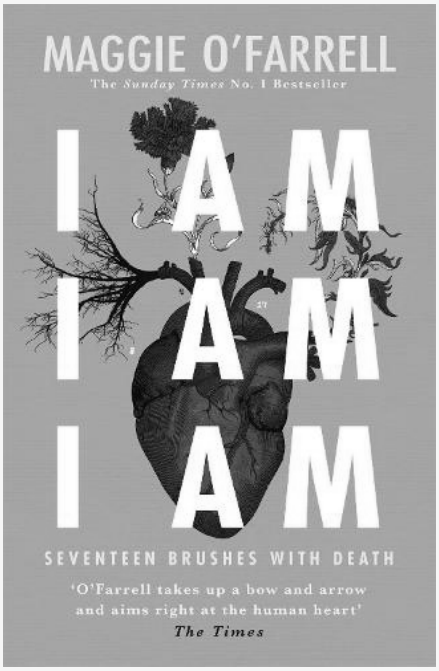
Cover



About this memoir chapter

A memoir doesn't need to follow a structured or progressive narrative, but does follow specific moments in your life. O'Farrell skips time and doesn't tell her stories chronologically.
This memoir in particular focuses on how a person felt about an event rather than the factual details, evoking an emotional reaction from readers.
At this point in the novel, readers would've already read many near-death experiences of O'Farrells. Each chapter is named after a particular body part that would've killed her- such as this chapter, called "Cranium", where a lorry was just a centimetre away from striking a fatal blow to her cranium.
GRAMPS
Genre: Memoir
Register: Informal
Audience: fans of the author, people who want to read memoirs.
Mode: Written
Purpose: To inform others about her experience, to reflect.

About this memoir chapter (cont)

Subject: O'Farrell goes on a walk with an unnamed man by a river, they talk "about their situation", and a dog "appears, out of nowhere". They walk with the dog and it nearly walks in front of a lorry- she yanks the dog back, and she feels the wheel just nearly passing over the top of her skull, "a centimetre" away. They are caught in the backdraft of the lorry but they continue- she says nothing of the near-decapitation to the man she is walking with.

Analysis

Chronological structure but influenced by her **reflective voice.**
Influenced by her knowledge of what happens
Childlike imagery: "They have fallen in love, instantly, dizzyingly"
Syntactic parallelism, asyndeton and anaphora: "There are obstacles. Other people stand in their way- other hearts, other minds, other situations.", "she looked at his, he looked at hers"
Indicative mood "a cottage hospital?" to "-picture-book style." - Vividly describing the setting/moment, this is significant as it romanticises the memory.
Language of injury: "a childhood scar on his abdomen" - sexual undertones continue after this quote, and the language of injury continues later with the truck incident itself. The use of "scar" could also be a **metaphor** for lasting wounds.
Language of consumption: "bite him, like a peach."
Parallelism "unavoidable and yet unconscionable" - reflects their conundrum.
Juxtaposition and ellipsis: "How can we? How can we not? This is a bad idea, this is the best idea" - confliction. Avoiding labelling the sin (affair?).

Analysis

Euphemism: "When they walk on, the dog comes too, darting head on the path, looping back, diving between them, begging for sticks to be selected, tossed, re-thrown. It thrusts itself past their ankles as they continue to talk, it plunges in and out of the undergrowth, it gazes up at them" - euphemism for their love for each other. Energetic, yet unpredictable.
Metaphor: - "thinking only to protect this animal, who has appeared from nowhere, who approaches the world and all it has to offer with such trust" The safety of the dog was worth protecting at the price of her skull.
Colloquial language, listing of euphemisms for death: "that would have been it. Curtains. Kick the bucket. Carked it. End of the line. Lights out. Bitten the dust. Gone the way of all flesh. Given up the ghost." - light-hearted and flippant.
Language of anatomy: "to the muscle and bone nearest his heart" she has thought over the situation many times, and has an understanding of the anatomy.
Nature language: "They walk on along the road and back into the forest where the light is patched and green, where the path is winding, diverging, not always clear. The dog comes too." - the language of nature here is more negative following the event, it's shifted and has focused more on the danger.

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