

# The Forgotten Study Guide

## The Forgotten by Elie Wiesel

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## Plot Summary

Sixteen-year-old junior, London Lane, is suffering from a strange affliction. She is unable to remember the past, but she is able to "remember" the future. After London's brother, Jonas, is kidnapped she falls into a coma. At 4:33 in the morning she is pronounced dead and then comes back to life. For the next ten years of her life she is unable to remember things after 4:33 in the morning. That is when her memory resets. London has learned to cope with this problem. Only her mother and best friend know what is happening. Every night before bed, London writes in her notebook. In her writings, she describes what happened during the day and the important things she must remember the following day.

London meets Luke Henry. Luke and London begin a relationship and fall in love. Luke knew London when they were eleven and knows her memory secret, a fact London isn't aware of until they are already involved. London's knowledge of the future puts her in a strange position. She is aware of the fates of her friends, family and boyfriend. London must decide if she will act on this information. She must also decide if she will try to forget the information.

London discovers that her brother is still alive and has been kidnapped. He was not killed as her family had always believed. She also uncovers that her boyfriend will be shot in the future. Ultimately, London decides to take control of the future and to change events for the better.



# Chapters 1 - 10.

## Chapters 1 - 10. Summary

In Chapter 1, London Lane is a sixteen-year-old high school student at Meridan High School. She woke up this morning to find that her red cell phone died sometime during the night. As a result she has no clue what to expect at school today. Her mother tells her not to worry about it, that she can survive without her phone, but London doubts she can. Her phone is programmed with all sorts of important reminders and alarms for different activities and events in her life. London gets to school and realizes she didn't write herself a note to bring proper clothes for gym class. She borrows an embarrassing shirt from Page Thomas, the girl who has a gym locker next to hers, and puts on shorts. A fire alarm goes off in the gym and she has to go outside with the entire student body wearing too short shorts and a yellow shirt with a kitten on it.

In Chapter 2, London is out in the parking lot for the fire drill feeling like a fool. She is convinced that Alex Morgan and the other cheerleaders are laughing at her and at her kitten shirt. It is cold and London takes her ponytail out hoping it will warm her neck. She hears a boy make a comment on her shirt and turns to look at him. Luke Henry is a new boy at school. Today, Friday, is his first day. London thinks he is gorgeous and he seems to be very nice. He takes off his hoodie and gives it to her, saying that he isn't cold. They exchange a few lines of small talk when Jaime Connor comes up. Jaime is London's cute best friend. Luke doesn't seem to notice Jaime, which confuses both of the girls. Jamie gives Luke the third degree and it is time to go back inside. The girls look at the principle in the parking lot and laugh. When London turns back, Luke is gone. She watches him walk away like nothing happened. Her mother picks her up and asks about the day. London mentions Luke and her mother asks if he is in her notes. London says no. London thinks about him and can't attach him to any "memories" of her future. At 4:33am she knows her memory will reset... she can't decide if she should write a not to remind herself of a boy who is obviously not in her future.

In Chapter 3, London has lied to herself about meeting Luke. Instead of writing a note about him, she wrote a note telling herself she got his hoodie out of the lost and found. She decided to do this because she didn't see him in her future. She goes over her notes, refreshing her memory from school on Friday and of the weekend. It is Monday morning. London's mother takes her to the doctor to look at an injury that occurred during Friday gym class. Her mother quizzes her over what she will say to the doctor. They pass a cemetery and London is shaken by seeing a man and boy standing at a gravesite. She can't get it out of her head.

In Chapter 4, London remembers the short and long term future and is forced to use that knowledge to make sense of the now. When she arrives at school she tries hard to avoid Page because London knows Page will eventually ask her to set her up with a boy named Brad. London is walking through the halls at passing time and is the target of a snide remark by Carley Lynch, a girl whom hates her but London has no clue why.



London is saved from Carley by her best friend Jamie. Jamie tried to cheat in math class and is now in detention for two weeks. London knows this won't be the last time Jamie is in detention. She will have an affair with the detention teacher that will cause him to get a divorce and cause Jamie to be sent away to an all-girls' religious camp for the summer. London makes a game of watching peoples' shoes as they walk to Spanish class. She can figure out who is coming toward her by their shoes. One girl, in cute red cowboy boots, will be a country music star in a couple of years. She sees a pair of brown Converse (Luke) walking up, but is pulled into the class by Jamie before she sees who is wearing them. Jamie mentions to London that the boy wearing the shoes is a boy London met the day before, and that he is a weirdo.

In Chapter 5, London wakes in the middle of the night with a memory of the future. She is in a graveyard surrounded by people dressed in black. It is the morning and the grass has recently been cut. She doesn't understand the scene, but she knows it is something she dreads. The tombstones are not sharp and she doesn't know who has died. She just knows that someone will. She will remember it until it happens and then forget it after it does. She considers writing the dream down, underneath a note about a weird guy wearing brown Converse, but decides not to.

In Chapter 6, London shows up for study hall and sits down to start her Pre-Calc homework, which she neglected to finish the night before (according to her note). She is interrupted from her work by a boy, it is Luke, but she doesn't recognize him. Luke tells her he didn't know they were in class together and asks her where she was the last study hall period. London is confused and tells him she was at the doctor while trying to figure out who he is and how they know each other. Luke tells her she can keep his hoodie, but is interrupted from saying anything else by the study hall teacher. London realizes that Luke is the "weirdo" Jamie warned her about when she realizes he is wearing brown Converse. She doesn't know his name, but is able to piece together that he is new and his last name is Henry. She also realizes that she lied to herself in her notes. She didn't get the hoodie from the lost and found, it came from Luke. Before bed London types a note about a bad memory that popped into her head. It was of a funeral. Her mother is there crying and she recalls seeing an angel carved of green stone. She titles it Dark Memory and prints it. London sticks the note under a note about the boy she met that day. The written note is decorated with hearts.

In Chapter 7, London sees Luke in study hall again. She is excited to see him and is waiting for him. She can't remember him from the past, and still doesn't see him in the future. She just wants to get to know him in the now as best as she can. London didn't tell her mother about the funeral because she didn't want to worry her. Luke asks her how her day has been and she tells him it hasn't been so good. He tells her that he is here if she wants to talk, then they get in trouble for talking and sit the next 90 minutes in silence. Their hands accidentally touch, causing London to become embarrassed. Luke just laughs. Jamie calls before bed to ask if she can borrow a green shirt. She says she will get it early in the morning because she has detention before school still.

In Chapter 8, London is cornered by Page before she can make it to study hall to meet Luke. Page wants London to set her up with Brad Thomas. London knows that Brad will



break Page's heart and she thinks it is weird for Page to like a boy who has her same last name. She finally agrees to talk to Brad and decides that Page should be allowed to take a chance on a relationship. London refuses to feel guilty over helping them meet, even though she knows they won't work out. She thinks it is like herself and Luke since she can't see Luke in her own future. On the way to study hall, London realizes she has no clue what Luke looks like. The thought causes her panic and she hides in the girls bathroom. She leaves after the bell and arrives at study hall late. Luke passes London a note in class asking for her phone number. She gives it to him and he puts it in his phone. London forgets her history permission slip and must leave class because they are watching a film on Nazi Germany, which required parental permission. It is snowing.

In Chapter 9, London walks to Jamie's house through the snow. She gets there and says hello to Jamie's mother, Susan. The girls go to the basement and paint their nails. London asks Jamie about her father. London knows that the girls will visit him in LA during spring break one year in college. Jamie says he and his wife are fine. She also talks about how wonderful Ted Rice is. Ted is the married, 24 year old detention monitor and driver's ed teacher. He has asked Jamie to meet him after school on Monday. London knows that the relationship will end with Jamie trying to overdose on pills. When she can't talk Jamie out of meeting him she offers to tell her what will happen in the future. Jamie becomes angry and tells London she likes not knowing the future and that the future may not happen like London thinks it will. She tells London that she can mess with her own life any way she wants, but Jamie doesn't want London telling her about her own future.

In Chapter 10, London sees the cemetery again. Her mother is sobbing and she can smell a mixture of cut grass and rain. There is a young woman in a low-cut dress, an older woman with a fancy beetle brooch, and a bald man.

## Chapters 1 - 10. Analysis

Chapter 1 indicates that something isn't quite right with London, however, the reader doesn't know yet what her problem is. It is clear that she needs to write herself notes and is anxious about what the day will bring. It is unclear if her mother, classmates and teachers know she has a problem with her memory as indicated on the book jacket.

In Chapter 2, London and her mother make mention of London's memory problem. She is able to "remember" her future, but not her past. Her memory resets itself at 4:33 in the morning. She must write down anything important before that time so she can remember it the next day. However, London bases some of what she writes down on what she can see has already happened in her future. London's mother is only one of two people who know of her condition.

In Chapter 3, London has no idea that she has lied to herself about meeting Luke on Friday. The scene at the graveyard they passed has really shaken her and she can't get it out of her mind.



In Chapter 4, London describes Jamie as the girl other girls hate and the girl boys love but never date. Jamie is a nice girl and a nice friend, but she wears provocative clothing and is very flirtatious. London has no clue that she has met Luke before when Jamie mentions him on the way to Spanish class. She also has no idea why Carley Lynch hates her and makes cruel comments to her.

In Chapter 5, London knows that the funeral "memory" was brought up by seeing the man and boy in the graveyard, but she doesn't know who will die. She is upset by the fact that she knows someone will die soon. She will be upset by it until it happens and then, once it does, she will forget it ever happened at all.

In Chapter 6, London is pretty good at scrambling to put things together using the information she knows about the future and the information she has retained from the present day. She goes to bed at night after writing notes about a funeral and a boy. Two things she decided not to write notes about a few days before.

In Chapter 7, London keeps the important things she sees in the future to herself. She doesn't tell her mother about the funeral and she doesn't tell Jamie about the affair she will have and the trouble she will get into. She is also not able to find Luke in her future "memories" at all.

In Chapter 8, London feels responsible for others because she knows the future. She struggles over helping Page meet Brad because she already knows Page will be hurt. She also worries about herself and how she will know Luke if she meets him in the hallway. Usually forgetting a permission slip is the kind of mistake that upsets her, but now that she knows Luke she is less upset by it. She is having a good day.

In Chapter 9, London can see far into the future. She sees herself on spring break with Jamie's father in college. She sees Jamie's suicide attempt and Jamie's unhappy marriage down the road. Thinking about Jamie's father makes her wonder where her own father is. Obviously she doesn't see him in her future. She also doesn't see Luke in her future. Even though she should have been able to see him Monday since she saw him on Tuesday.

In Chapter 10, London sees the funeral again and is struck by the older woman and the brooch the woman is wearing. She is also struck by the footprints on the ground. She wants to mess them up, but she doesn't.



# Chapters 11 - 20.

## Chapters 11 - 20. Summary

In Chapter 11, it is Monday morning and London is reading over her notes from the day before. She went to dinner with her mother at Casa de Amigos and needs to make sure there isn't a food stain on her jeans. Her conversation with Jamie about their dads got her thinking and she went snooping. She has an envelope hidden in her dresser drawer. London's mom asks if things are ok and London tells there things are fine. London spends the day at school angry with her mother over what was in the envelope. She is also angry that Luke hasn't called her. She is about to tell him off when he asks her to his house for lunch. Jamie catches up with London in the hallway and asks what's up. London tells her about the manila envelope she found in her mother's room and the photographs and birthday cards inside. Her father sent her three birthday cards when she was little. They were sad, apologetic cards, but London is upset that her mother hid them from her.

In Chapter 12, London and Jamie are in Spanish lab attempting to translate their assignment. Jamie does most of the translating because London is busy looking at the pictures of her father she found inside the manila envelope. London notices how much she looks like her father and how much her father looks just like she thought he would. She is looking at a photo of her father teaching her to swim when she notices a woman in the background. The woman looks like London and her father. London realizes that it is her grandmother and that her grandmother is the woman with the beetle brooch in her future funeral "memory." Jamie asks London what they should do for lunch. London says she has plans with Luke and goes to meet him. Just as Luke looks up to greet her, London realizes whose funeral she is remembering the funeral must be her father's.

In Chapter 13, London and Luke head to the parking lot for lunch break and get into his minivan. During the drive to his house, Luke tells London about his life. His parents married after high school and had him at twenty five. His mom worked while his dad was in law school and then the three of them moved to New York. His dad started working too much and they divorced. Two years later they remarried and how he has 3 year old twin sisters. Luke lives in a large house near where London lives. They eat and he gives her a tour of the house. Luke shows her his room and she doesn't want to leave, there is so much of him in the room. Some of Luke's art is hanging and she sees that he likes to draw and paint peoples' ears. London wonders if he wants to paint hers. They return to school and walk in hand-in-hand. Luke touches her jaw and asks her to go out with him on Saturday. London says yes and they part ways. She sees Jamie looking at her and waves. Jamie waves back, but London can tell there is something wrong. She heads toward Jamie, but Jamie has left.

In Chapter 14, Jamie calls and pretends that she isn't upset by seeing London and Luke together after lunch. London asks her if everything is ok, but she lets it go when Jamie insists things are fine. Jamie tells London that she met the teacher, Ted, after school





and that he is wonderful. London knows she promised Jamie she wouldn't tell her what happens, but she can't help herself from trying to talk some sense into her friend. Jamie tells London she is being a bitch. London says Jamie is acting like a slut. London knows that they won't talk again for a long time. Jaime is upset and hangs up.

In Chapter 15, London's Wednesday note. She wore jeans, a black cardigan and a yellow tank. Jamie has ignored her all week in Spanish. Jamie came over to trade clothing with London and ripped her "best friends" poster in half. London hasn't mentioned her father to her mother yet, but would like to meet him before something happens to him. She tells her self to read the Dark Memories file and to finish an essay for class. She didn't really talk to Luke in study hall; he sketched a giant ear the entire time. They have a date on Saturday.

In Chapter 16, London is feeling sick inside when she and her mother pull up at school. She asks her mom if she has ever changed the future. Her mother thinks, then tells her that she missed Jamie's 13th birthday because she saw herself breaking her nose. Before the party, London "remembered" running into a glass door and breaking her nose. She didn't go to the party, but she did break her nose later that year tripping over a stray dog she brought home. London decides she can't change the future. London's mother tells her that it is possible that she does change the future. Her mother points out that she is only aware of the things London tells her. Maybe there are things she sees in the future but doesn't remember, and maybe those things change. London thinks about it. She realizes that if she saw she would be hit by a bus the next day, but didn't write it down or tell her mother, she may unknowingly take a different route the next day and never get hit by a bus. This thought cheers her up. She runs into Page when she gets to school and decides that it isn't Page's fate to be hurt by Brad. Maybe if she tries to stop Page from dating him, she actually won't date him. So she won't be hurt by him. When Page asks London if she talked to Brad about her yet, London tells Page a lie - she tells her Brad is gay.

In Chapter 17, Luke comes to pick London up for their date and tells her mom they are going to have dinner and see a movie. He is being mysterious as the two get into his minivan and drive north into the country. They arrive at a beautiful clearing and park. London thinks for a minute that he may be some horrible monster, but knows that the Luke she wrote to herself about is a great guy. Luke puts down the minivan seats, takes out a hot pizza and puts Star Wars into the car's DVD player. The two have a great time and London feels really close to him. Luke makes up a fantasy that they knew each other in a past life. The two decide that their names were Caroline and William and they lived in Ireland where they grew potatoes. London laughs hysterically and thinks that this is the best time she will have for a long time. The two lie down between the seats and snuggle. Eventually, they both fall asleep. London has a great dream about their pretend life in Ireland, however, the dream becomes a nightmare when London realizes she is asleep and can no longer remember Luke in her dream.

In Chapter 18, London wakes up in a panic. She doesn't remember where she is or how she got there. She also doesn't recognize the boy next to her under the blanket. She worries for a moment that she has been raped, but then realizes she wasn't. Luke also



wakes up in a panic. He jumps into the driver's seat to check the time. It is around seven in the morning. They drive back to London's house. London is trying to figure out who the boy in the car is and how she let herself get into this situation. She is relieved that he knows where she lives. London's mother runs to the car when they arrive. She orders them both into the house and tells them they are grounded. She has been on the phone with Luke's parents all night. His father is looking for him. London realizes she had turned off her phone. Her mother asked what happened and Luke told her about their date and falling asleep. London is shocked. She is sad that she had the greatest date of her life and can't remember it. London's mother sees the look on her face and realizes that London doesn't know what is going on. Her mother's attitude changes to compassion and she kindly tells Luke to head home. Luke kisses London before he leaves.

In Chapter 19, London writes a note to herself before falling asleep. It reads, "It's not Dad." When she wakes she reads her note for the day, Monday. She reminds herself that Jamie is still angry with her and thinks she should ask her friend to help her find her dad. She references the manila envelope to explain about her mother and father. She has also written that she and Luke have been dating for three and a half months. She thinks he is super hot. They went to the movies and had fun even though the movie was bad. She beat him at a video game; her character was called Red Warrior. She reminds herself not to hold the minivan against him.

In Chapter 20, Luke picks London up for school with a cup of coffee and breakfast from a place that will be her favorite for the next few years. She knows from her notes that this is normal for them. However, she still can't get over how cute he is. They drive to school and Luke parks at the back of the lot. They stay in the car and talk until the lot fills up, then get out entering the school. Inside the car London tells Luke that Jamie is having an affair with Mr. Rice. Luke seems hurt that she hasn't told him sooner. They snap at each other during the discussion, but then thinks are fine. Two girls park next to the van and glare at London. She remembers that one of the girls will be pregnant by the end of the year. She waves at Brad when he pulls up and can't figure out why he is glaring at her. In Spanish class Jamie asks Mrs. Garcia, again, if she can change partners. She no longer wants to partner with London. Mrs. Garcia tells her no. London decides asking Jamie for help finding her father might be a way to get her friend back. Jamie tells London she only wants her help to look into her mother's files. Her mother is a divorce lawyer. London had forgotten this, but thinks it is a good idea. Jamie doesn't say no, but refuses to talk to London the rest of class.

## Chapters 11 - 20. Analysis

In Chapter 11, London is upset that her mother has hidden her father's birthday cards from her, but she isn't ready to confront her mother about it yet. She is glad to see Jamie. When they link arms she thinks about how she sometimes needs Jamie's physical support for the day ahead of her. She also remembers the note she wrote herself about Jamie's situation and thinks that Jamie needs her too.



In Chapter 12, London is preoccupied looking at the photo of her father and her grandmother. She can tell that her grandmother cares for her and thinks it is strange to know there is someone else out there who might want to be a part of her life. When London makes the connection between her crying mother and the funeral she decides the funeral she keeps "remembering" must be her father's. She is stunned and shocked.

In Chapter 13, London is enthralled with Luke and is trying not to act like a total stalker when he shows her his room. She feels very comfortable with him and seems to lose herself whenever he looks into her eyes. London feels like he can see right into her. It seems that Jamie may be jealous of her best friend's budding relationship.

In Chapter 14, London can't stop herself from trying to protect Jamie even though her friend has asked her to butt out of her business. London also wonders if Jamie met Ted in response to seeing London with Luke. London has admitted to herself that she is the only friend Jamie has. Jamie is furious that London is not more supportive of her relationship with Ted.

In Chapter 15, London is worried she won't get to meet her father before he dies. She is excited about her date with Luke and thinks that Jamie's behavior is ridiculous.

In Chapter 16, London is starting to wonder if she is trapped by her "memories" of the future. She has always assumed that her "memories" are her fate and that there is nothing she can do to change her fate. When it comes to her future, Pages, even Jamie's she has a "why fight it" mentality. After talking to her mother she decides to try to change things.

In Chapter 17, Luke tells London that he feels connected to her. He tells her she is beautiful and that he likes who she is. London feels like she is falling in love with Luke. She keeps thinking that this is the happiest she will be for a long time.

In Chapter 18, London has never allowed herself to get into a situation like this before. She has no note and can't figure out who Luke is or why she would be sleeping next to him. She feels bad for forcing him to explain the night to her mother, but she is incapable of remembering it. Luke is confused, but not angry.

In Chapter 19, three months have passed and London considers Luke to be her boyfriend. She still writes herself notes about her day for the next day. She has concluded that the funeral she keeps "remembering" is not her father, but doesn't say more. London is completely wrapped up in her relationship with Luke.

In Chapter 20, London isn't aware of it, but she is seeing some of the results from her memory lapses. Because she doesn't remember things she hasn't written down, she doesn't remember that she told Page that Brad was gay. She also doesn't know why she hasn't told Luke about Jamie's affair before. Luke is surprised by Jamie's situation, but is all kindness and understanding to London. He is very supportive of her. London misses Jamie's friendship and wants help finding her dad. That Jamie's mom has access to her parents' divorce files is a great way to meet both of London's needs.



# Chapters 21 - 30.

## Chapters 21 - 30. Summary

In Chapter 21, London is getting ready for bed. Her mother is working late and London feels sorry for her, even though she is still upset about the envelope. It has been three and a half months since she found it. London reads through her notebook. She knows the bald man is her father, so he is not the person who died. However, in her memory she can't make herself look to see who is dead. She sees a groundskeeper. He smiles at her and she wants to kick him. London can't get past the fact that she still can't see Luke in her future. She also thinks there is a connection between Luke's arrival in her life and the arrival of the "memory." She writes two questions before bed: "Why can't I remember Luke?" and "Whose funeral is it?"

In Chapter 22, London arrives at gym class and is pounded in the face by a ball. She forgot they were playing dodge ball that day. Everyone in the gym laughs at her, even Page who seems to be upset with London. London is completely embarrassed. During Human Anatomy, London begins to smiling remembering her contact with Luke before class. The teacher thinks she is being disrespectful and asks her what is so funny. When London doesn't respond the teacher turns back to the board. They are learning about the brain. London is intrigued when the teacher writes "Types of memories" on the board, but the bell rings before they can talk about it. Her mother takes her to lunch and orders onion rings, London's favorite. Her mother wants to talk about feelings and wants to reconnect with London. She tells London that Carley is jealous of her because she asked Carley's ex-boyfriend to a dance in the past. London asks her mother why her father left, but doesn't mention that she has found the envelope. Her mother tells her he left when London was six because they didn't get along. She lies and says he never tried to contact his daughter, London, again. London mentions that her memory went haywire at six and asks if they could be connected. Her mother says maybe. London calls Jamie to talk, but Jamie refuses to speak to her. She and Luke talk before bed.

In Chapter 23, Jamie refuses to speak with London again in Spanish. However, during dismissal she drops a phone number on London's desk. She knows it is her father's number. Over dinner, London asks her mother if her messed up brain could possibly be fixed. That she has been learning about memory in class. Her mother tells her that a neurologist did a scan and her brain isn't messed up, so no, it probably can't be fixed. London is upset with this answer and goes upstairs.

In Chapter 24, London is in Luke's bedroom. The two are sitting on the bed getting ready to call her father. Luke makes the call, but the number has been disconnected. They go downstairs, have a snack and watch Luke's twin sisters play. As London watches one of his sister playing in a box she has a shocking realization. London feels sick and asks Luke to take her home. She jumps out of the car and goes to her room. There, she allows herself to have the memory. She is at the funeral of a young child.



She has a hazy future memory of being pregnant, but isn't sure if the child in the coffin is her future child or not.

In Chapter 25, Jamie partners with someone else in Spanish class. After class, London thanks her for giving her the phone number last class period.

In Chapter 26, London wears a red cocktail dress to the Winder Formal with Luke. Before they leave her mother takes a picture of the two of them, Luke tells London she is beautiful. Luke presents London with a painting of her ear instead of a corsage. They dance a few slow dances at the school dance, then decide to leave. London is sick that Jamie is being eyed by Mr. Rice. He looks at her in a way no teacher should look at a sixteen year old girl. Before leaving, London heads to the bathroom. There she is confronted by Page who accuses her of never talking to Brad about her. Page is at the dance with Brad. London wonders if Page and Brad's future has changed and hopes that it has. She would hate for Page to have her heart broken.

In Chapter 27, London and Luke arrive at her house to find it empty. They enter and begin to make out, only to be parted by the phone ringing. They lie on the floor together and talk for a long time exchanging "I love yous." London goes upstairs to put on a sweater and realizes she left her notebook on the kitchen counter. Luke as gone to the kitchen to make her a grilled cheese. She comes down to find him reader her notes. London is stunned to find out Luke knows about her condition. He has known since before they met. Luke explains that they met at a YMCA camp when they were eleven. He was in town for the summer to see his aunt and uncle. One day he was hit in the head by a dodge ball. Luke picked a fight with the boy who threw the ball and was beaten up. London was the only person who helped him, she used her sweater to clean him up. It is why he gave her his hoodie when they met. Luke explains that he was devastated the next day when she ignored him. Eventually she told him about her condition. Back then he went by the name LJ. London is furious. She can't believe he has been lying to her like this. She feels completely betrayed and kicks him out of the house. He tells her he didn't want to make her feel uncomfortable which is why he never said anything. That night London erases all of his calls from her phone. She puts all of her notes about him into a box and hides them in the basement. She then leaves a note to her mother telling her never to mention Luke again. London has erased Luke from her life.

In Chapter 28, London is getting books from her locker when a gorgeous guy she doesn't know grabs her elbow. Its Luke, but she has no clue who he is. Luke is hurt when he realizes London has erased him from her memory and walks away from her in anger. She arrives at study hall to find the strange boy sitting by himself. Of course, the only empty seat is the one next to him. She watches the boy angrily writing during the class period while she does her own work. Before the bell rings he hands her a note. She goes early to math so she can read it. The letter is from Luke and explains why she can't remember him and what he did to upset her. London asks her mom about Luke when she arrives home. Her mother leads her to the hidden box and makes a comment about their break up being brief. London gets a call from Luke and asks for space, then she cries.



In Chapter 29, London tries to figure out why Page hates her so much when just a short time ago they were on speaking terms. She realizes that she has saved Page from heartbreak. London's "memory" of Page and Brad's future has changed. No longer will he break her heart. In fact, they will stay together and even go to college together. However, yesterday in gym class, Page told the teacher and the class that she didn't want London on her team. This, together with Jamie's anger and her fight with Luke, makes London feel like she has no friends.

In Chapter 30, London receives a call from a woman named Abby Brennan. Apparently, London had been to visit her looking for her grandmother, Jo Lane. However, London doesn't remember this and didn't write herself any notes about it. She feels she must have hit a dead end and didn't think it was important information to remember. Abby tells London that her grandmother is at a nursing home in the city named Lingering Pines. London calls, but it is after hours so she must call back the next day. London's mother leaves to show some houses to a client and Luke arrives at the door. They kiss and make up, then go to her room. London tells him they are not going to have sex; Luke agrees that they aren't going to have sex tonight.

## Chapters 21 - 30. Analysis

In Chapter 21, London still hasn't confronted her mother with the information she has found, but she is still bitter with her. London understands that the funeral has something to do with Luke, but she knows it can't be his funeral. Why would her father attend if it was?

In Chapter 22, Carley's hatred of London is just another example of how not having a memory hampers London's life. She knows her mother is hiding something about her father, but doesn't yet want to confront her mother about it. London is desperate to talk to her best friend, Jamie, again. She is comforted by Luke's call, even though she can't remember his face sometimes.

In Chapter 23, London's memory problem started when she was six and her father left. Now she is wondering if her problem can be fixed. She is still angry with her mother.

In Chapter 24, London's memory of the future is capable of sharpening in an instant. It is also something that is capable of being jogged just like a normal person's memory of the past.

In Chapter 25, Jamie is still giving London the cold shoulder; London is still trying to make amends with Jamie.

In Chapter 26, London has fun at the dance for a little while, but would rather be alone with Luke. She feels socially awkward after being confronted by Page in the bathroom. She hopes that her attempt to keep Page and Brad apart has somehow changed Page's fate in the future.



In Chapter 27, London feels angry, hurt and betrayed by the boy she loves. She can't bare to think of him again and erases all traces of him from her life.

In Chapter 28, London is torn. She wants to forgive Luke and also doesn't want too. She hates that he lied to her and that she now has to deal with her angry feelings about his lie. She admits to herself that she lied to him too, but feels that his lie is worse. She doesn't want to ask him for space, but feels that she needs to do so.

In Chapter 29, London feels alone and friendless. Page wasn't a friend per se, but she was at least someone who liked London and was kind to her. She is in a fight with her boyfriend and her best friend is still angry with her. London feels alone and adrift without Jamie. She gets why Jamie is angry, London did call her a slut, but she needs Jamie. She also knows that they will be friends again in the future.

In Chapter 30, London is confused as to why she didn't write the information about Abby Brennan and Jo Lane in her notebook. She assumes it is because she didn't have good information about them. She is happy to see Luke and is more than ready to forgive him, encouraging him to stay until her mother comes home.



# Chapters 31 - 40.

## Chapters 31 - 40. Summary

In Chapter 31, London's mom comes home and she decides to hide Luke in her closet instead of asking him to leave. Luke told his parents he was spending the night at Adam's house. He planned to wait in his van all night if that was what it took to get London to forgive him. After her mother checks on her, London crosses the dark room to the closet. She and Luke begin to make out in the closet. They don't have sex, but both of them end up shirtless. London dresses for bed and asks Luke to lie with her. He says he will until she falls asleep, then will return to the closet. He doesn't want her mom finding them in the morning. Before they fall asleep, Luke sends London a text message telling her that the boy in the closet is her boyfriend and that he loves her. She tells him she loves him too.

In Chapter 32, it is Saturday. London wakes up to find a text from Luke. Instead of finding him in her closet she finds a note from him. He left early and will come back with coffee and announce himself at the front door. She might want to tell her mother they made up. He tells her the highlights of the night before and writes that he will explain it all later. London tells her mother they are back together and that she will be spending the day with Luke. Luke arrives and the two get in his van and leave.

In Chapter 33, Luke takes London to Lingering Pines to meet her grandmother. Instead they find that Joe Lane passed away the year before. London is in shock and confused. She "remembers" her grandmother from the future funeral. London wonders if her grandmother had a twin. She briefly thinks about asking her mother, but she is too confused to form a plan. Luke and London arrive at the cemetery and find the plot where Josephine London Lane is buried. The groundskeeper, who looks like Santa, tells them where to find her. They turn to leave when London has an epiphany. She begins to run toward the angel statute from her future memory. Standing in the same place where she "remembers" standing in the future, London makes a shocking realization. The funeral is a memory of her past. The groundskeeper is the same man who winked at her during the funeral. The ground isn't holding a future grave - it is holding an old one. The headstone reads: Sweet Baby Boy, Jonas Dylan Lane, November 7, 1998 - May 8, 2001.

In Chapter 34, London realizes she was so preoccupied with figuring out who died she never really paid attention to when the funeral was. She and Luke drive back to her house. Luke tells her she must talk to her mom about what has happened. They've been gone all day and her mother is probably worried. He drops her off and London intends to confront her mother about the past.

In Chapter 35, London ask her mother about Jonas. Her mother is clearly devastated and doesn't want to talk about it. She explains that Jonas was London's brother and that he was taken and killed. She tells London that she wanted to spare London the pain of





such a horrible memory. London tells her mother she wants to know about Jonas, that it might help her memory. She finally tells her mother she remembers the funeral. London writes herself a note outlining what her mother tells her. Jonas and London were with their father at the store. London was 6 and Jonas was 2. Their father left then in the car to grab a cart and when he came back a van was leaving with Jonas inside. Her father jumped in the car with London and chased the van. They ran a red light and the car was demolished. London was in a comma. At 4:33 one morning she died and was revived. Her mother kicked her father out and blamed him for what happened to her children. The police found Jonas' bones and clothing in the mountains and they buried the bones in the cemetery. London's father tried to contact her, but her mother told him to leave them alone.

In Chapter 36, two months later, in April, London sits down on a beautiful morning to read her notebook. She reads about Jonas and her day is ruined.

In Chapter 37, London is crying about Jonas as her mother drops her off at school. Her mother suggests she tear up the letter about Jonas and go back to not remembering him. London is horrified by the idea even though her mother tells her Jonas wouldn't have wanted her to be upset like this. He was a happy baby who loved his sister. London tells her she owes it to him because he is dead and she is still alive. London sits across from Jamie in Spanish and they work on a travel brochure about Isla del Mujeres in Mexico. Jamie asks what is wrong and seems to be on the verge of making up with London. London is invigorated by the fact that she will have her best friend back soon. Then she decides to break Jamie and Mr. Rice's relationship up.

In Chapter 38, London drags Luke with her to stalk Mr. Rice's house. She knows from a future memory that Mrs. Rice is a math tutor. London plans to find out who she is tutoring now and to get them to "accidentally" discover Mr. Rice's affair. She refers to this person as The Messenger. That way Mrs. Rice will find out, but it won't be London who tells. Unfortunately, Mrs. Rice is tutoring Carley Lynch. The last person who will listen to anything London says. London and Luke return to her house and hang out in London's room until her mom comes home. London settles on a plan. She will use the gossip network to get Carley to find Mr. Rice and tell Mrs. Rice.

In Chapter 39, following her written notes London puts her plan into action the next day at school. She puts a note in Gabby Stein's locker which leads Gabby to discover Mr. Rice and Jamie in the Driver's Ed room. Gabby goes to Alex Morgan and tells her what she saw. Alex sends out a text. London and Luke arrive in time to see Carley pull up at her tutor's house with a worried expression. That is enough to tell London her plan is working. She will not make sure she forgets that she had anything to do with the gossip spreading.

In Chapter 40, London arrives at school to find that the police have arrested Mr. Rice. She sees that there will be a trial and conviction in the future. Jamie is upset in Spanish class and London offers her a shoulder to cry on. During lunch, London tells Luke she can't believe they got caught. Luke looks at her funny, but doesn't remind her that she is the reason all of this is happening. They decide to have a picnic lunch and head to the



store. London texts Jamie to ask if she wants to come, but she says that she forgot a book at home. London waits for Luke in the van at the grocery store. A woman comes to look inside the van and it brings back a memory for London. She remembers a woman knocking on the car window while she was playing peek-a-boo with Jonas. London unlocked the car door and a man grabbed Jonas from the other side of the car. When Luke returns to the car, she asks him to take her home.

## Chapters 31 - 40. Analysis

In Chapter 31, London and Luke's relationship is becoming more physically and more emotionally intimate.

In Chapter 32, London is thrilled to be back together with Luke. She doesn't remember him, but if he is the boy she describes in her notes then she is happy. The night before she allowed him to read her notebook so he could get to know her better. London's mother is sad that London will be going with Luke for the day. They were going to spend time together, but London doesn't remember this.

In Chapter 33, London's world has just been turned upside down. She has remembered the past and parts of a terrible event that her mind tried to block out. Not only is her grandmother dead, but she has discovered the grave of a boy who shares her last name.

In Chapter 34, London is now confused about what is past and what is future. Is she really remembering the future or is she comingling things about the past.

In Chapter 35, London writes the story of her past and includes a note to read it to herself every morning. She feels it is the least she can do to honor Jonas.

In Chapter 36, London has kept her promise to herself and read about Jonas every day for the last two months.

In Chapter 37, London's day starts badly as she remembers her brother, but changes once she realizes that Jamie doesn't completely hate her. Her decision to break up Jamie and Mr. Rice gives her a new sense of purpose.

In Chapter 38, London tells her mom she loves Luke and is surprised when her mother calmly tells her she knows already.

In Chapter 39, Luke isn't as convinced as London is that this whole idea is a good plan. He is surprised London isn't going to do more to stop Jamie and hopes the plan works for Jamie's sake. There is some foreshadowing here that things may not turn out as well as London hopes.

In Chapter 40, London has made sure that she won't feel badly about destroying Jamie's life by not reminding herself of her part in Mr. Rice's arrest. This doesn't seem to sit well with Luke. She also remembers her part in her brother's disappearance. She

seems to be partially at fault for the people being about to grab him because she unlocked the car for them.



# Chapters 41 - 48 and Epilogue.

## Chapters 41 - 48 and Epilogue. Summary

In Chapter 41, London's mother comes home to find her daughter in a ball on the chair. London is upset and her mother wants to know why. London tells her they must call the police, she remembers the people who took Jonas. Her mother is shocked that London is telling her there was a man and a woman. She tells London it isn't her fault that Jonas is gone. Then London tells her there is more. London remembered something horrible from the future. Five or six years in the future she and Luke are following a man London believes is Jonas murderer and kidnapper. She confronts the man and he pulls a gun. Luke shoves London and tells her to run. The man shoots both of them and Luke dies.

In Chapter 42, London finishes her story and they are both crying. Her mother orders her to get up. They are going to get help and do something about this. They go to the police station and talk to Captain Moeller, a man her mother knows from high school. London looks through books, but can't find anyone who looks like the man and woman in her memory of the past. She does remember the address from the future memory where she and Luke confronted the kidnapper. She lies to the captain and tells him the woman dropped a piece of paper that looked like an address. The word Beacon was on it. London and her mother are in the drive thru of a restaurant when Moeller calls. They hurry to the station. Moeller found a street in the city named Beacon. A new couple just rented a space and run a pawn shop. But the shop is never open and their have been complaints of children crying in the space at night. He thinks Jonas may have been kidnapped and adopted on the black market.

In Chapter 43, London's mom wakes her up for school. She is going to be late. Her mom comes in and sits down, then Luke enters behind her. London greets Luke, shocking him and her mother. She remembers Luke without looking at her notes. She can see him in her future and doesn't realize that she couldn't see him there before. She tells Luke about his death and he tells her they will change things so it doesn't happen. However, he still looks afraid.

In Chapter 44, London is preoccupied thinking about her brother and her father. She is getting ready for bed when Luke instant messages her. He wants to know if she remembers them having sex in the future. She says yes and he tells her that isn't fair. He asks her when that will be. She tells him he will just have to be surprised.

In Chapter 45, it is the last day of junior year and London doesn't have the next day to help her form a frame of reference for the present day. Her mother and Luke help her fill in the blanks. Jamie finds London at her locker and they apologize to each other. They walk arm in arm down the hall.

In Chapter 46, London's mother is home early. The police have found something and want her to come to the station. They arrive to find out that the bones they buried didn't



belong to Jonas, they belonged to a Baby Doe who was not in the missing children database. They are shown an age progression photo of Jonas. London can't remember him in her future, but she feels there is something there. Like the punch line of a joke she can't remember. She is satisfied.

In Chapter 47, Luke takes London to the place where they had their first date. He parks the car and they eat pizza and recline the seats. He wants her to remember their first date. London suggested they break up and Luke tells her he doesn't want to be without her. Snuggled in Luke's arms she is confident that they can change the future and he will not be killed. Luke suggests she write down about their night and she tells him no. She will remember him in the morning.

In Chapter 48, London writes that the kidnappers have been arrested and are cooperating with police. She and Luke went floating and made out for the rest of the afternoon. She still hasn't remembered her brother, but she thinks she will. She also writes to call her dad. London calls her dad. It is their third conversation. She asks him to tell her about Jonas. He tells her how Jonas loved balls. At Christmas, when he was one and a half, he tried to bounce the ornaments from the tree and they broke. The funny story makes her father sad and they tell each other they love each other before they hang up. London isn't worried because she remembers her father in her future and knows things will be ok. She also remembers him at her graduation and sees he is still in love with her mom. London wakes in the middle of the night with a new memory from the future. She wakes her mom and tells her the age progression picture is slightly different than Jonas. They will see him during a Christmas holiday. He has a great laugh. Her parents tell him the story of breaking the ornaments as a baby.

In the Epilogue, London's notes are shared and she describes how she goes with Luke to a Weezer concert. London writes she is a lot stronger than she used to be and she knows it is because of Luke. Luke started a chain reaction that helped her remember the past and the future. London is happy to have a mother and father who love her, a great boyfriend, a great best friend and a brother she will see again soon. She is also happy to know that the most important thing is this: she can change the future.

## **Chapters 41 - 48 and Epilogue. Analysis**

In Chapter 41, London doesn't know how her mother can't blame her for Jonas' death. She is convinced her mother will hate her when she tells her about Luke's future death.

In Chapter 42, London knows that her information of the future may help find the kidnappers from the past. Now that she knows she can change circumstances of the future she and her mother believe it is worth a try. London realizes before her mother does what the implications are of Captain Moeller's discovery - Jonas may be alive.

In Chapter 43, London can see Luke in her future where she couldn't before. This information makes Luke and her mother happy. She tells him of his death and wonders if it was the right thing to do.



In Chapter 44, London and Luke's IM conversation shows that it will be hard for him to ever surprise her. It also shows that her awareness of future events gives her the ability to control when and if they will happen. It begs the question: Are her future memories for real? Or are they self-fulfilling prophecy?

In Chapter 45, London is amazed that Jamie trusts her even though she can't see the future. London knows that they will be friends forever, but Jamie just rolls the dice and trusts that things will work out for the best.

In Chapter 46, London can't remember Jonas from the future, but she seems confident that she eventually will.

Chapter 47:

Luke romantically tells London he will risk dying to be with her. London is confident in her ability to change the future.

Chapter 48:

London is happy she can now have a relationship with her father. Her rift with her mother has begun to heal and she knows she will be able to meet her brother in the future.

Epilogue:

London has learned to be happy with the life she has and the people in her life. She has learned to like the memory she has and to feel confident in the fact that she has the power to change the future.



# Characters

## London Lane.

London Lane is the sixteen-year-old protagonist of the book. She lives with her mother in the town that her mother grew up in. London doesn't know her father and isn't aware that she used to have a brother. London is unable to remember either the distant or recent past. She is however able to "remember" things from her near and distant future. London spends the first part of the book trying to remember things about her day-to-day life.

## Luke Henry.

Luke Henry is London's boyfriend. Luke is new to Meridan High School. He lives with his parents in a nice house not far from London. He has twin sisters who are three years old. Luke knows about London's memory problem. He wears brown Converse sneakers.

## Bridgette Lane.

Bridgette Lane is London's mother. She is a real estate agent. Bridgette is supportive of London, but is also hiding a secret from her daughter. London's mother doesn't tell her daughter that she had a brother whom she can't remember. Bridgette knows about London's condition and tries to help her cope with it.

## Jamie Connor.

Jamie Connor is London's beautiful, flirtatious best friend. Jamie is having an affair with her teacher, Mr. Rice. Jamie and London end up in a fight that lasts most of their junior year.

## Page Thomas.

Page Thomas is in London's gym class. Page likes London until London lies to her about a boy named Brad. Page and Brad become a couple.

## Ted Rice.

Ted Rice is the married Driver's Ed teacher. He is young and begins to have an affair with Jamie. Eventually Mr. Rice and Jamie are discovered and he is arrested.



## **Carley Lynch.**

Carley Lynch is a cheerleader who doesn't like London. London asked out Carley's boyfriend after they broke up. Carley makes mean comments to London. She is being tutored by Mr. Rice's wife. Carley tells the principal about Mr. Rice and Jamie's affair.

## **Captain Moella.**

Captain Moella is a friend of Bridgette's from high school. He helps Bridgette and London re-open the case of Jonas' kidnapping and alleged murder.

## **Jonas Lane.**

Jonas Lane is London's brother. He was kidnapped from a car when he was two years old and London was six. Jonas is believed dead. However, he was kidnapped and sold on the black market.

## **London's father.**

London's father is estranged from her. Her mother made him leave them alone after Jonas was kidnapped.

## **Jo Lane.**

Jo Lane is London's grandmother. Jo's grave is what triggers London's memory of her brother's funeral.





## Objects/Places

### **Meridan High School.**

Meridan High School is where most of the action of the story takes place. Meridan is where London and the rest of the characters attend high school. London has classes with the other characters in the book.

### **4:33 am.**

4:33 am is the time of day when London's memory resets. It is also the time of day London died when she was in a coma as a six-year-old child.

### **London's Notebook.**

London's notebook is where she keeps all of the important information she needs to remember. London writes in her notebook each night. She makes notes to herself about what she wore and what she needs for school. She also writes accounts of conversations and situations.

### **Winter Formal.**

The winter formal takes place at Meridan High School. London and Luke attend the formal. London feels awkward being at a social event because there are too many ways for her to mess up. Page is unkind to London in the bathroom. London and Luke go to her house after the dance. London discovers that Luke has been lying to her, he always knew she had a memory problem.

### **Detention.**

Detention is where Jamie and Mr. Rice begin to meet and have their affair. Jamie begins to get detention intentionally.

### **Brown Converse.**

Luke wears brown Converse sneakers. Before they begin dating, London only knows him by his shoes.



## **The Funeral.**

London "remembers" the funeral from the future. In the beginning she thinks the funeral is in the future and that it might be her child's funeral. At the end of the book it is discovered that London is remembering the funeral from the past. The funeral was held for her brother Jonas.

## **Lingering Pines.**

Lingering Pines is the name of the nursing home where London's grandmother, Jo Lane, lived.

## **Luke's Minivan.**

Luke drives a minivan. London thinks this is pretty weird, but gets over it. London and Luke drive many places in the van and have their first date in the van.

## **Spanish Class.**

London and Jamie have Spanish class together. It becomes the place where much of their relationship takes place.

## **Gym Class.**

London hates gym class. Page Thomas has gym with London.

## **The Shoe Game.**

Luke taught London the Shoe Game when they were eleven years old. London plays the shoe game her entire life, but didn't realize Luke taught it to her. London tries to guess things about people according to their shoes.

## **YMCA Camp.**

London went to YMCA summer camp when she was eleven but doesn't remember. Camp is where Luke and London met for the first time. Luke was beaten up by a boy and London made him feel better. They became friends and she told him about her memory problem. Luke always remembered London, but London didn't write the information down so she forgot him.



# Social Sensitivity

The focus of *The Forgotten* is memory.

Professor Elhanan Rosenbaum, a Holocaust survivor, is a well-respected and talented psychotherapist who prides himself on his memory because it is so crucial to the Shoah (Holocaust). Rosenbaum believes that it is crucial for him to remember the countless victims that he has seen in his native city of Feherfalu in Romania because forgetting the pain and suffering of the Jews dishonors and diminishes the pain experienced by those who lost their lives. That is why saying Kaddish (the prayer for the dead) is important to him. As a psychotherapist, Rosenbaum heals his patients (predominantly Holocaust survivors) by getting them to remember and reveal their pain so that they can continue to lead productive lives without repressing memories. Gradually, Rosenbaum discovers, to his horror, that he is quite ill and that he suffers from a terrible disease—one that he dreads far more than cancer. Although the narrator and the characters never mention the disease in the novel, Doctor Rosenbaum clearly suffers from Alzheimer's Disease.

A significant irony in the novel is that a man who feels that God has preserved his life so that he may serve as a witness and remember events and people during the Holocaust discovers that he is losing his memory. The social concern of memory in Wiesel's novel is currently an issue because every year more and more Holocaust survivors die—along with their memories. Each year fewer people who witnessed the horrific events can voice their stories and their thoughts. Rosenbaum represents those people because even though he is still alive, his memory is dying. Wiesel portrays the weakening of memory in a scene in which a Holocaust survivor named Jacob Neimann testifies against a former SS officer, with Rosenbaum in the audience. While being asked questions by the defense attorney, Neimann breaks down and forgets details about his encounter with the Nazi.

Rosenbaum becomes enraged when he sees the fellow Holocaust survivor forgetting details about the incident partly because he realizes that his own memory is failing—and at a markedly faster rate than Neimann's.

As with a majority of Wiesel's writings, *The Forgotten* concentrates on the Holocaust. Although the novel is set decades after the Shoah, the tragedy affects the lives of the main characters. Malkiel Rosenbaum, son of Elhanan, travels to his father's hometown of Feherfalu to discover the possible cause of his father's loss of memory, which the psychotherapist attributes to the sin that he committed during the Holocaust. The remorseful Elhanan laments to his son, "I am a guilty man. That is why I am being punished.

Like Abuya's heretical sons, I gazed when I should not have gazed and turned my eyes away when I should not have. I saw a sin committed . . . a crime . . . I could have, I should have, done something, called out, shouted, struck a blow. I forgot our precepts, our laws, that require an individual to struggle against evil wherever it appears. I forgot



that we can never simply remain spectators, we have no right to stand aside, to keep silent, to let the victim fight the aggressor alone. I forgot so many things that day . . . . That is why I am forgetting other things now."

Elhanan relates his loss of memory to his failure to intervene when he witnessed a friend hurt a stranger. Elhanan sincerely believes that his disease exists as divine retribution for turning the other way when he witnessed a terrible injustice. He watched as his partisan companion Itzik the Long viciously raped Elena Calinescu, the innocent wife of Zoltan, the Nyilas chief. The rapist justified his behavior to Elhanan by saying that the woman's husband had murdered many innocent Jews. Although the Nyilas chief was indeed guilty of these heinous crimes, his wife did not deserve to be punished for the evils committed by her husband.

Elhanan believes that because the Jews suffered so much during the Holocaust, he should have summoned the courage to prevent an injustice committed against an innocent person—despite the fact that she is not Jewish and that her husband was a fiend. Rosenbaum deplores injustice and suffering, whether or not the victims are Jewish. The narrator says, "Famine in Africa, racial persecution in Indonesia, religious conflict in Ireland and India: what men did to other men they did to him. When someone said that as a Jew he was wrong to care about anything but Israel, he answered angrily, 'God did not create other people so we could turn our backs on them.'" This comment relates to Wiesel's famous remark that during the Holocaust, not all victims were Jews but all Jews were victims.

# Techniques

Wiesel writes in a stream of consciousness, without a strict chronological order.

He shifts between the present and the past in order to link Elhanan's past as a partisan and Holocaust survivor with his present life as a professor and psychotherapist whose mind is succumbing to Alzheimer's Disease. If the reversions to the past seem haphazard and arbitrary, so are the reminiscences in the mind of Elhanan Rosenbaum.

This narrative technique works well because it adds to the suspense in Wiesel's novel. The reminders of the past, such as the stories by Hershel and Ephraim, are sections of a giant jigsaw puzzle that the novelist has created. Once Malkiel has focused himself on helping his father by traveling through Feherfalu, he finds different pieces and attempts to put them together. The novel is a mystery because the reader, just as Malkiel, himself, has no idea what will be found. The reader, together with Malkiel, finds various clues and eventually sees their connection. Elhanan does not help the reader or his son because he is too ashamed to say what he has done (or, more specifically, what he has failed to do). Perhaps he also wants his son to learn about the old country by traveling through it, looking for clues. Elhanan clearly has faith in his son's ability to find out what happened despite beginning in a foreign country and possessing no clues.

The novelist focuses on the father-son relationship, making it the most integral relationship in the book. The assumption that this relationship is the most important in the novel is proven by the fact that the fathers' names repeat every other generation: Malkiel is the name of Elhanan's father and son. Malkiel leaves his girlfriend Tamar so that he can aid his father, who has, in turn, refused to marry after becoming a widower, subsequently focusing all his attention on his son.



# Themes

## Loss.

Loss is a strong theme running throughout "Forgotten." Loss touches each of the characters in their own way.

London's loss is literal. She has lost her memory. She has also lost her brother and father, but these losses aren't known to her until the end of the book. How London deals with her losses is what drives the book. Her inability to deal with the loss of her brother sparks the memory loss which governs London's behavior during the book. Her personality has formed around her loss of memory.

London's mother has suffered the loss of her son and the loss of her daughter as she knew her. When London loses her memory she becomes a different person than the one her mother has known. Bridgette's reaction to loss prevents London from making realizations about her own life.

Although a secondary character in the novel, London's father is present in almost every chapter. London and her father are estranged due to the loss of her brother. However, the loss of London's memory prevents her from knowing this.

London loses her relationship with Luke every night and must recreate the feelings she has for him every morning.

## Fate vs. Free Will.

The struggle between fate and free will is an old one and is a theme in many novels. London is caught up in this struggle through most of the book. She believes, because of her future memories, that she is trapped by fate. What will be, will be. She hopes that she can save people from their fate, but doesn't really believe she has the power to change the future. London's interactions with Page are a good example of this. London doesn't want to help Page date Brad because she has seen that Brad will break Page's heart. However, she tries to intervene by refusing to hook them up. Page hopes that this will save Page from sadness. However, Page and Brad find another way to begin dating. At first, London doesn't know if the future will be the same as she saw it - if Page will be heartbroken. Later in the book London's future memories change and she sees Page and Brad going to college together. This change gives London hope that the future is not set. She clings to this hope when she sees a future memory of Luke being shot and killed. The book ends as London discovers she is free from the future she remembers. She now believes that she is in charge of her own fate.



## Denial.

London's memory problem is the result of her denial. She refuses to remember that her brother was kidnapped and murdered, resulting in her father leaving and her family falling apart. When London finally remembers the kidnapping, the reader learns that London's memory loss is serving as protection. She is protecting herself from blame, as she blames herself for his kidnapping because she unlocked the car for the strangers who took him. London also uses her memory loss to deny that she caused Jamie's affair to end and Mr. Rice to be arrested. London's denial drives the tension and suspense in the plot. When she ceases to give in to her denial, her memory and self-confidence begin to develop.

## Significant Topics

Memory serves as the predominant theme in the novel. Elhanan believes that the memory of the rape disrupts his memory, preventing him from honoring his heroic father, also named Malkiel.

Elhanan believes that his loss of memory hinders him from keeping alive his father and other Holocaust victims and thus from obeying God. The memory of the dead, especially those who perished during the Shoah, is sacred. When he sends Malkiel to Romania, he insists that the son keep the memory of the massacres at Feherfalu locked inside his mind forever.

Speaking of the victims who had once been his neighbors and friends, Elhanan says to Malkiel, "Remember, my son.

Without even knowing it, I must have walked across their graves."

Jewish mysticism is another important theme in *The Forgotten*. Hershel, the gravedigger, and Ephraim, the blind seer and eternal crier, play significant roles in that they serve as the bridge between the past and the present. Although they may seem unpleasant and moody, through their gifts they help Malkiel in his journey.

Hershel becomes Death personified and Ephraim labels himself Memory personified. The Great Reunion becomes important because it manifests the religious history of Feherfalu. Despite the great atrocities committed during the Holocaust, Hershel retains his faith in God and in the great rabbis of the community, indicating that the Jewish faith will survive despite the Holocaust. Hershel and Ephraim live on to ensure that the Jewish faith in this shtetl in the Carpathian Mountains will survive.

The element of forgiveness plays a significant role in the text. Elhanan believes that God has not forgiven him for leaving the Nyilas's wife when he could have saved her from Itzik the Long. God punishes him, Elhanan believes, because he has not sought the forgiveness of the woman, Elena Calinescu. Because he cannot travel due to ill

health, Elhanan sends his son to Feherfalu to find the woman and seek forgiveness for him.

Elhanan can only feel at peace when he knows that she understands his remorse for failing to intervene on her behalf.

Sexuality plays a part in this novel in that Malkiel's lust for women manifests his immaturity. As long as he has lusty feelings for women, his attempts to aid his father become impotent. Only when he can ignore the sexual advances of women such as the beautiful translator Lidia can he become focused and aid his father. By drinking with the hideously ugly Hershel rather than the attractive Lidia, he finds the clues that he needs in order to find out the truth about Itzik the Long and his cruel rape of Elena Calinescu.



# Style

## Point of View

"Forgotten" is told from the first-person point of view of its sixteen-year-old protagonist, London Lane. London has no memories and therefore, she never thinks about events in the past tense. However, because she has "memories" of the future, she often thinks of events in the future tense. London's memory resets each day at 4:33am. During the day, she speaks of things in present tense. If she is recalling something from an earlier moment in the same day, she will use past tense. The rest of the time London refers to events that will happen in the future as a way to reference something she should know about the present or the past. The concept itself should be confusing to the reader, but the author's voice and writing style allow the reader to follow London extremely well.

London narrates her story as it happens. Occasionally the reader is allowed a glimpse of the notes London writes to herself to jog her memory. All of London's thoughts and conversations are open to the reader.

## Setting

London Lane lives in a small, unspecified town where her mother also grew up. She lives in a middle class home with her single mother and attends Meridan High School. "The City" is often referenced as being close by, but it is never named. The majority of the story's action takes place at Meridan High School. The high school is where London interacts with her friends and enemies. London's interactions with Luke begin at school, but continue at her home, his home and - primarily - in his mini van. Often London is alone in her bedroom reminiscing about the day, writing notes to herself or reading from her memory notebook. The settings assist to make the character feel like a normal teenage girl. They also contribute to the chasteness of the romantic relationship between London and Luke, not much can happen when a parent could walk in any minute.

## Language and Meaning

London's language is that of a typical teenager. The characters of the book use average vocabulary and speak as you would expect for young, middle class teenagers. London and her mother have typical mother-daughter conversations, as do London and her best friend. Perhaps because of her experiences, London is more thoughtful than other characters of her age in the book. Slang is used in the book, but only occasionally. Cursing language is both limited and mild. The weakest link in language is that of Luke, London's boyfriend. His intensity and devotion are, perhaps, too mature for a boy his age.

## Structure

"Forgotten" is structured as a novel. There are forty-eight chapters of varying length; chapters range from two pages to ten. The book is summed up nicely with a short epilogue at the end of the last chapter. Some chapters contain short excerpts of London's memory notes.



## Quotes

"He's not in my memory, which means he's not in my future" (Chapter 2, p. 17).

"Even though I have the benefit of knowing that I'll grow more beautiful each day - and that Carley will never look better than she does right now — the comment stings" (Chapter 4, p. 23).

"Tomorrow is Wednesday, so today is Tuesday. Check" (Chapter 6, p. 32).

"The snow blankets the courtyard like froth on the top of a perfect latte" (Chapter 8, p. 47).

"There's an awkward silence again" (Chapter 17, p. 95).

"I turn to my mom, mouth still slightly ajar, and the ice melts" (Chapter 18, p. 103).

"And then something happens. A piece snaps into place" (Chapter 24, p. 139).

"I wonder what he means by 'always' as he brushes my face with his hand and we are quiet for a moment" (Chapter 27, p. 156).

"Page was forced to find another way into Brad's arms, and it seems to have made all the difference" (Chapter 29, p. 179).

"In a way, he has become the closest thing to a memory I might ever have" (Chapter 33, p. 207).

"I want to watch a Disney movie to scrub my brain clean" (Chapter 42, p. 252).



## Key Questions

One topic for discussion is the father-son relationship between Elhanan and Malkiel; they become closer upon Malkiel's understanding of Elhanan's actions (or more precisely, his one tragic inaction) during the Holocaust. As the novel progresses, Malkiel acquires a better understanding of Elhanan's pain and his need to maintain his gradually depleting memory.

Jewish mysticism is another subject for debate. It plays a major role in people's lives during the Holocaust, and it helps the reader understand the values of the Jewish people. The gravedigger's story of the Great Reunion—an event in the graveyard that has profoundly affected his life—shows the belief system that has helped Jews maintain their fortitude and their faith; yet faith, as Wiesel has mentioned in several of his books, is problematic in light of the horrors of the Holocaust.

1. Why is the theme of memory important in the novel? Why does it mean so much to Elhanan?
2. What is the significance of the role of the gravedigger? What is his connection to Jewish mysticism?
3. Malkiel seems like a devoted son to Elhanan, yet Wiesel characterizes him as a womanizer. What purpose does Malkiel's love for women have in the novel?
4. Itzik the Long rapes the wife of Zoltan, the Nyilas chief. Can you justify his behavior—or at least understand his action? Do the atrocities that he has witnessed and endured justify his actions?
5. Wiesel presents the plot in *The Forgotten* in a unique order, venturing back and forth from the present to the past and from one country to another. Explain the significance of the novel's organization.
6. Explain the importance of women in the novel. What is the significance of the role of people like Tamar and Talia?

What effect do they have upon their men?

7. What does the title of the novel signify? Who are the forgotten? Are they the Holocaust survivors? The memories?

The ancestors, such as those buried in the graveyard Malkiel visits, and people back in Romania, such as the gravedigger, whom Malkiel encounters?

8. What role does Jewish mysticism play in the novel? How, for instance, does the gravedigger's discussion of the Great Reunion of the revered rabbis affect the book? What is Wiesel's point in having the great rabbis trying to intervene when it is too late?



## Topics for Discussion

London's mother has kept some very important details of her daughter's life from her. What does she hide from London? Do you think she has the right to do this? How could London's life have been different if her mother told her the truth?

Luke's betrayal hits London especially hard. Not only has her mother been lying to her, but her boyfriend has been keeping a secret too. Why did Luke lie to London? How could he have done things differently? Is it possible that London overreacted?

London's story brings up an age old question: is there such a thing as fate? It is clear, in the beginning of the book, that London believes in fate. What are some examples of this belief? How does this belief influence and govern London's behavior?

By the end of the story, London realizes that she has the power to change her future. Does this mean that she has free will?

The relationship between Jamie and Mr. Rice is considered to be taboo by American standards. Why is their affair harmful? Who is at fault in this relationship? Can Jamie be blamed for the affair? Can Mr. Rice be blamed?

London often refers to the harm that will come to Jamie as a result of her affair with a teacher. What happens to Jamie in London's "memories" of the future?

The novel never addresses the paranormal aspect of London's memory issues. Is it possible to suffer memory loss from a traumatic event? What about seeing the future? Is that a normal part of memory? Why doesn't London ever speak of her future memories in terms of ESP or clairvoyance? Why might the author choose not to take the story in this direction?

People can often predict what will happen based on prior memories and past behaviors. Is it possible this is happening to London? Does London really see the future? Or is she seeing what she thinks the future will be? Does it make a difference?

London and Jamie are best friends. Usually, the best friend in a book is created to be the confidant of the main character. This gives the reader the ability to "hear" the book in something other than narrative. However, because Jamie and London fight through most of the book, Luke plays this role for London. What is Jamie's purpose in the book? How does her character help to develop the plot? How does she help move the story forward?

## Literary Precedents

All of Wiesel's writings derive, to some extent, from biblical precedents; *The Forgotten* is no exception. The hardships faced by Elhanan may remind readers of tribulations encountered by Biblical characters such as Jonah and Job. Like Elhanan, Jonah fails in a serious obligation (in the case of Elhanan, it is his decision to refrain from aiding the wife of Zoltan, the Nyilas chief, who is being raped by Elhanan's friend, Itzik the Long). God punishes Elhanan for failing in his duty to intervene by taking away his memory (Alzheimer's Disease). Elhanan is reminiscent of Job in that he must weather several tragedies, such as the loss of his family, his wife, and ultimately, his mind.

Contracting Alzheimer's Disease is extremely painful for him because he prides himself on his memory, his ability to honor the memories of those who perished during the Holocaust. Like Job, Elhanan is an honorable and virtuous person who must find the strength to endure the great hardships that would have destroyed the average person.

*The Forgotten* might derive, in part, from *Hamlet* (1601). The gravediggers in both works provide valuable information and moral instruction to the protagonists; they serve as guides and historians of the past. Just as the gravedigger in *Hamlet* tells of King Hamlet (the prince's father) and the court jester, Yorick, Hershel tells of the great rabbis of the past in his Carpathian town and of Malkiel, son of Elhanan (Malkiel's grandfather, whom the protagonist has only met through stories of the past). Both gravediggers help their respective protagonists understand their situations more clearly and are comical, even grotesque, archivists of the past histories of their town.

## Related Titles

An important work that relates to *The Forgotten* is Wiesel's novel *The Oath* (1973).

*The Oath*, like *The Forgotten*, concerns a Holocaust survivor who has suppressed his story about the Shoah but who feels that he must now reveal the atrocities to a younger person who has not experienced them himself. Yet in both novels, the audience is the son of a survivor who must learn about a tragedy in order to better understand.

*Night* (1958) is another work by Wiesel that focuses on father-son relationships during the Holocaust. Although *Night* deals with life during the Holocaust and *The Forgotten* concerns life after the Shoah, both books express Wiesel's feelings about how a father and son can help each other cope with the inevitable sense of loss that occurs because of the Holocaust. In both works, the Holocaust ultimately brings the father and son together, causing them to communicate and learn about each other in a manner that would otherwise never be possible.

Like his previous novels, this novel includes several storytellers. Hershel the gravedigger and his blind friend Ephraim are storytellers, as are Malkiel and Elhanan. These novels manifest Wiesel's preoccupation with storytelling. And by hearing accounts of events told through various perspectives, the reader comes to a fuller understanding of significant events during the life of Elhanan, Malkiel, and Hershel.

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