



Torch (Vintage Contemporaries)

By Cheryl Strayed

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In her debut novel, the bestselling author of *Wild* weaves a searing and luminous tale of a family's grief after unexpected loss.

"Work hard. Do good. Be incredible!" is the advice Teresa Rae Wood shares with the listeners of her local radio show, *Modern Pioneers*, and the advice she strives to live by every day. She has fled a bad marriage and rebuilt a life with her children, Claire and Joshua, and their caring stepfather, Bruce. Their love for each other binds them as a family through the daily struggles of making ends meet. But when they received unexpected news that Teresa, only 38, is dying of cancer, their lives all begin to unravel and drift apart. Strayed's intimate portraits of these fully human characters in a time of crisis show the varying truths of grief, forgiveness, and the beautiful terrors of learning how to keep living.

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Torch (Vintage Contemporaries) By Cheryl Strayed Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A family founders after a mother's death in Strayed's beautifully observed debut. Teresa Rae Wood was a teen mother and an abused wife who escaped to Minnesota, fell in love, raised good kids and started hosting a radio program called *Modern Pioneers*. "Work hard. Do good. Be incredible," Teresa tells her listeners, because that's what she does—until she's diagnosed with cancer and learns she has only months to live. As her loving common-law husband, Bruce, and her children, Claire (a bright, responsible college senior), and Josh, (a brooding 17-year-old), face Teresa's dying and death, Strayed shows how grief can divide people when they need each other the most. Bruce vows to kill himself, but then stumbles into a marriage with his neighbor; Claire drops out of school, cheats on her boyfriend and stops eating; Josh sells drugs and falls in love with a girl he quickly impregnates. The novel, like the family it portrays, loses its center after Teresa's death, as Bruce, Claire and Josh (especially the latter two) push and pull at each other, reaching and only sometimes finding comfort and connection. Strayed's characters are real and lovable, even as they fail themselves and each other; even tertiary players feel fully realized. Though the subject is sad, the novel is not without humor; it shimmers with a humane grace. (*Feb.*)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Strayed's debut novel hits with the weight of unwelcome news and tackles head-on some of the most difficult issues a family can face. Critics, who compare *Torch* to Joan Didion's best-selling memoir *The Year of Magical Thinking*, praise Strayed's attention to language and her ability to render grief—a topic with which she is intimately familiar, see below—through well-drawn, restrained details. Some critics comment that the narrative drags a bit after Teresa's death. Still, Strayed, primarily an essayist before the novel's publication ("Heroin/e," an essay about her own experience with her mother's cancer and the author's subsequent battle with drugs, made its way into the *Best American Essays of 2000*), possesses "a raw, unflinching familiarity with the rhythms of grief" (*Oregonian*).

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From [Booklist](#)

Teresa Rae Wood is famous in her small town of Midden, Minnesota, for hosting *Modern Pioneers*, a local radio program that gives tips on living off the land. At the age of 38, she is diagnosed with a virulent form of cancer and dies within months. Her -common--law husband, Bruce, and her children, 20-year-old Claire and 18-year-old Josh, are left reeling. Bruce abruptly marries his next-door neighbor, Josh becomes heavily involved in dealing methamphetamine, and Claire single-mindedly devotes herself to keeping her mother's memory alive. What they learn about grief over the succeeding months gives each of them the strength to both ask for help and respect each other's vastly different coping methods. First--novelist Strayed shows a deep appreciation for the rhythms of small-town life, capturing the sense of community, the struggle to earn a living, and also the disdain for "city apes." In addition, she discerns within one family's crisis the painful, shifting nature of familial relationships, especially Josh's desire to both escape from and acknowledge his need for his dying mother. *Joanne Wilkinson*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Richardson:

Now a day people who Living in the era wherever everything reachable by connect with the internet and the resources in it can be true or not need people to be aware of each information they get. How individuals to be smart in receiving any information nowadays? Of course the answer then is reading a book. Studying a book can help persons out of this uncertainty Information particularly this Torch (Vintage Contemporaries) book since this book offers you rich facts and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred pct guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

Jeremy Clayton:

The actual book Torch (Vintage Contemporaries) has a lot details on it. So when you read this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was published by the very famous author. The writer makes some research previous to write this book. That book very easy to read you can obtain the point easily after perusing this book.

Aaron Blue:

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