



Thanks for the Memories

By Cecelia Ahern
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Introduction

How is it possible to know someone you've never met?

With her marriage already in pieces, Joyce Conway nearly lost everything else. But she survived the terrible accident that left her hospitalized and now, inexplicably, she can remember faces she has never seen, cobblestone Parisian streets she's never visited. A sudden, overwhelming sense of déjà vu has Joyce feeling as if her life is not her own.

Justin Hitchcock's decision to donate blood was the first thing to come straight from his heart in a long time. He chased his ex-wife and daughter from Chicago to London and now, restless and lonely, he lectures to bored college students in Dublin. But everything is about to change with the arrival of a

basket of muffins with a thank-you note enclosed—the first in a series of anonymous presents that will launch Justin into the heart of a mystery . . . and alter two lives forever.

Questions for Discussion

1. On page 265 Joyce states, "I am drawn to this man that I have barely met, in ways I've never been drawn to anybody, not even my husband." Do you believe you can love someone you've never met?
2. When Joyce is explaining why her marriage with Conor failed, she speaks of being unhappy. Her father warns her that there is no perfect marriage, that no one is truly happy all the time. Joyce responds with, "But what if you're never happy? Ever." In what ways is each of them right?
3. Author Cecelia Ahern depicts two father-daughter relationships throughout the book. What kind of bond does Joyce share with her father? How does it differ from the one between Justin and his daughter?
4. Joyce's father tells her, "More often than not, the easy decisions are the wrong decisions, and sometimes we feel like we're going backward when we're actually moving forward." How is his advice reflected in the story, particularly with Joyce and Justin's actions?
5. Joyce, in turn, tells Conor, "*Perfer et obdura: dolor hic tibi proderit olim*" "Be patient and tough; someday this pain will be useful to you." In what ways does Joyce not heed this advice? When does she learn to listen to it herself? And when does Justin?
6. At the climax of the novel, Justin has a choice between going to the opera and going to dinner. Why is his decision so crucial to Joyce?
7. What do you make of the notes in the muffin basket, "Thank you . . . for saving my life"? Describe the different ways "thank you" is used throughout the story. Who do you think saved the other more, Justin or Joyce?
8. Ahern has been praised for the touch of magic she infuses in all of her stories; the transformation of everyday common things into something magical. Did you find the connection between Joyce and Justin plausible, mystical, or a mix of both?
9. What did you make of the ending? Do you believe Joyce and Justin live happily ever after?
10. Do you believe in coincidences? Have you ever had a feeling of déjà vu (already seen), déjà vu (already lived) or déjà visit (an uncanny knowledge of a new place)? If so, what was that experience like? What emotions did it evoke? If you haven't had such experiences, do you believe they can happen?

About the Author

Before she embarked on her writing career, Cecelia Ahern completed a degree in journalism and media communications. At 21, she wrote her first novel, *P.S. I Love You*, which became an international bestseller and was adapted into a major motion picture, starring Hilary Swank. Her successive novels *Love, Rosie*; *If You Could See Me Now*; and *There's No Place Like Here* were also international bestsellers. Her books are published in 46 countries and have collectively sold more than 10 million copies. She is also the co-creator of the hit ABC comedy series *Samantha Who?*, starring Christina Applegate. The daughter of Ireland's former prime minister, Ahern lives in Dublin, Ireland.