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Descent into Darkness Lewy Body Dementia

(And talking about it with my companion, Little Bit)

Basil B. Clark and Cynthia L. French

Basil B. Clark did not set out to write a book. During more than 1,400 days and nights caring for his wife, Cora, he began journaling to Little Bit, his rescue ginger cat and quiet companion. Those private notes became an honest record of the exhaustion, confusion, tenderness, mistakes and devotion that can shape life with Lewy body dementia.

This true caregiver memoir follows Cora and Basil from a late-in-life love story through diagnosis, hallucinations, disrupted sleep, falls, difficult decisions, the move to a care center and the grief that followed. Cynthia L. French adds selected insights from her own experience caring for a husband with Lewy body dementia.

The purpose is not to offer a medical formula. It is to help caregivers recognize possible situations, understand that grief and loneliness can begin before death, and feel less alone. It also asks families and care communities to offer specific help before a caregiver reaches the breaking point.

Readers also encounter the hard choices surrounding a care-center transition and the long goodbye that follows. Alongside the fear and fatigue are moments of humor, tenderness, clarity and hope.

*"Love does not always mean having the right answer.
Sometimes it means staying, asking for help, and doing the best
you can."*

A lived caregiver story for memory-care communities

For caregivers, families, support groups, care teams, churches and community partners

VALIDATION

Caregivers can recognize their own exhaustion and grief.

DIGNITY

The person remains more than the diagnosis.

CONVERSATION

Families can discuss practical, specific ways to help.

PARTNER WITH CLARK'S COVE FOR THE RELEASE

Host a caregiver or family conversation
Discuss an author Q&A, reading or local program
Reserve facility, support-group or staff copies
Share release information with families and care teams

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Love, caregiving, and the long goodbye

HOW THE BOOK BEGAN

When exhaustion and second-guessing became difficult to carry, Basil began writing to Little Bit. She listened without judgment, and the notes gave him somewhere to place thoughts he could not always say aloud. After Cora died, he kept that conversational form because it let him speak honestly while protecting her dignity.

The book is not arranged as a neat medical case history. It is a collection of memories, incidents and lessons from a husband learning while living it. It follows changing mobility, sleep disruption, hallucinations, paranoia, accusations, moments of clarity, medication concerns, emergency calls, the care-center transition and the difficult work of living after caregiving.

WHAT READERS MAY RECOGNIZE

- The person with dementia may experience a reality the caregiver cannot correct.
- Grief, guilt and loneliness can begin long before death.
- Simple, specific help can matter more than general offers.
- Caregivers may need permission to rest, ask questions and accept support.
- Love does not always mean having the right answer.

THE LONG GOODBYE

The care-center chapters address adjustment, communication with staff, visits, medication concerns and the recognition that the final stage was approaching. The story continues after Cora's death through paperwork, belongings, guilt, relief, loneliness and the task of learning how to live after years of being responsible for another person's every need. Alongside the pain are moments of humor, tenderness, clarity and hope. The closing reflections consider what remains when the daily urgency ends: memories, unanswered questions, complicated relief and the gradual return of an identity beyond caregiving. Basil offers no simple ending, only an honest invitation to keep living and find meaning in the days that remain.



ABOUT BASIL

Basil is a retired Associate Professor of Speech and Theatre and a decorated Vietnam infantryman. His writing explores war, healing, faith, memory, grief and love. In this book, his central credential is lived experience: more than four and a half years as Cora's sole caregiver.

CYNTHIA L. FRENCH

Cynthia "Cindy" L. French brings personal and professional caregiving experience. She cared for relatives with dementia, including her late husband, who had Lewy body dementia, and worked as a Patient Care Technician supporting clients with various dementias. She has no medical degree or affiliation; her contribution is lived experience. Cindy offers another perspective on Cora: beneath the confusion, Cora remained a woman deserving dignity, while Lewy body dementia may at times have led her to experience events from a younger, more vulnerable point of view. Her reflections deepen compassion for the person living with dementia and the caregiver beside them.

WHY IT MATTERS IN MEMORY CARE

The memoir helps families understand changing realities, recognize a caregiver's burden, and preserve the dignity and personhood of a loved one beyond the diagnosis.

SHARE THIS STORY WITH YOUR MEMORY-CARE COMMUNITY

Descent into Darkness gives families, caregivers and care teams a compassionate, lived-experience starting point for conversations about Lewy body dementia.

Partner with Clark's Cove to display release flyers, share the book with families and support groups, host an author Q&A or reading, or reserve signed and bulk copies for your library, staff and community.

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