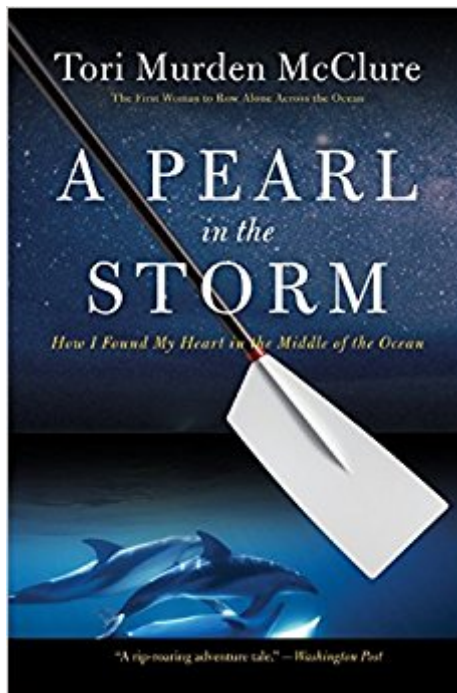




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# A Pearl In The Storm: How I Found My Heart In The Middle Of The Ocean



## Synopsis

In this memoir by the first woman to row solo across the Atlantic Ocean, Tori McClure finds that what she is looking for lies not in a superhuman show of strength, but rather in embracing what it means to be human. "In the end, I know I rowed across the Atlantic to find my heart, but in the beginning, I wasn't aware that it was missing." In June 1998, Tori McClure began rowing across the Atlantic Ocean solo in a twenty-three-foot plywood boat with no motor or sail. Within days she lost all communication with shore but decided to forge ahead -- not knowing that 1998 would turn out to be the worst hurricane season on record in the North Atlantic. When she was nearly killed by a series of violent storms, Tori was forced to signal for help and head home in what felt like disgrace. But then her life changed in unexpected ways. She was hired by Muhammad Ali, who told her she did not want to be known as the woman who "almost" rowed across the Atlantic. And at thirty-five, Tori fell in love. *A Pearl in the Storm* is Tori's thrilling true story of high adventure -- and of her personal quest to discover that embracing her own humanity was more important than superhuman feats.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Two storm-wracked trips across the Atlantic Ocean become voyages of self-discovery for Tori McClure, as she explains in this epic tale of adversity and triumph. McClure details her attempts to become the first woman to row across the Atlantic, interspersed with reflections on challenges she has faced in the past. She recounts her struggles to protect her developmentally disabled brother, Lamar, from abuse by neighborhood children; her time at Harvard; and her

divinity school; and her work with the homeless, all the while describing her " battles through towering waves and fierce storms. Her tiny vessel, the American Pearl, is battered " by winds throughout the journey, forcing McClure to come to terms with her own vulnerability. Throughout it all, she relies on a loyal cadre of friends who help her attain her goals. Yet, for McClure, perhaps the greatest accomplishment is learning to accept her own weaknesses as she submits to the whims of the ocean swells and allows herself to become receptive to the myriad possibilities of life.

--Katherine Boyle --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Tori Murden McClure is one of the most remarkable women I have ever met; her journey across the ocean is equal only to her journey of the heart. This is a story of courage, adventure, and personal discovery that will appeal to women--and men of all ages." (Candice Bergen)"Unlike Hemingway's The Old Man and the Sea, Tori Murden McClure's true story of a woman and the sea and a boat named American Pearl is one of victory. If you want to be inspired, read this book. You won't stop till you've finished." (Sena Jeter Naslund, author of Ahab's Wife)"For those six billion or so of us on planet Earth today who will never row across an ocean, this extraordinary narrative by one fellow human who did so transports us to places beautiful, haunting, daunting, terrifying, and uplifting." (Roy Hoffman, author of the novels Almost Family and Chicken Dreaming Corn)"In this fine book, Tori McClure generously gives us at the same time a wonderfully told adventure story and a moving account of a storm-wracked journey through self-discovery into healing. . . ." (Charles Gaines, author of The Next Valley Over)"The reader of this book encounters a rare spirit whose courage is an inspiration." (Jill Ker Conway, author of The Road from Coorain)

I read this book thinking it would be an interesting adventure story about what it was really like to attempt a solo crossing of the Atlantic ocean -- courage in the presence of doubt, perseverance in the presence of pain, triumph over adversity. While those elements are certainly present, they are buried within a much larger autobiographical story and a thematic tone that comes across as self aggrandizing. The author's self-confidence comes across as arrogance, her knowledge and experience come across as haughty, and her noble intentions come across as pompous. She paints a picture of her personality akin to a steamroller, or perhaps a bulldozer: willing to flatten anything that gets in the way of achieving her objectives in life. The author spends the first 2/3 of the book on her first, failed attempt at crossing the ocean; interwoven in the narrative is a lot of biographical back

story starting at the age of two and continuing through her college years. The vast majority of the background is irrelevant to the story at hand, furthermore, the casual name dropping (in a way that does not advance the story) is just irritating. The romance (it is supposed to be a romance story, after all) is relegated to just a few pages and seems to have been added as an afterthought. In the same fashion, the second, successful, crossing is tacked on to the end of the book with almost no discussion on what worked, or didn't work, the second time around. In fact, I was really hoping for more insight on the second journey, not only the journey itself, but the aftermath and how a highly introverted person handled the inevitable attention that came with it. I was really hoping for more from this book. What was it really like to be all alone in the middle of the ocean with nothing but the dolphins to keep you company? What was it really like to get caught in a hurricane and face your worst fear of abandoning ship and abandoning the journey? How did you overcome the inevitable doubt that must have crept in at some point during the second journey? Overall, it's a pretty good story if you can separate the wheat from the chaff.

I was well-warned by a friend from my book club that she picked this up and couldn't stop reading it. I did the same, including getting three hours of sleep to finish it. This is an incredibly well-written book - I know a little of many of the things Tori writes about but have vociferously recommended this book to four coworkers since this morning, all because different aspects of it would appeal to them. This isn't a book strictly for endurance athletes, rowers, women who did something different with their careers, the well-educated, those who have fallen in love or for those who grew up in challenging circumstances although the author eloquently covers each of these. She also talks about fear, helplessness, bravery, pain, inspiration and the quest for something that most can't understand. It is an incredible tale and well-worth the read.

This is a remarkable story about an individual who has accomplished more in a short life time than most people would even dream of. It is a story of a woman who seemed to be angry at much of the world, and channeled her anger into accomplishment. Unfortunately her anger detracted from the story. Her personal dislike of much of humanity seemed strangely at odds with her Divinity Degree from Harvard. Loved her bravery and strength and the peace she found at sea; it was just too bad she made the reader uncomfortable to be in her presence.

Tori Murden McClure is a wonderful writer and does a fine job telling her own story. In my opinion, however, she tells a bit too much of it. There is a good deal of backstory which I didn't find

appealing or relevant to her journey across the Atlantic. When she was at sea, the story was riveting. Let me amend that statement...it was riveting when she was actually relating the events and her experiences as they happened on the boat. Interspersed throughout the entire book were pages of her reflecting on and telling us her terra firma story. In the middle of a hurricane or just a beautiful day at sea, she constantly interrupts with stories about her brother, her considerable education, her past jobs, her many adventures across the globe like skiing to the South Pole, for example. This was too much and intrusive. Continually stopping the action is very off-putting to readers. I was so tempted to skip over these pages and I'm still not sure why I didn't, except that I wanted to write a fair review. Frankly, you could skip over these vignettes and add to your enjoyment of the book. Most of these sidebar events could have been saved for an actual memoir of an interesting woman. Instead, they seemed smug and conceited at times and did not endear Tori to me at all. I enjoyed the story in spite of her flaying me with her considerable accomplishments.

This story is beautifully written. It's true and that makes it so easy to experience with Tori as she lives through her physical, emotional, spiritual journey and tries again. I found the parts where she's building the boat a bit uninteresting to me so I skimmed those parts, but when Tori was going through the storms and describing what the boat was going through how important it is to understand the boat if one reads the description of building it more carefully. I read the descriptions of boat-building more carefully on her second try.

I have read this as an ebook. I wanted to own a paper copy to give it to others since I felt the book is motivational.

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