

# Chris Cleave

## Quotes

*Thinking, Mean, Stories, War, Writing, Girl, World, People, Clouds, Two, Men,  
Principles, Mind, Dying, Life Is, Brave, Children, Heart, Athlete, Forgiving*

So when I say that I am a refugee, you must understand that there is no refuge.

~Chris Cleave

A scar is never ugly. That is what the scar makers want us to think. A scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, I survived.

~Chris Cleave

Looking after a very sick child was the Olympics of parenting.

~Chris Cleave

A scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, I survived.

~Chris Cleave

At some point you just have to turn around and face your life head on.

~Chris Cleave

I'm telling you, trouble is like the ocean. It covers two thirds of the world.

~Chris Cleave

Our own personal brand of courage - in relationships, in conflict, in our principles - is as unique as our fingerprints.

~Chris Cleave

I could not stop talking because now I had started my story, it wanted to be finished. We cannot choose where to start and stop. Our stories are the tellers of us.

~Chris Cleave

It is certainly impossible to imagine forgiving the enemy while their animus remains undefeated.

~Chris Cleave

We must see all scars as beauty. Okay? This will be our secret. Because take it from me, a scar does not form on the dying. A scar means, 'I survived'.

~Chris Cleave

We were exiles from reality that summer. We were refugees from ourselves.

~Chris Cleave

At this point in time the war [ WWII] is close enough to still feel hotly personal to a writer, yet far enough away so that jingoism and heroics are no longer required.

~Chris Cleave

Yet war doesn't end with armistice, it only ends with forgiveness and reconciliation.

~Chris Cleave

If your face is swollen from the severe beatings of life, smile and pretend to be a fat man.

~Chris Cleave

Life is extremely short and you cannot dance to current affairs.

~Chris Cleave

My paternal grandmother drove ambulances during the regional Blitz, in Birmingham.

~Chris Cleave

I like to push characters to extremes so they have to make really tough decisions and there is no life more extreme than that of an athlete.

~Chris Cleave

The ways in which we are able to express courage also depend on the

hand life deals us.

~Chris Cleave

I was carrying two cargoes. Yes, one of them was horror, but the other one was hope.

~Chris Cleave

It was the month of May and there was warm sunshine dripping through the holes between the clouds, like the sky was a broken blue bowl and a child was trying to keep honey in it.

~Chris Cleave

Our stories are the tellers of us.

~Chris Cleave

We cannot choose where to start and stop. Our stories are the tellers of us.

~Chris Cleave

It was hard not to be full of hope

~Chris Cleave

I am a woman built upon the wreckage of myself.

~Chris Cleave

We leave it up to books and movies to talk about WWII on our behalf.

~Chris Cleave

That is how we lived, happily and without hope. I was very young then, and I did not miss having a future because I did not know I was entitled to one.

~Chris Cleave

I planned how I would kill myself in the time of Churchill (stand under

bombs), Victoria (throw myself under a horse), and Henry the Eighth (marry Henry the Eighth)- Little Bee

~Chris Cleave

I think all of us are intrigued to imagine what we as individuals would become, if we were ever tested as hard as that golden generation was.

~Chris Cleave

To be well in your mind you have first to be free.

~Chris Cleave

Life is savagely unfair. It ignores our deep-seated convictions and places a disproportionate emphasis on the decisions we make in split seconds.

~Chris Cleave

There's what people say, and there's what people mean, and I like to explore the difference between the two.

~Chris Cleave

I think that the relationship between two top-level athletes who are rivals is one of the most fascinating human relationships to explore. It's always one atom away from being a tragedy.

~Chris Cleave

[My maternal grandmother ] was a teacher in London and elsewhere during the war, although the children she taught were not the "lost children" who feature in the novel - those come from my research.

~Chris Cleave

Studying psychology is fun because you're always looking for the same things I think a writer should be looking for, which is the story behind the story.

~Chris Cleave

The Daily Mail can't say 'asylum-seeker' without saying 'foreign criminal' in the same sentence. I'm sure it's practically editorial policy.

~Chris Cleave

I think, in common with a lot of novelists, I wasn't the most athletic guy at school.

~Chris Cleave

The future looks like gasoline. . . . crude oil . . . is the future before it has been refined. It is like a dream of the future, really, and like any dream it ends with a rude awakening.

~Chris Cleave

I'm a much better writer for being a father.

~Chris Cleave

I'm really interested in people's decisions.

~Chris Cleave

We don't know our hearts until life puts us to the test, and WWII fascinates because it was the last time everyone was simultaneously pushed to their limit.

~Chris Cleave

I'm always determined that as a novelist I'm going to go out there and research my characters very thoroughly before I start writing.

~Chris Cleave

WWII was, without exaggeration, the biggest event in all of human history, and it is still within living memory.

~Chris Cleave

That is the trouble with happiness-all of it is built on top of something that men want.

~Chris Cleave

I'm not happy with just repeating myself.

~Chris Cleave

And thus love makes fools of us all.

~Chris Cleave

We must constantly dare ourselves in the small things, until courage becomes a habit of mind that will serve us when we are unexpectedly tested.

~Chris Cleave

Still shaking, in the pew, I understood that it isn't the dead we cry for. We cry for ourselves, and I didn't deserve my own pity.

~Chris Cleave

Sometimes we don't notice that someone is being brave, because they are only doing something that seems quite easy for us.

~Chris Cleave

I write in the novel's afterword that our recent wars "finish not with victory or defeat but with a calendar draw-down date and a presumption that we shall never be reconciled with the enemy".

~Chris Cleave

You travel here and you travel there, trying to get out from under the cloud, and nothing works, and then one day you realize you've been carrying the weather around with you.

~Chris Cleave

Things that we have to really dare ourselves to do come quite naturally to others.

~Chris Cleave

I do think it is harder to acknowledge our strengths, or to forgive ourselves and each other for our shortcomings, when there has not been a result we can all agree on.

~Chris Cleave

There was no quick grief for Andrew because he had been so slowly lost. First from my heart, then from my mind, and only finally from my life.

~Chris Cleave

The only bad days as a writer are the ones when you are too cowardly or too lazy to sit down at the keyboard and give it everything you have.

~Chris Cleave

It is easier for a rich person to act on their principles than it is for someone with fewer choices (which is why it is all the more disappointing when a wealthy person plays to the crowd).

~Chris Cleave

Nobody has the time to sit down and explain the first world from first principles.

~Chris Cleave

Sad words are just another beauty. A sad story means, this storyteller is alive

~Chris Cleave

This is the forked tongue of grief again. It whispers in one ear: return to what you once loved best, and in the other ear it whispers, move on.

~Chris Cleave

Something I am now convinced of, after researching *Everyone Brave*, is that none of us is born courageous in all respects.

~Chris Cleave



Horror in your country is something you take a dose of to remind yourself that you are not suffering from it.

~Chris Cleave

We're often told that we live in a globalized world, and we talk about it all the time, but people don't stop to think about what it means.

~Chris Cleave

I think bravery means a different thing to everyone.

~Chris Cleave

This thing with being lovers, it isn't like being married.

~Chris Cleave

Courage is a muscle that develops through use. It's no use waiting for some inner fire to conveniently become apparent at the moment of crisis - that's cartoon stuff.

~Chris Cleave

In a few breaths' time I will speak some sad words to you. But you must hear them the same way we have agreed to see scars now. Sad words are just another beauty.

~Chris Cleave

In my world death will come chasing. In your world it will start whispering in your ear to destroy yourself. I know this because it started whispering to me when I was in the detention center.

~Chris Cleave

If I can't write it would be as if I died.

~Chris Cleave

My whole life is my work.

~Chris Cleave

However long the moon disappears, someday it must shine again.

~Chris Cleave

People wonder how they are ever going to change their lives, but really it is frighteningly easy.

~Chris Cleave

I know that the hopes of this whole human world can fit inside one soul.

~Chris Cleave

Andrew had a gift for deepening the incision he began.

~Chris Cleave

Everyone carries the weight of WWII with them in their recent family history, and yet it is rarely spoken about within families, because veterans and survivors don't tend to talk.

~Chris Cleave

If I could not smile, I think my situation would be even more serious.

~Chris Cleave

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