a girl one simply puts on a prayer list. (Ha! Just the thought.) And she's not a girl one envies for her beauty or her professional confidence and income. She's a soul tormented by the world's violence, a violence she managed to bring close, often inside. She's a soul tormented by an exasperating inability to sleep. The description of how she spent her wakeful evenings one of the most sorrowful of the book. To suffer and never rest? Hell on earth. The descriptions of what she would take, enough to knock out an elephant, that would still have no effect on her increasingly thinning frame, incredible. A super-human strength most unwelcome.

Eli is not just our witness. He brings everything in his life and tangles it up with Serala. His own unhealthy love relationships, his complicated love for his broken but surviving father, his allegiance to but fears for his younger brother, his team of friends. And we journey with him through undergraduate life, studying abroad, involvement in the political ongoings of the day, then off to graduate school (where I was co-existing a continuation of my perky life, already married, glibly going about life on my own stretch of suburbia), a stint in Montana, and finally back home to Seattle. Journeys within journeys occur in the context of Serala (moving closer, journeying with, leaving behind) and weave through his lived-hard years.

Is her death a tragedy? An inevitability? A necessary freedom for Eli? Herself? Both?

Brutal and beautiful and... life rendered raw.

Thank you, Eli.

Marty says

Too dark for me. Not enough insight or interest to be worth the reading

Heidi says

Eli Hastings' book tells the story of two best friends whose relationship is anything but ordinary. It is also a story of deep friendships and brotherhood through all of life's turbulence and pain. It will have you laughing out loud and sobbing from one page to the next. Eli's gift for language is astounding. Every paragraph is a work of art. The book is full of torment, anger, and misfortune...and glows bright with a Love like no other. It is brutally honest, raw, and so very courageous. For anyone who has Loved and lost, this book should not be missed. Congratulations on such a beautiful book.

Toby Lawless says

An honest look at love and pain; this book is at once an exploration of a most profound and complicated relationship and coming of age in modern America. A page turner from the very start, we are with Eli the entire way, never wanting the adventure to end.

Verkizen says

I gave up on this book. I just couldn't handle his perception of the girl in it. I feel guilty about it because it was a first reads from Goodreads. But my honest opinion is that this book wasn't for me. I don't like drugs. I don't like manic pixie dream girls (if you want to refer to them that way). Nothing about this book appealed to me once I started reading it.

Abigail says

This is a beautiful, albeit sad memoir about the power of friendship and the role of love in the midst of addiction. The writing is beautifully poetic and lyrical and the emotional insights are well formed, if a little repetitive at times. The story would be beneficial to anyone who is supporting a loved one who is in the throes of addiction.
