



No One Tells You This

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If the story doesn't end with marriage or a child, what then?

This question plagued Glynnis MacNicol on the eve of her 40th birthday. Despite a successful career as a writer, and an exciting life in New York City, Glynnis was constantly reminded she had neither of the things the world expected of a woman her age: a partner or a baby. She knew she was supposed to feel bad about this. After all, single women and those without children are often seen as objects of pity, relegated to the sidelines, or indulgent spoiled creatures who think only of themselves.

Glynnis refused to be cast into either of those roles and yet the question remained: *What now?* There was no good blueprint for how to be a woman alone in the world. She concluded it was time to create one.

Over the course of her fortieth year, which this memoir chronicles, Glynnis embarks on a revealing journey of self-discovery that continually contradicts everything she'd been led to expect. Through the trials of family illness and turmoil, and the thrills of far-flung travel and adventures with men, young and old (and sometimes wearing cowboy hats), she is forced to wrestle with her biggest hopes and fears about love, death, sex, friendship, and loneliness. In doing so, she discovers that holding the power to determine her own fate requires a resilience and courage that no one talks about, and is more rewarding than anyone imagines.

Intimate and timely, *No One Tells You This* is a fearless reckoning with modern womanhood and an exhilarating adventure that will resonate with anyone determined to live by their own rules.

No One Tells You This Details

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From Reader Review No One Tells You This for online ebook

Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

Glynnis MacNicol was about to turn 40, and all-of-sudden, she began to question her life's purpose. Up to that point, she'd had it all in her mind- a successful career and an exciting life. But should she want more? Should she want what society says every 40 year old woman should have?

This memoir chronicles MacNicol's 40th year, as she takes a deeply personal journey of self-discovery. It's a tough year for her emotionally, she has an ill family member, and she has to walk through many highs and lows.

Ultimately, what she discovers about being the master of her own fate is positively empowering. I was grateful for the brave and open way she told her story. No One Tells You This is insightful, bold, and thoughtful. Recommended for fans of memoirs, especially for those that challenge traditional social mores.

Thank you to Glynnis MacNicol, Simon Schuster, and Netgalley for the complimentary copy.

Jeanette says

No rating. This book was not for me. A mother of 6 asked me to read this with a snicker. Wait until I see her next week!

When I have had repeated jaw surgeries (minor and very troublesome birth defect), my largest trouble has been my HUMONGOUS gag reflex. It wasn't tested half as much, not even after 4 decades of doing a "repeat" fix, as the beginning of this book. General anesthesia would have been welcome. Surgery and book. Both. It's probably worthwhile and gets better with context, Glynnis's tale? From the ratings, I'm sure it does. But not by/for my time.

Honestly, please forgive me- but I'm Sicilian in culture and nuance. Most probably incompatible with making your own Mother's death after a terrible and long, long illness (in which you were not present) a focus for your own self-centered beginning to a memoir. Because it's all about you and your grief, and your "importance".

I did get two pages past that, and then hit something even worse.

Glad I didn't live in this "youth" (40 is YOUNG) era's cognitions. Super glad.

Caroline says

5 stars

Finally, the kind of smart, feminist, nostalgic, narrative-driven memoir I was looking for! I **thoroughly** enjoyed this. I can't even remember what fortuitous podcast/article/random Twitter thread brought me to

learn about this book, but I bought it a couple days after its publication, and I'm so glad to have had this perfect summer read when I did. Do you ever think about things that way--like, what if I hadn't heard about this book when I did, and never did end up learning about it because the buzz died away? I'm sure I've missed out on so many great books because of that unavoidable phenomenon. There are simply too many books and too little time, alas. But back to this wonderful nonfiction treat!

Leave any expectations about what a memoir about being single and childless at 40 should contain at the door; Canadian-born writer Glynnis MacNicol treats the subject with a refreshing amount of nuance and open-mindedness that I haven't seen in other examples of the genre. She avoids the kind of reflexive self-defense you would expect and instead proffers examples of both the good and the bad aspects (and the gray area in-between) of being "alone" at 40. Rather than rating different life choices on a scale, she demonstrates that what really matters is that you make the right choice for *you*, not what you feel you must do based on societal expectations or family pressures. There's no wrong way to live when it comes to deciding on whether to pursue marriage and/or raising children.

MacNicol comes to these conclusions after embarking on a year-long journey of self-discovery the day she turns 40. She braces herself for a year of loneliness but soon finds herself more busy and in-demand than ever--just not necessarily in a romantic sense. She hurdles several life challenges, including the failing health and eventual death of her mother, the birth of her second nephew while her sister and brother-in-law are separated, and the marriages and first births of her closest friends. As she prioritizes being there for her family and friends, romance takes a bit of a back seat (besides a fun and flirty encounter with an Icelandic tour guide and a Tinder date with a deceptively young-looking 60-year-old).

MacNicol ruminates on the importance and value of lifelong friendships and argues that in some ways they can "fill" the role of a life partner. I say "fill" because, as the author believes, there isn't *really* a hole to fill--some people are content with being single. On that note, at one point the author decides to move into the upstairs apartment of her friend's house. "That [hole] was now filled, for the most part, in one way or another. Not the way I'd ever thought it would be, but is anything?" I found this section really moving because it made me think of the lifelong friends I have, and how any time spent with them feels like coming home in a sense.

MacNicol's relationship with her mother plays a big role in the book. Her mother has Parkinson's and quickly develops Dementia as well, and MacNicol feels like she is losing her mother before her actual death--what she describes as the "long goodbye." She looks back on the life decisions her mother made, and notes ironically that her mother had done everything she could to not die alone, but because her disease makes her unable to recognize her family, she might as well be alone. I appreciated how MacNicol makes clear that she didn't want to be like her mom, but still loved and respected her and learned a lot from her. The parts about her mother were some of the most moving.

The question of motherhood inevitably comes up, and MacNicol handles it with aplomb. She thinks about it even more while she is in her Canadian hometown, helping her sister with her children after the birth of her new nephew. She also has many conversations about it with friends back in New York so that the reader gets every perspective possible. Many of her friends who have children tell her that she's lucky to still be independent and that they didn't feel like they had been properly warned about how hard motherhood would be. Other friends who are childless like MacNicol but who want to have children push back against that kind of negativity, noting how hard it is to hear such things when they are trying to become pregnant and keep a positive attitude. So basically, there's no one correct attitude to have concerning kids and motherhood.

There are also some great subtly feminist moments and thoughts in the book. I love when MacNicol pointed

out that Hemingway was able to be so adventurous because he always had a wife to make his life easier and clear the way for his trips and writing. She observes that thanks to the generosity and attention of her friends, she is similarly blessed. "I was the other woman in their lives, and together they combined to make the perfect husband in mine." Such an unconventional but accurate idea! At the same time as MacNicol is pretty overtly feminist in her life and ideals, she doesn't shame other people who have more traditional views (insofar as they only apply them to themselves, of course).

MacNicol's descriptions of her travels were entertaining and thought-provoking. The final trip section (where she drives cross-country with her friend who is moving, and they take an extended pit stop at a dude ranch in Wyoming) was especially great. It inspires her into a leap of self-confidence that really pays off.

On a minor note, I was fascinated by MacNicol's perspective on healthcare, since she is someone born in Canada but living underinsured in New York (I say underinsured because at one point she pays an exorbitant cost for medicated eyedrops because her insurance doesn't cover prescriptions). Speaking as a liberal here, I felt kind of validated because while she acknowledges her frustration at having to be on a waiting list to get her mother into a senior care home, she always reminds herself that it would be so much worse if her family was uninsured in the US. So that frequent argument we hear from the right that "Canadians don't like their socialized healthcare" is sometimes true... but not the full picture. But this is not a politics review, so I'll move on. Just something I found interesting, in addition to all the other little moments of Canadiana.

I feel somehow like I'm leaving things out in this review, but only because MacNicol covers so much ground so effortlessly. I loved how smoothly and cohesively the narrative played out--one thing that has stopped me from fully enjoying memoirs in the past is the "essay-style" some memoirists employ. I much prefer this kind of chronological story form. I felt a strong connection to the author by the end of the book.

I strongly recommend this book to anyone who enjoys memoirs about family, gender, and friendship, and who appreciates narration with a frank but humorous voice. I actually was brought to tears a couple times (most notably during the epilogue), so if emotion is your jam, look forward to that too :P.

This is a book I plan to revisit again in the future, especially in a little over a decade as I approach 40 myself. I will also look forward to reading more from MacNicol in the future!

Ariel ? says

"No one told me about the joy!" - Glynnis MacNicol's explanation of what no one told her about being single and childless in her 40s on the Call Your Girlfriend Summer Books 2018 podcast episode. No one told her about the joy, freedom, or stability. I knew instantly I needed to read her book. I don't explicitly plan on being single in my 40s, but I will probably be childless, and if my present-day choices are any indication of my romantic future, I will shirk the institution of marriage for something more open and less defined. MacNicol bemoaned that there were not many stories like hers made available for public consumption, and she's right. There are so few women like her I can think to look to for an indication of what my future might hold. I constantly thought about my women's studies graduate program advisors while reading; two unmarried women in a sea of wedding rings and hyphenated last names. Although I'm only 25, I'm from a tiny town in Oklahoma, and I currently live in Texas. Plenty of my friends have been in significant long-term relationships (many punctuated by extravagant parties and legal definitions), or are on their way down the aisle already. Even without marriage, not many of my friends are ever single for a period lasting longer than a month. Lesbians may not bring a u-haul to the second date, but they do bring it to the two-month

anniversary. For many of my friends, they seem happy. Even the ones with earth-shattering heartbreaks every six or so months, they insist on letting Facebook/Instagram/Twitter/Tumblr know that they're the happiest they've ever been with their newest partner several weeks later. The first of my circle of local lesbian friends just had their first baby, and plenty of others have made it clear that sperm donors and IVF procedures are not too far down the road. What I'm saying is, even though MacNicol is a straight woman in her early 40s, and I am a lesbian in my mid-twenties, I could relate to a lot of what she wrote. I wondered how much of what she described would be my life in the next 20 or so years. Would friends come over to my hip apartment and seethe with envy? Would they complain to me about their spouses and children one moment and try to explain how marriage and parenthood were indescribable blessings the next? Would a world of travel and financial freedom unfold before me, so much that I would feel overwhelmed by the possibility of it all? Would my hitched friends describe my lifestyle as "single lady fun time" in group texts about weekend brunch plans despite my potentially overwhelming responsibilities to my chosen family? Would my "chosen family" see their connection to me as expendable while I was looking upon it as one of the most meaningful connections in my life (speaking as an unmarried, childless woman and also as a woman who has had to cut ties with her abusive parents)? When MacNicol wrote, "The obligations of friendship are unwritten," after feeling guilty for wanting to ask a friend to accompany her to a funeral, it hit me in the stomach. I realize it may be silly to be already worrying about how my life might look in 15-20 years, but I'm not *worrying* exactly, just speculating. Marveling about the possibilities stretched out before me.

P.S.

I'm so glad MacNicol didn't make men a significant part of her story. Unlike similarly-marketed books (*cough* *What I Was Doing While You Were Breeding* *cough*), MacNicol didn't wait to write about her adventures until some man came into her life to show readers she had finally found meaning or a happily ever after. She didn't even make her dating life a central part of the text. I felt this made her story much easier to relate to for me, personally. She's the cool, independent, self-actualized aunt I hope to be someday.

Valerity (Val) says

Not every woman is meant for couplehood, marriage, babies and PTA. And not every woman grows up wanting a life that includes all of those things. On the cusp of turning 40, the author has been thinking about her options and wondering why she isn't more panicked about being in a relationship or her biological clock ticking down. With her mother going through serious health problems and her sister's marriage experiencing a breakup as she's about to have her 3rd child, it seems like things are falling apart around her in the family. When she's called on to step in and help out, it gives her even more to think about. She begins to wonder if there even are any happy endings.

This book grew on me as I read it, kind of a mix of a midlife angst, and being single at age 40. Then there's also the major angle of her mom's illness, some very serious issues that she deals with, talking about her wonderful friends and her enjoyment in her job writing, and ability to travel and have adventures. Lots of food for thought in several areas and an enjoyable memoir of a Canadian writer living in NYC who travels. My thanks for the advance digital copy that was provided by NetGalley and author Glynnis MacNicol for my fair review.

Simon & Schuster

Published: July 10, 2018

Corinna Fabre says

I'm not even sure where to begin reviewing *No One Tells You This*. This book is breathtaking and poignant to the point of surreal. Glynnis leads by example: by taking readers through her trials, tribulations and moments of peace as partners in her journey, she imparts the kind of wisdom that can't be achieved by smacking you over the head with proselytization, but instead flows from a deep well of empathy and experience.

Her writing is expert and never crossing the line into glib or saccharine, which is so easy to do in this genre. I feel like I'm writing about this as if it's some sacred tome but, to me, this is a near-perfect example of what writing in this arena can be.

Thomas says

I love this courageous, gentle, thoughtful memoir. Glynnis MacNicol writes about her 40th year, in which she finds herself without a romantic partner or kids. Determined to avoid the stories and stereotypes so often told about single, childless women (e.g., objects of pity, selfish and spoiled creatures, invisible humans), she sets out to create a new, more empowered narrative. She embarks on a journey of self-discovery and connecting with others that entails family illness and struggle, travels to foreign countries and encounters with men, and embracing old friendships filled with support and shared history. Within this year, MacNicol has numerous insights about love, loneliness, meaning in life, and more, all while recognizing that taking ownership of her choices and her destiny brings about a radical fulfillment outside the confines of a conventional life.

As someone who has worried about not finding a husband while also enjoying his life without a boyfriend or potential husband, I related so much to MacNicol's memoir. I appreciate her strength and thoughtfulness in *No One Tells You This*. She details her process of coming to cherish her independence and her deep relationship with herself as a single woman without kids, while also honoring how she has sometimes wished for a husband and/or kids to fill the voids of loneliness. She approaches various relevant topics with perceptiveness and warmth, including how we extol the virtues of kids and romance on social media and leave out the negatives, the immense pleasure and depth of friendship despite its precariousness, the joy of mobility as an untethered person, her privilege as a white woman, and more. I feel like MacNicol put her whole heart into this book and it shows, through her personal epiphanies as well as the quiet, more ordinary moments she shares, like driving her sister's kids to school. A quote about friendship I loved, as she reflects on one of her closest friends getting married.

"I wasn't envious of Mauri. If anything, I was envious of our past lives together, and I was mourning a life I was losing. The resentment, I'd realized, was rooted in the fact that I never had any control over this upending of my life. It had never occurred to me that I was allowed to do anything but silently accept it. The fact that no one acknowledged that I had anything to be upset about made it all that much worse. It was hard work to root yourself so deeply in life that you could still love people and rely on them, knowing at any point they could make decisions that would leave you scrambling to find solid ground again. This was the better or worse of friendship, undeclared. What I wanted was for there to exist some way for me to say 'I'm happy and

sad and not jealous' all at the same time, and also 'This is a loss and is still beautiful.' Maybe that was the wedding toast. 'We are really the ones giving you way. And it's hard. And I will miss our life. And I am still so happy for your happiness. And so proud of you.'"

MacNicol does a fantastic job integrating her journey toward contentment in independence with her caretaking of her mother who is dying from Parkinson's and Dementia. In the hands of a less skilled writer, these two seemingly disparate life threads may have joined together in an awkward, or at worst, insensitive way. But MacNicol honors the legacy of her mother's life with beautiful prose while still commenting on how she herself wants and has created a different life. She further dispels stereotypes of single, childless women by showing how deeply and lovingly she cared for her mother toward her life's end, which reminded me of my own grandmother's passing and made my heart hurt in the best possible way. MacNicol's vulnerability and quiet yet compelling portrayal of raw emotion, ranging from grief to loneliness to confidence and self-fulfillment, all contributed to this my five-star rating of this memoir. I want to share one more quote, about not having kids and living in the moment:

"I also knew without a doubt that the joy of my life was rooted in my ability to move when I wanted and how. I valued that ability to be in motion more than anything. I could hear the arguments in my head, the return of the magazine voices: 'You're going to regret this in ten years.' 'You don't know what you're missing.' Of course, I might regret it. I knew that. there were an endless number of things about my life I might end up regretting. Some I already did. But it seemed to me that going through life making decisions on what I might possibly feel in a future that may or may not come about was a bad way to live. I wasn't going to have a baby as an insurance policy against some future remorse I couldn't yet imagine. I had more respect for myself than that. The truth was, no one knows what they're missing in the end. You can only live your own life, and do your best with the outcome when you roll the dice."

Overall, a wonderful memoir I would recommend to anyone who has ever questioned the fullness of their life, or who has decided to live a life outside of society's traditional paths. While I feel that MacNicol could have gone a little deeper with some of the feminist (or even somewhat queer) ideas in the memoir, like further interrogating how society pressures women and feminine people to marry and have kids, I can see why she chose to keep the book closer to her own experience. *No One Tells You This* affirms the importance of self-determination in creating a life worth living. Thanks to MacNicol, I feel once again so excited to take ownership of my life, no man or child necessary.

Jana says

Five stars not enough. I loved every word of this book and I am evangelizing about it to anyone who will listen. It's not long, but I savored it over several days because I just didn't want it to end. The story of the author's 40th year weaves together her struggles to be a long-distance caregiver to her dying mother and maintain her relationships with her father and sister (while her sister has a baby in the midst of this), all while coming to terms with her happiness and independence as a single, childless woman in a big city during a milestone year. I loved how she described her friends - clearly chosen family - including the importance of those close relationships, and how hard she had to work at maintaining her friendships. Adult friendships are work and when I was single, I had to do even more work so as not to be resentful at doing a disproportionate amount of maintenance. Now that I'm getting ready to be a parent, I'll think about this book often and make sure I keep putting in the work to keep my chosen family close.

I could go on and on, but will end by saying that the anecdote about lying on the couch on Thanksgiving in

particular spoke to me deeply, and I will think of it during every holiday for at least the next year.

Booksandchinooks (Laurie) says

Thank you to Simon&Schuster Canada for a free copy of this book for an honest review. This is a very engaging memoir by the author as she comes to some revelations as to the direction her life is going. Glynnis is celebrating her 40th birthday, alone, as the book begins. She lives a very busy life in NYC but has never found 'the one' or had children. As she contemplates this she has to come to terms with whether her life, as it is, is enough or if she should be trying harder to find a partner or to become a single mother. She is also very busy as a part time caretaker for her mother who has an all consuming fatal illness. Glynnis flies back and forth to Toronto, her hometown, to assist with her mom and to help her recently separated sister as she has her third child. The author leads a very fulfilling life and she has to decide whether this is enough or if she will have regrets going forward by not following the traditional route of being a wife and mother. The writing is great and the book kept my interest throughout. It is compelling to see what decisions Glynnis makes about what her life will look like after age 40 and beyond.

Lydia says

This memoir isn't just for single ladies- it's for all of us who feel like life is passing us by and we can't see or fathom where the time has gone. It's for those trapped in memories of childhood and times past, feeling as though we are still living in those moments. It's also a memoir for anyone who has watched an older woman in their life who they loved deeply, become lost inside herself because of something beyond her control. Loved this book a whole lot- I don't hand out 5 star reviews very often!

Shereen Lee says

An cool and eccentric story about nostalgia and aging. Would recommend a read if this is a genre you're already interested in, but since I'm not that emotionally invested in memoirs I just found this okay.

Michelle says

No One Tells You This-- is a debut memoir that highlights life of a unmarried single woman without the possibility of a socially expected life that includes a husband and family. Glynnis MacNicol is a full-time writer and co-founder of The List. Her award winning writing has been featured in numerous notable publications including the NYT, The Guardian and Forbes, she lives in NYC.

As a dutiful daughter and sister with too many friends to count, Glynnis led the extremely busy life of a professional woman. Soon after her arrival to help her sister care for her niece and nephew following pregnancy and the birth of a new baby, she flew to Toronto to check on her parents. It was readily determined that Glynnis mother would require long term nursing care. Fortunately in Canada, this kind of nursing care was available to citizens-- without the extremely complicated and costly process of dealing with the U.S. Medicare system and spend-down requirement. About a year later, Glynnis returned to

Toronto to sell her parent's home, and visit her mother at her nursing care facility. Glynnis father was initially involved in the care of his wife-- until he wasn't. Curiously, there was no further mention of him in the book.

On a writing assignment, Glynnis flew to Iceland, where her extraordinary trip and writing abilities were showcased. In Iceland, the atmosphere shifted and bubbled constantly, fueled by geo-thermal volcanic energy. Independent farmers built and operated their own mini power stations, bread was left in covered pots marked with small flags and baked on the beach.

On a glacial river raft tour, their vessel "careened wildly" down the rapids. The Australian women placed in the back of the boat, were drenched numerous times, cried and begged to return. At the front of the boat, their tour guide held Glynnis ever so tight (knowing she was single) hoping to get her email address to stay in touch.

In NYC, where Glynnis had lived for years, she moved into a rare apartment vacancy upstairs from one of her best friends. The dating apps were fun to chat with a variety of guys. Glynnis never felt like the stereotypical woman her age: supposedly needy, desperate, seeking a committed relationship to have a baby. A past relationship with a man she referred to as "646" left her wary and hesitant to reenter the dating pool. Extracting herself from what little comfort she had with 646 wasn't easy as she hoped it would be. When Glynnis decided to drive cross country with a friend to San Francisco, a small Wyoming working ranch they visited opened up another world for her: she and her friend loved the natural beauty of the trees, meadows, hiking trails and wildlife. Returning to the ranch a month later on a writing assignment, she quickly discovered fly fishing in a icy river nearby was not her thing.

It was during a cruise when Glynnis began to fully appreciate her single status. Weren't single women sometimes viewed with suspicion, associated with metaphorical dangerous beings as witches, furies, sorceresses and harpies? The married women she interviewed weren't suspicious of her at all, didn't clutch their husband's in her presence— in fact, several of the women envied her! The single life was just too good; the freedom she had to come and go wherever she pleased was truly exhilarating! **With thanks and appreciation to Simon & Schuster via NetGalley for the DDC for the purpose of review.

Sarah says

****I won this book in a Goodreads Giveaway, and there several spoilers in this review****

This is a very honest memoir that really gives you a glimpse of how complicated life gets as you grow older and how hard it is to know if you've made the right choices.

MacNicol describes with candor what it was like losing her mother slowly to degenerative disease, helping her sister with 3 kids including a newborn after the husband walked out (and thoroughly exemplifying how kids can be incredibly annoying and yet loved) as well as several terrible relationships full of red flags with bad men. This isn't a person who has decided against marriage and kids and is completely satisfied without, it's one who is constantly wishing she had it even though she likes her independence. I think she would jump right into it if she came across a decent guy who was in a similar place in life.

Chapter 19 onwards gets inspiring, starting with onslaught of married friends with children starting to open up to her about how much they wish they had her life, and how they are equally torn between loving their families and hating the lives they have. It just shows how no one is sure of their decisions and everyone

thinks someone else has made the better decision. She also goes on a roadtrip trailing Laura Ingall's series (loved that callback to my childhood :) and then to Wyoming where she falls in love with the nature there and has a lot of good experiences.

I'm not sure I understood whether she plans to go back to there in the end, or if she will stay in Toronto (which she returns to as her mother gets worse). The following of her mother's progression is heart-breaking and reminds me of what happened with my grandmother. And it makes me pray I never have to go through it with my own mother.

Overall, this book is very sobering in its portrayal of life. But it's comforting in how it tells you whatever you are doing, you are probably not completely screwing up, and others out there are as envious of you for something as you are of them. And that any life you choose will be filled with good as well as bad.

Anyways, this book deserves 5 stars for how well it communicates life as it is and makes you feel so many emotions all at once. Recommend whether you are in anything close to her situation or not.

Susan says

As a single woman over 40 who has chosen not to marry or have children I can't tell you how excited I was to receive this book. It gets so tiresome when people are constantly making you feel less than complete because you lack a partner and a family. Like most of us Glynnis is still learning how to navigate through life, making mistakes and figuring it out along the way. I very much related to how everyone around Glynnis relies so deeply on her, after all she has the time and freedom to take care of everyone else right? 'snorts'

This is a very personal memoir and she is not afraid to share everything, whether it's pretty or not. Her mother's decline due to Parkinson's is heartbreaking. It's especially poignant that her mother wanted to get married and have a family to make sure that she wouldn't die alone then the disease took away her memories and she died isolated by her own mind. The takeaway from this book for me is that sh*t happens that we have no control over. Situations and people change constantly and the goal in life is not to reach as many of the traditional milestones as possible but rather to live the happiest life possible, whatever form that may take.

I received this book for free through a Goodreads Firstreads giveaway but this has not influenced my review in any way.

Smitha Murthy says

What is it about July where I am reading books from authors I feel like having a long, extended conversation with? From Katie Heaney to Kyo Maclear and now Glynnis MacNicol, I feel like I have made three new friends. 'No One Tells You This' is not a typical memoir. It's not the typical 'I am dying of cancer and I suddenly find life so beautiful,' memoir that seems to be all the rage these days. Rather, it's a book about one woman trying to lead an unconventional life and finding joy, meaning, grief, and all the vicissitudes of life in it.

‘To marry or not to marry.’ We spend much of our lives obsessed with this one question. We consider

ourselves bereft if we are not married - not leading this ideal Instagrammed version of adoring spouse and adoring kids, where either you are slaving away at the corporate ladder to bring the big bucks home or you are the caring spouse who slaves away at home. Either way, this is the dream life you are fed - you don't have this - you are somehow less complete. I know. I am there. Either people pity me or people envy me. The pity because they think I will die tragically alone (As if we all die in pairs. Death, as I know it, is the only master that doesn't allow you to take anything with you), and I have no idea what it is to always have someone to lean on, and wake up to, and wash the dirty dishes with. They really have no idea about my life, do they? Or they think I am so free that I can travel the world, take off whenever I want to. "You have no obligations or responsibilities," they sigh. Absolutely. Like being married is the only way to have responsibilities and love?

I have seen people pursue marriage with relentless fervor, convinced that this is the magic salvation that will grant them a lifetime of bliss. I have also seen those who scoff at such as those who pursue marriage. Neither of those extremes balance life out. And that's what I love about Glynnis - she is not beating her chest here as a feminist. There is a lovely gentleness that addresses everything that life has to offer, irrespective of whether you have a significant other or not in your life. There is a lot of fun and humor in her approach to life, and a lot of wisdom as well that is not preachy, but just sinks in and catches you abruptly in a sentence that would otherwise remain hidden. A wonderful read.
