



# **It Rains in February: A Wife's Memoir of Love and Loss**

*Leila Summers*

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On the 24th of February 2007 my husband, Stuart, drowned himself at sea, leaving me widowed with two young daughters aged six and four. I knew it wasn't an accident, even though the medics and police never suspected suicide. Stuart had been talking about ending his life for a year. His most recent suicide attempt had been only three weeks earlier. Afterwards, he explained that day as the most peaceful day of his life. Sitting next to the dam, he smoked his last cigarette. He drank a hundred sleeping pills and did a final check to make sure everything would look like an accident. The last thing he remembered was swimming out into the crystal clear water. He said that he was no longer scared of dying, that there was nothing scary about it. Living was the scary thing.

It Rains In February: A Wife's Memoir of Love and Loss is the true story of a husband's depression and obsession, not only with another woman, but also with ending his life. In this honest and heartfelt narrative, Leila Summers weaves a compelling tale of the year that led up to Stuart's suicide and the grief and self discovery that followed. Although each suicide is unique, this book gives the reader an insider's view from one perspective by way of letters and email messages.

## **It Rains in February: A Wife's Memoir of Love and Loss Details**

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# **From Reader Review It Rains in February: A Wife's Memoir of Love and Loss for online ebook**

## **Holly says**

When I first saw this book, I avoided it...I didn't want to read something sad...but after several days of seeing it on the top 100 free list, I decided to download it and maybe save it for later. Little did I know I'd be reading it in short order!

There is a large part of me that wishes this book was not a memoir, because what the author went through is so excruciatingly painful. No one should ever go through what she went through. I applaud her for taking the time to write this book so honestly and so raw. The narrative is lean, like muscle over bone, which made it easy and clean to read. Uncluttered.

My head is swirling with so many emotions...frustration and anger, sadness, and a strong desire to hug my husband and my puppies and it makes me want to stop time for a moment and capture the beauty of NOW. Because last minute doesn't matter and two minutes from now doesn't matter. NOW matters.

There were parts of myself that identified with the author. I am a bit enabling and a bit co-dependent. I like to think I am stronger, but I cannot say for certain I would make different choices if I were in her position. I like to think I would, and that was the part that angered and frustrated me...she left so many decisions up to someone whose emotions flickered in the wind. And her husband reminded me a lot of my ex-husband...the same mannerisms, the bold and brashness, the saying "shocking" things at parties to get a rise out of people, only to later confess he doesn't truly feel that way...

If you are involved with a creative person, you should read this book. Many creative folks also have mood disorders or other disturbances, sensitivities that on the surface, may not seem much more than "eccentricities" but could actually be symptoms of a deeper issue at play. It is always difficult to know where to draw the line on what is "eccentric" and what is something to be taken seriously.

I was saddened to hear that in S. Africa you cannot have someone committed involuntarily. What an immense burden the author carried around! I have been in the presence of the dying, and even though you know death would provide a relief, it does not dull the pain. I do believe that Stuart was mentally ill, and it must have been no different than to watch something you love slowly turn into someone unrecognizable due to the pain they are in. And despite your desire to remove said pain, you must let someone go on their own terms, as horrible and as far removed it is from your own beliefs. I do not envy her here at all.

I cannot say I have walked away with any better understanding of one's wanting to end their own life. I can understand the desire to make the pain stop, yes, but to refuse treatment...it galls me...and to expect those who love you to just accept your refusal of treatment and watch you slowly die and transform into someone no longer recognizable...a tragedy!

So yeah, I think I'm angry. But this is LIFE. And it's NOT easy and it's NOT rainbows and unicorns and it IS beautiful and ugly all at once. And it deserves recognition. Not just the beautiful parts, but the ugly parts as well. If you are ready to face the beauty and the ugly, I recommend you give this book a try. It won't be easy, but it will be worth it.

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## **Bobby says**

This book reinforces my admiration of the strength that comes in the human form. Ms. Summers' recollection of events of such a horrible part of her life and then being able to put said events on paper is astounding. The mixture of a verbal account of occurrences with the letters and e-mails that accompany these occurrences is really well done. Ms. Summers puts us right into her shoes of both utter frustration ...as well as complete and total dedication and caring. Even though the outcome is never in doubt, when I got to the words from Stuart's Dad "He's dead", I had to put the book down and regroup. Every attempt to help Stuart is exhausted. Throughout this tale I tried to think of things Robyn could do and then in the very next instant, Robyn has tried it. Especially creative was the "Leila Summers" character to bring about a quasi-love affair via e-mails. The hope of putting someone else's needs ahead of his was a brilliant idea but again there was no way of helping one who has no desire to help one's self. This is a hard recommend but certainly a must-read.

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## **Lynne King says**

I always find memoirs somewhat difficult to read. I want to read them but when I see someone opening their soul for everyone to read about their lives, I just feel embarrassed to a certain extent, and especially in the case of Stuart, who leaves Leila (Robyn) and her two children for another woman.

I just cannot understand how she could still love this man after the way he treated her. Stuart basically ruined many people's lives, and then to finally commit suicide, well that must have been the final straw, to quote a cliché. Of course, depression is a dreadful thing and I understand clinical depression, as appears to be the case here, is awful for everyone concerned, not just the individual who is depressed. But then again, I do question suicide, if one is religious and the state of one's life is dreadful, such as a serious non-curable illness, what is wrong with going to Switzerland and getting it over and done with. I often wonder. I recall that Terry Pratchett was present at his friend's assisted suicide in Switzerland. Was that really so wicked when the individual who decided to take his own life, was quite competent and had choice. For after all, we as human beings do have choice to a certain extent in our existence of laws and the like.

This is, nevertheless, a beautifully written book, the story is truly poignant and I realise that Leila obviously had to write this memoir as a form of healing process. I believe that I would have tried to block it all out and think the best for the future of my two children but will she be emotionally scarred by bringing this all up again? I wonder...

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## **Lucinda Clarke says**

### **A REALLY GREAT BOOK**

I'm not surprised this book has won an award, it was brilliantly written. It also sent shivers down my spine as I was in Durban when it all took place and many of the scenes described were places I was familiar with. There were a lot of other parallels as well, but the lasting thought was the need to get more information out about personality disorders. The writer went through hoops to help her husband, she tried and tried over but she was fighting a battle it is almost impossible to win. I think it very brave of her to share her story. It was a difficult book to put down. Well worth the 5 stars and i am so glad I read it.

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## **Georgette says**

Leila Summers has written a beautiful, heart wrenching biography of her marriage to Stuart, her husband of many years. Leila meets, falls head over heels in love, and marries Stuart. They have two beautiful girls, who remain the light of both of them. Somewhere in between paradise and purgatory, Leila begins to sense a change in her husband. A man who was so creative, driven by their mutual passion, and happy with their lives in Durban, suddenly seems out of place, sometimes overemotional, sometimes distant to the point of distraction. Stuart eventually confesses to Leila that he has fallen in love with a mutual friend of theirs, who sings with him and is also married. Things go into a spiral from this point on. Leila remains strong and attempts to get Stuart to open up and talk, and along with his sister, attempts to keep him on a happier plain. Sadly, Stuart attempts suicide and the battle to save him continues. The letters and emails that Leila shares in her book are beautiful, blunt, and so hard to read, because there is such an open honesty to them. Leila loves her husband very much, despite her sadness and sometimes anger at the dissolution of her marriage, and she never stops trying to reach him. She speaks honestly throughout the book of her battles to remain optimistic in the face of such an uphill battle, and she attempts to keep life uncomplicated and as normal as possible, especially to their two little girls. Stuart's sadness permeates the pages, as it becomes apparent to him that his love for the friend, remains a solitary one and unrequited to some extent, and furthers his desire to no longer be among the living. Ultimately, it's a book on the beginning, middle, and end of a not only a marriage ending, but also the life of a driven, vibrant man lost in the tailights of depression. You feel hopeful for Leila and her girls, that life does indeed go on, and that Stuart will always be remembered with joy and compassion, thanks to the way Leila has brought him to life in the pages of this book. I will recommend it heartily.

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## **Michele Kallio says**

IT RAINS IN FEBRUARY is an incredibly moving memoir of a young wife's love and loss. Leila Summers tells the unbearably sad story of her husband's illness and suicide with tenderness and love. It is a difficult book to review but one I highly recommend be read. IT RAINS IN FEBRUARY will take you on the rollercoaster ride that was Summer's life. Through emails she reveals her husband's illness and her unending support for him. It is a tale of loss but it is also a story of hope, for although her husband's struggle and death are the main topic of the book, Summers shows how she kept her children's lives normal and happy. Summers reveals not only the pain of this terrible time but the love and healing that has come from it. IT RAINS IN FEBRUARY is a difficult book to read, but one I recommend.

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## **Yianna Yiannacou says**

From the moment the author approached me and asked me to review her memoir I knew I had to say yes. There is just something so personal about reading another persons memoir that will always stay with me. As soon as I read the first page I was hooked and I knew that this book was going to go straight to my heart. The book begins with Robyn a wonderful housewife who has two beautiful young daughters and a husband that she would die for. It is so easy to get lost in ones perfect little world when nothing is askew. As soon as Robyn feels like something has changed she becomes suspicious of rumours that are running around about her husband sleeping with their mutual friend. Robyn does not want to believe it but still she confronts

Stuart, her husband, and he denies it.

Somewhere along he admits to being adamantly in love with Amanda their friend. Not only does he admit falling for someone else, I think that was when Stuart's depression started to kick in. If not depression, then his chemical imbalance worsened and he wanted to take his own life saying that he couldn't live with the 'fridge people' anymore.

Robyn doesn't know how to react to it. Stuart is so blunt in saying that Amanda is his soul mate and from the moment he laid eyes on her he knew that she was the one. He still completely respected and loved Robyn who was the mother of his two wonderful daughters but apparently it wasn't enough for him.

I respect Robyn for staying by Stuart's side at that time because I feel that if she didn't stay and support him through that, then he would have taken his life much sooner. I don't know how she stayed calm and composed after finding out the love of her life was in love with someone else. I would have thrown a tantrum after a tantrum and locked him away in a room with no key, but that is just me. I think Robyn's love overpowered her feelings of jealousy and her body automatically switched from being his wife to being his friend. I found Stuart very selfish and wanted to smack him a couple of times but other than that, I just felt bad for the guy. I felt like he did it to himself though. It was his fault he was like that and he had no one to blame but himself.

Stuart moves out because he can no longer stay at home since Robyn feels it is the right decision. He goes camping to hotel rooms to even buying his own little place and every single time he went away, he hoped that Amanda would come and visit him. That was all he wanted but Amanda was married. Apparently Amanda loved him back, but not enough to leave her own family and in the end I feel that is what killed Stuart. I am not saying that Amanda SHOULD have left her family, but if she did, Stuart would have been alive.

I loved how the book has real life emails between Robyn and Stuart and how open they always were with one another. Stuart never kept one thing from Robyn which I think is a relief because if he kept everything to himself and hid in a hole, I don't know how Robyn would have coped with that. The times where she visited him and he didn't talk were miserable. Stuart does not seem like the person to keep feelings in and when he did it was unbearable to read and I could only imagine how it must have been to be around.

In a last attempt to get into Stuart's mind, Robyn creates up a person on the other side of the world that Stuart would be able to relate to. Robyn hopes that if Stuart has someone he can talk to than maybe he won't try to take his life - again. At this point in the book Stuart has nothing to say to Robyn or his sister since all they are telling him is to seek help, medically or mentally, but he just won't do it. Robyn writes under the alias name Leila Summers. It appears to be working since he opens up to her, but in the end it just wasn't enough.

Robyn is a warrior throughout the entire book. She has to deal with her husband trying to take his life, her work life, her social life and the life of her two daughters who are caught right in the middle. She tries to shield them from the truth but making the right decision, Robyn tells them the truth about their father committing suicide. Every single part with her daughters made me cry.

"Mommy why is Granny crying when daddy is so happy in heaven?"

My favourite part was when Robyn went to the psychics and she could see Stuart. She had a message for Robyn about her son. Robyn shook her head since she didn't have one. The psychics laughed since Stuart apologized for confusing her. It was later when Robyn told her friend what happened and her friend said,

“SUN! Not son. The sun, the moon, the stars, and the sea.” That is what he always compared his daughters to since no matter what happened he would always love them more than life itself.

The weather has been very strange this year and when I read the part where Stuart committed suicide it was such bad weather. Instead of snow we had rain and the sky was grey. I felt like the weather was almost connected to the book I was reading. It did the same thing when I was done. When I finished and everything was sort of settled, the sun was setting and it was very peaceful. I know it probably means nothing, but at the moment it meant something to me.

Overall a definite read! I loved every minute even though I was sad for most of the book.

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### **Grace Peterson says**

What is love? Is the warm fuzzies we feel while embracing our husband of 30 years under a moonlit sky? Is it opening a small, exquisitely wrapped package to find a diamond of commitment?

*It Rains In February: A Wife's Memoir of Love and Loss*, written by Leila Summers, answers this question without even trying. It is the true-life account of one woman's struggle to help her mentally ill husband.

Set in exotic South Africa, Leila and Stuart meet, fall headlong in love, get married and have two daughters. But behind Stuart's artistic, somewhat eccentric demeanor lies a skewed view of reality, likely stemming from a chemical imbalance in his brain. Once he lays eyes on cinnamon-skinned Amanda, his affection for his wife takes a backseat to his unrequited obsession.

Perhaps Amanda is flattered, even titillated by handsome Stuart's flirtations, we don't really know, but she doesn't leave her husband for Stuart. And despite Leila's numerous urgings, Stuart refuses to resume first place in her life and continues to decline, ultimately taking his own life.

Leila is a gifted writer. The book is a poignantly candid love letter written to deceased Stuart, detailing the events and emotional difficulties during the months and years of their relationship. Despite the enormous stress of trying to keep Stuart from fulfilling his own demise, Leila's unconditional love for him never wavers. To me, this is the take home message.

I can't help but contrast the long suffering devotion Leila exhibited for her husband in a far from ideal marriage to many of today's marriages that quickly dissolve when things take a turn for the worse. Leila constantly reassures Stuart of her love for him and tries desperately to get him to seek psychiatric help. She writes honestly about being pulled in different directions, caring for their daughters and trying to make a life for herself. Despite the worst possible outcome, Leila survives and ultimately thrives.

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### **Kelsie says**

I've only just started this book, but it's already heart-wrenching. With every paragraph, I find myself thinking, "This sounds like my life; such perfect love and tenderness, shattered by greed." It's a page-turner for sure.

Having finished this book, I since recommended it to a number of people. All the way until the end, I never wanted to put the book down. I thought about the characters when I was not reading. The ending was frustrating because the story of Robin's life is left somewhat unresolved, but when you realize that she is a real person (Leila Summers) and that this book was simply her way of dealing with the trauma in her life, it becomes less frustrating and more impressive, really. I hope Ms. Summers continues writing and I can get my hands on another book as compelling soon!

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### **Paola Graziani says**

In the eight days I read this book, Leila's memoir was constantly on my mind. I experienced a variety of emotions such as disbelief, compassion, and admiration. Leila's strength and unconditional love are remarkable. But putting Stuart's needs before her own made me want to scream at times. I tried to imagine what it must be like to live with someone like Stuart when suicidal wishes are triggered by an obsession with another woman. I didn't succeed so I read the story through Leila's eyes.

The writing style left me feeling frustrated because it read more like a timeline of events than a story. The numerous emails the author included in the memoir broke the flow and caused me to disconnect. I nevertheless applaud the author's courage in having written this memoir.

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### **Patricia Puddle says**

I started reading this book and though I don't have a lot of time to read these days, I couldn't put it down. The story is sad and had me hooked from the start. The author, Leila, (Robyn) was brave to write it and it must have been hard, though it probably helped with the healing process. It was quite frustrating in parts as you want to shake her for letting her husband treat her the way he did. Though he was suffering from depression, he was in love with another woman and kept telling her that if he couldn't have her, he would kill himself. The other woman happened to be a friend of theirs and although she apparently loved him back, she chose to stay with her own husband and children. The MC, Robyn, supported her depressed husband and kept trying to get him to seek medical help for his depression. He refused and moved out of their home and many miles away in the hope that his new love would join him. She didn't and his depression got worse, though he still had a relationship with his wife and she visited him often.

Robyn had to accept that her husband wasn't in love with her anymore, but kept helping him with everything because she still loved him. plus they had two little girls who he adored and them him. Robyn even went as far as to beg the other woman to visit him in the hope that he wouldn't attempt suicide again. She also tried to get him to see a psychiatrist and go to a hospital, but he threatened to kill himself in there if she arranged it. Should Robyn have kept helping him and sacrificing her own well being for years on end? I'm not sure, but she did what her heart told her to do and no matter what she did, the outcome would have probably been the same. Even if she had forced the issue of having him taken to a mental health hospital and put on antidepressants, he still could have killed himself. Mental illness is so complicated and no one can know if even a medication can help certain people. My thoughts are that Robyn tried her very hardest to keep him alive, for himself, his children, and for her. She was totally selfless, which is rare in this world. My sadness was also for the children who must wonder why their daddy didn't want to stay alive - to be with them. Hopefully, when they're older, they will do some research on mental illness and realise that even their father had no control over his own life and death, and that he was unlucky enough to have had a chemical



imbalance through no fault of his own.

I actually think he may have fallen for the other woman because of his mental illness, and it was probably just infatuation, maybe he enjoyed the high of being in love as an escape from his dark thoughts of death. Had he spent time with this woman he may have even gone back to his wife and children. After reading all his letters in the story and his desperation to be with this other woman, it seemed to me that it was her rejection that he couldn't take. Maybe he had self esteem problems, maybe not, but that's just my thoughts. He was probably already depressed before meeting her and that rejection made it worse.

Depression can be caused by many things, firstly the person usually has the inherited gene, and then if other things happen, like losing a family member or pet, as well as financial problems, it can trigger it off. Maybe even a fear of being left alone or work issues or loss of a friendship. In this story the husband had lost a dear pet that was his best friend and I'm sure that affected him more than he let on. I've known people who were depressed for years after losing a pet. Our pets are our babies, so it's understandable. But with this man it was much more complicated. He chose his own future and now the family are left behind to pick up the pieces. I think there is no one to blame. It's just all too sad and I hope that the author can find closure and meet someone who'll give back all the unconditional love to her that she gave to her husband. I'm sure with a mother like they have, the children will grow up strong and healthy and with compassion just like their wonderful mother. And to the other woman, well she must feel bad too and probably guilty. I don't think she should though. None of it was her fault, after all, it seems she sacrificed her own love for this man, probably for her children and her own husband, who she'd made vows too. Good luck to all of them.

I highly recommend this book to all adults and teens. There are people in many families that suffer from undiagnosed depression. The symptoms are not always obvious. Look for withdrawal and don't let fake smiles fool you. If someone you know has been suffering from long-term depression, and has been threatening suicide, then they suddenly seem really happy, it could be that they are planning suicide that day. They may not be, but it's worth watching them, just in case.

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### **Theresa says**

To be honest....Amazing...but very hard to read. I have people in my family with bi-polar. The heart-wrenching agony that the family members go through are too close to me. I did ..however...learn about the disease through the eyes of Robyn...the wife. She was amazing in her love and selflessness for her husband...Stuart. Patience of a saint at times. I am not so sure I could do the same. I learned that one cannot help another...no matter how much you love them ....unless that person WANTS the help themselves. Important to know.Others can learn that hand-wringing and fretting do nothing . Love them as much as you can...the rest is up to them.

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### **MeMe Belikova First lady Ivashkov says**

Wow, this book was truly AMAZING! I read this book in one sitting which is rare for me(slow reader) but I couldn't find the strength to put it down. I found myself experiencing every heart-breaking moment with the character Robyn as she took me through her journey of life,love,loss,hope, and finally freedom.

Robyn a wife of two children finds out that her husband, Stuart of seven years(hope I'm correct) is having an affair and is dangerously in love with another women. Robyn's life is torn apart as her family has to struggle with the emotional roller coaster ride that Stuart takes them on. In this story Robyn has to learn that loving someone is not enough to make them love you back, and that no matter how much you love someone it can't always save them.

This book made me look at my own life and how it is important to love one another. Never take for granted those close to you, you never know what they may be going through or what demons are hidden within in their soul. This story was raw and real, a confession from a wife coping with loss and her disturbing adventures of finding freedom within herself. Thus, enabling herself to let go of the hurt and have the strength to tell her story.

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### **John Davis says**

An amazing read. I found this book to be very different as it is written 'to' her deceased husband as well as interspersed with their letters and emails. Very interesting and a page turner. Be careful of the negative reviews you read here or on Amazon as it seems more about what the readers would or wouldn't do if this happened to them. To me that is not the point of a book review. Anyway, this book was very well written and I highly recommend reading it.

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### **Kimberly says**

A couple months ago I was approached by the author Robyn who goes by the nom de plume Leila Summers. Usually I don't read books like this but after I read the summary I was convinced that I would have to read it.

A few days ago I finally got around to read it and I'm glad I did. Ever since finishing it though I've been struggling with how I should review it. I mean this isn't a work of fiction...it's some one's life I'm reading about. In fact I don't even think I can properly put into words how I felt about this memoir but I'll give it the old college try.

This book was an emotional read for me. Robyn really took me into her world with her words. I loved the way in which she wrote her memoir. For me it was as if I was reading a love letter to her husband, it was deeply personal and very intimate. Several times while reading it I had to stop because I had a sense that I was invading her privacy while there were other times when I had to put the book down because Stuart was making me so angry.

The book is about Robyn's husband Stuart's last 2 years of life, the disintegration of a marriage and a family...and ultimately Stuart's suicide. I really admire Robyn and the rest of the people that stood by Stuart like his sister Ruth. Despite his continued deterioration and that which they themselves endured they still loved him, and unlike many people they didn't turn their backs on him when he fell to pieces.

Even though I read the book I cannot comprehend how much strength it took Robin to keep loving the man that was so willing to walk away from their marriage on the hopes that the woman he had been having an emotional affair with for 2 years before marriage broke up would leave her family. The memoir was raw with emotion and was written beautifully.

Robyn truly inspires me. She held her head high for her daughters and dealt with blow after blow delt by Stuart. Yes she had a difficult time of it, and yes she would get angry at her children because she was so stressed out but that is perfectly understandable given the situation all can be forgiven.

To say I enjoyed this book would be wrong. How could I enjoy a book like this? Yet, that doesn't mean that I didn't love it. This book is a shining example of how a woman had to come to terms with her family falling apart because of her husband's love for another. It took me on a journey that showed that while Robin sometimes wavered, the strength and love she had for her husband stayed throughout the book. She did all she could to save his life, but unfortunately...it was not meant to be. I found myself to be incredibly moved by Robyn's writing and I do hope that she realizes that she has a gift, one that I hope she continues to use because I would love to read more from her.

This book is highly recommended to everyone. It will make your heart hurt...and it will make you feel compassion something that I find is often lacking in the world today. It will take you on a journey of love, forgiveness, and acceptance.

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