

## AN ADVENTURE IN GRIEF: THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF ONE WOMAN'S JOURNEY THROUGH GRIEF FOLLOWING HER HUSBAND'S SUICIDE.

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'I was making dinner when John went out to the barn to shoot himself'.

John Johnson was a Vietnam veteran devoured by post-traumatic stress. Eventually he found it impossible to go on living. Following his violent suicide his wife Catherine was faced with an overwhelming grief. Having bravely attempted to battle grief before after the death of her much-loved brother, this time Catherine decided she was going to take it on headfirst. Giving herself a two year period to deal with the incredible and traumatic effects of her beloved's death she deliberately faced up to grief and allowed it to run its course. Using a variety of therapies, alternative healing, lots of old movies and a sacrosanct permission to deeply feel everything she was undergoing she fought her way through the darkest spell of her life and safely out the other side.

Catherine and John had been together for fifteen years when John, suffering Post Traumatic Stress Disorder from the effects of his time fighting during the Vietnam War, took his own life. John was a larger-than-life figure, an English runaway from a brutal childhood of poverty and alcoholism and an Australian Army Officer. John and Catherine were living in the wilds of the Australian Outback when the suicide took place. After this heartbreaking event Catherine was faced with overwhelming grief and left emotionally battered. Having dodged grief once before, she chose to confront her anguish and everything it threw at her, head on. Using tools such as good food, healing therapies and professional counsellors Catherine treated recovery as a tough adventure which brought her into the depths of sadness and loneliness. In time the darkness and despair turned to light as she came to experience extraordinary peace of mind and the joys of living despite the cruel death of the man she loved. Unflinchingly honest and without self-pity, Catherine looks at the hidden aspects of grief and how to manage the strange and unsettling challenges the loss of a loved one provokes. She also portrays with sympathy and candour the devastating impact of post-traumatic stress on a Vietnam veteran long after the war. This is a deeply moving and inspiring story of one person's journey through grief.

This powerful memoir and unflinchingly frank account of the process of recovery through grief is both inspiring and enlightening. The book also examines in detail John's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, the horrific manifestations of it at the heart of his decision to end his own life, and how his wife managed to come through the darkest time possible and re-emerge into the world stronger than ever.

### About the Author

Catherine de Courcy grew up in Dublin, graduated from UCD in 1979 and became a professional librarian. She worked in libraries in Ireland, Papua New Guinea and Australia. She travelled the Australian outback with her husband, John, and wrote several guidebooks. She has an international reputation as a historian of zoos. In 2003, some years after John's death, she returned to Ireland and is now a full-time writer.

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