

“Nothing is so bad that good can’t come from it” says Mina



Mina Blair

Pic by Hamish Cameron

Books

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Midhurst author Mina Blair shares an empowering spiritual journey in her new book – a book which began with the tragic death of her 12-year-old daughter Francesca.

As Mina says: “We all have the ability to go within ourselves to find hope, courage and strength when we need it.”

Not For The Last Time has been self-published through MatChat® Books, paperback £8.99 and ebook/Kindle £2.99 (www.minablair.com).

Mina, aged 55, said: “It all started with the birth of my second daughter in 1995. I had been concerned about the pregnancy because I contracted chickenpox in the first trimester and was not at all well. Seeking GP advice about the foetus – the danger to intrauterine babies from measles is well known, after all – I was assured it would be OK, the virus wouldn’t cross the placenta and to proceed.

“Well, it did cross over and Francesca was born three weeks early by emergency caesarean with multiple complicated issues. Nobody had seen a baby like this before; she confounded all the paediatric experts.

“We had neither diagnosis nor prognosis as we battled one problem after another. After two years the medics finally agreed with me that it had been the chickenpox but her future remained uncertain. This condition now has a name: congenital varicella syndrome and is listed as a rare disorder.

“In spite of it all, she grew into a funny, charming and loving little girl. As a mother, however, I knew instinctively her body wasn’t viable. Sadly, I was right. Francesca died from respiratory failure a month after her 12th birthday in November 2007.

“*Not For The Last Time* begins with the last day of her life. I spent the 12 years with Francesca bracing myself for the inevitable, not thinking I could bear the unbearable. I couldn’t see past her death, it was simply a black void. That’s

why the loss precipitated a massive spiritual crisis.

“I’m not a religious person – and I was tormented by the classic existential questions: why me? Why her? Where did she go? Where do we all go? Why are we here? And ultimately, who am I?

“The story follows me on my spiritual quest to find the answers, starting with the friendship I develop with the local priest who supported the family so beautifully with preparing for, and getting through, the funeral. With him as my spiritual mentor, I explore medieval European spirituality and enter the world of philosophic thinking about the something-greater-than-yourself. I travel around the globe – to Africa, Asia, Mexico – meeting the people who would offer the gifts of compassion and enlightenment, helping me heal. I get a dog, a spiritual experience in itself! Along the way, I finally find my spiritual home on the yoga mat and in the ancient yogic scriptures of India.

“Ten years after Francesca dies there is a turning point.

I go to Bali to spend a month immersed in yoga teacher training – eat, breathe, sleep yoga basically. It was more for personal development, to be honest, since I had no definitive plans to teach afterwards. In fact, the idea of teaching terrified me! The training challenges me on all levels. It’s very intense, and halfway through I have a cathartic sort of grief breakdown. I come out of this episode knowing I have to write a book and knowing the title. But the spiritual journey doesn’t end there. A couple more challenging growth opportunities come my way that offer more insight. The book ends with my sharing the lessons I’ve learned and concluding that ultimately, nothing is so bad that good can’t come from it. We have a choice in life and we must choose joy. The book is aimed for anyone who has suffered or is suffering from heartbreak and/or hardship of any kind and are struggling to cope or don’t understand why it’s happened to them and feel lost, overwhelmed or confused.”