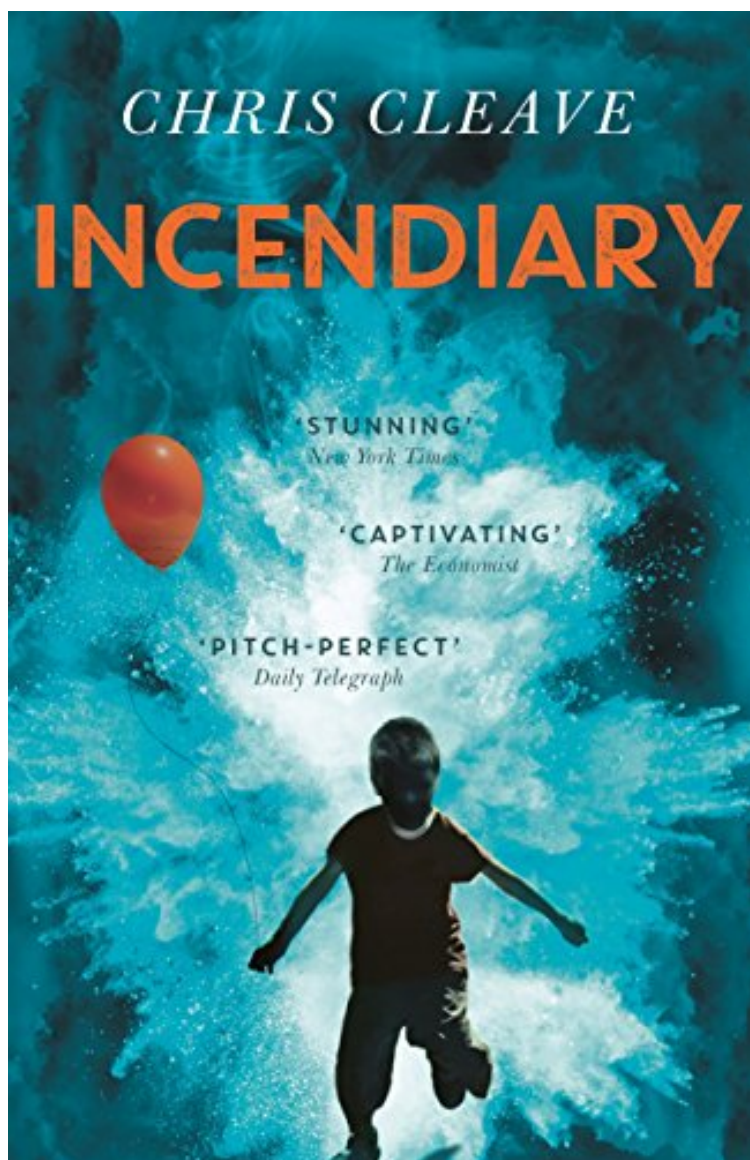


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## Incendiary (English Edition)



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### Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurYou aren't stupid. You know there's no such thing as a perfect mother. Plenty of other books will tell you there is, but this one won't lie to you. I was weak and I cheated and I was punished, but my god I loved my child through all of it. Love means you never break, and it means you're stronger than the things they do to you. I know this is true because I have been through fire, and I am the proof that love survives. I am not a perfect mother but I will tell you the perfect truth, because this is you and me talking.

This is my story.ExtraitDear Osama they want you dead or alive so the terror will stop. Well I wouldn't know about that I mean rock 'n' roll didn't stop when Elvis died on the khazi it just got worse. Next thing you know there was Sonny Cher and Dexys Midnight Runners. I'll come to them later. My point is it's easier to

start these things than to finish them. I suppose you thought of that did you? There's a reward of 25 million dollars on your head but don't lose sleep on my account Osama. I have no information leading to your arrest or capture. I have no information full effing stop. I'm what you'd call an infidel and my husband called working-class. There is a difference you know. But just supposing I did clap eyes on you. Supposing I saw you driving a Nissan Primera down towards Haggerston and grassed you to the old bill. Well. I wouldn't know how to spend 25 million dollars. It's not as if I've got anyone to spend it on since you blew up my husband and my boy. That's my whole point you see. I don't want 25 million dollars Osama I just want you to give it a rest. AM I ALONE? I want to be the last mother in the world who ever has to write you a letter like this. Who ever has to write to you Osama about her dead boy. Now about the writing. The last thing I wrote was N/A on an income support form that wanted NAME OF SPOUSE OR PARTNER. So you see I'll do my best but you'll have to bear with me because I'm not a big writer. I'm going to write to you about the emptiness that was left when you took my boy away. I'm going to write so you can look into my empty life and see what a human boy really is from the shape of the hole he leaves behind. I want you to feel that hole in your heart and stroke it with your hands and cut your fingers on its sharp edges. I am a mother Osama I just want you to love my son. What could be more natural? I know you can love my boy Osama. The Sun says you are an EVIL MONSTER but I don't believe in evil I know it takes 2 to tango. I know you're vexed at the leaders of Western imperialism. Well I'll be writing to them too. As for you I know you'd stop the bombs in a second if I could make you see my son with all your heart for just one moment. I know you would stop making boy-shaped holes in the world. It would make you too sad. So I will do my best with these words Osama. I suppose you can see they don't come natural to me but I hope this letter reaches you anyway. I hope it finds you before the Americans do otherwise I'm going to wish I hadn't bothered aren't I? Well Osama if I'm going to show you my boy I have to start with where he lived and I still do. I live in London England which I agree with you is a bad place in lots of ways but I was born here so what can you do? London looks like a rich place from the outside but we are most of us very poor here. I saw the video you made Osama where you said the West was decadent. Maybe you meant the West End? We aren't all like that. London is a smiling liar his front teeth are very nice but you can smell his back teeth rotten and stinking. My family was never rotten poor we were hard up there's a difference. We were respectable we kept ourselves presentable but it was a struggle I don't mind telling you. We were not the nice front teeth or the rotten back teeth of London and there are millions of us just like that. The middle classes put up web sites about us. If you're interested Osama just put down that Kalashnikov for a second and look up chav pikey ned or townie in Google. Like I say there are millions of us but now there's a lot less than there were of course. I miss them so bad my husband and my boy especially. My husband and my boy and me lived on Barnet Grove which is a road that goes from Bethnal Green to Haggerston. There are 2 kinds of places on Barnet Grove. The first kind are very pricey old terraced houses. The estate agents call them Georgian Gems With Extensive Potential For Conversion To Fully Appointed Executive Flats With Easy Access To The City Of London And Within A Stone's Throw Of The Prestigious Columbia Road Flower Market. The second kind of places are places like ours. They are flats in dirty brick tower blocks they smell of chip fat inside. All the flats in each block are the same except that the front doors don't match on account of they get kicked in as often as they get opened nicely. They built our tower blocks in the fifties. They built them in the gaps where the Georgian Gems had incendiaries dropped on them by Adolf Hitler. Adolf Hitler was the last chap who hated London as much as you do Osama. The Sun calls him the MOST EVIL MAN IN HISTORY and he made the gaping hole in Barnet Grove that they built our tower block in. I suppose it was thanks to him we could afford to live Within A Stone's Throw Of The Prestigious Columbia Road Flower Market so maybe Adolf Hitler was not all bad in the long run. Like I say our flat was in one of those tower blocks. It was a small flat and you could hear the upstairs neighbours on the job. They used to start uh uh uh very soft at first and then louder and louder uh uh oh my god UH and after a bit you could listen as hard as you liked and still not know if you were hearing love or murder. It used to drive my husband crazy but at least our flat was warm and clean and it was ours. It was an ex-council flat which is to say we owned it. Which is to say we didn't have to struggle to pay the rent. We struggled to pay the mortgage each month instead there is a difference and that difference is called EMPOWERMENT. I didn't work I looked after our boy. My husband's wages paid the mortgage and not much else so by the end of the month things were always a bit wobbly. My husband was a copper and he wasn't just any old copper he was in bomb disposal. You might reckon bomb disposal wages would of stretched a bit further Osama but you'd reckon wrong if you didn't reckon with the horses the dogs the cockfights in the back room of the Nelson's Head and whether it was

going to be a white Christmas. My husband was the sort of bloke who'd take a punt on anything so thank god he had a better track record with bombs than the 11:31 at Doncaster. When we were behind on the bills I used to get teeth-chattering scared of the bailiffs Osama. Whenever I could squeeze a fiver out of the shopping money I used to stash it under the carpet just in case my husband blew everything one day and they chucked us out on our ear. There was never more than a month of mortgage under the rug so we were always less than 31 days away from the street or only 28 days if my husband blew the lot in February which sod's law he would. But I couldn't hold his flutters against him on account of he needed a thing to take his mind off the nerves and his thing was no worse than mine Osama I'll tell you about my thing in a minute. In bomb disposal the call can come at any time of the day or night and for my husband it often did. If the call came in the evening we would be sitting in front of the telly. Not saying much. Just sitting there with plates on our knees eating chicken kiev. They were Findus they were more or less okay they were always his favourite.

Anyway the telly would be on and we'd probably be watching Top Gear. My husband knew a lot about motors. We never could afford a new motor ourselves but my husband knew how to pick a good secondhand one. We mostly had Vauxhall Astras they never let us down. They used to sell off the old police Astras you see. They'd give them a respray but if the light was right you could always see POLICE showing out from under the paint job. I suppose a thing can never really change its nature Osama. Anyway we'd be watching Top Gear and the phone would go and my husband would put his plate down on the sofa and take the phone next door. He wasn't supposed to tell me anything about the job but when he came back through the lounge there was one sure way to tell if it was serious. They always knew which were the real bombs and which were most probably just hoaxes. If it was a hoax my husband would sit back down on the sofa and gobble the rest of his chicken kiev before he left the flat. It took him only 30 secs but he never did that if it was serious. When it was serious he just picked up his jacket and walked straight out. When it was serious I used to wait up for him. Our boy would be asleep so there was only the telly to take my mind off things. Not that it ever would of course. After Top Gear there was Holby City and then it would be Newsnight. Holby made you nervous about death and chip pan fires and Newsnight made you nervous about life and money so between the both of them they could get you in a right state and leave you wondering why you bothered with the licence fee. But I had to keep the telly on in case anything happened and there was a news flash. So I used to just sit there Osama watching the telly and hoping it would stay boring. When your husband works in bomb disposal you want the whole world to stay that way. Nothing ever happening. Trust me you want a world run by Richard Judy. At night I always watched the BBC. I never watched the other side because I couldn't stand the adverts. A woman with nice hair telling how this or that shampoo stops split ends. Well. It made me feel a bit funny when I was waiting to see if my husband had got himself blown up. It made me feel quite poorly actually. There's a lot of bombs in London these days Osama on account of if you've got a message for the nation then it's actually quite hard to get on Richard Judy so it's easier just to stick a few old nails and bolts into a Nike bag of fertiliser. Half the poor lonely sods in town are making a bomb these days Osama I hope you're proud of yourself. The coppers make 4 or 5 of them safe every week and ano...From Publishers Weekly An al-Qaeda bomb attack on a London soccer match provides the tragicomic donne of former Daily Telegraph journalist Cleave's impressive multilayered debut: a novel-length letter from an enraged mother to Osama bin Laden. Living hand to mouth in London's East End, the unnamed mother's life is shattered when her policeman husband (part of a bomb disposal unit) and four-year-old son are killed in the stadium stands. Complicating matters: our narrator witnesses the event on TV, while in the throes of passion with her lover, journalist Jasper Black. The full story of that day comes out piecemeal, among rants and ruminations, complete with the widow's shell-shocked sifting of the stadium's human carnage. London goes on high terror alert; the narrator downs Valium and gin and clutches her son's stuffed rabbit. After a suicide attempt, she finds solace with married police superintendent Terrence Butcher and in volunteer work. When the bomb scares escalate, actions by Jasper and his girlfriend Petra become the widow's undoing. The whole is nicely done, as the protagonist's headlong sentences mimic intelligent illiteracy with accuracy, and her despairingly acidic responses to events and media versions of them ring true. But the working-class London slang permeates the book to a distracting degree. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.