

THE GOOD PARTS

BOOK CLUB GUIDE



Dear Reader,

Ten years ago, my husband wrote me the letter that inspired *The Good Parts*. We met as bright-eyed eighteen-year-olds and parted ways after college graduation, tearfully acknowledging that the timing was wrong, we'd met too soon, we were headed in different directions—him, to China, me to Scotland. I tried my best to forget him: I met new friends, started dating someone nothing like him, and became, in big and small ways, a new version of myself.

His letter arrived two months after he'd first sent it, covered in countless stamps and looking like it'd been on the losing side of a wrestling match. His words changed the trajectory of our lives. We could choose each other now, he said. He'd imagined a future for us where we grew together like trees, our roots twining, leaves straining toward the same light. He was signing on to love every version of me, if only I were brave enough to let him. It was the first time I realized that great love is never a straight line.

Our love story ended happily. But what if I'd never gotten the letter? Who would I be today? Would I carry some of the past with me, or would it feel better to forget? They were big questions I wanted to explore alongside concepts I'd grappled with in school: how memory defines and redefines us, the profound connection between destruction and creation, and what the body remembers when the mind does not. And I wanted to explore them in the warm embrace of a life-defining love, with parallels to my own story (but only the good parts).

Thank you so much for reading *The Good Parts*. It is staggering to me that these characters I've grown to know so well will now get to live new lives through the eyes of readers like you. But here they are, in your hands. That's pure magic.

With gratitude,
Evann Normandin



Discussion Questions

1. Rose's memory loss is a choice; her father's is not. How does the novel use these two experiences to explore the difference between forgetting as liberation and forgetting as loss?
2. In both timelines, Landon tries to capture Rose through photographs and drawings. What does it mean to capture someone's "essence"? Can art preserve a person, or only the artist's perspective on them?
3. What does the title *The Good Parts* mean to you? How do Landon's desire to protect the good parts of their relationship and Rose's preference for accuracy shape the story?
4. Rose and Graham's group discusses how physical impulses and sensations can linger from their "others'" experiences after taking the forgetting pill. Do you believe the body can remember what the mind does not? Can we ever truly "forget" something?
5. At the end of the book, Graham responds to Rose's decision in a way that surprises Landon. How do you interpret Graham's response? Does it reflect optimism, emotional distance, self-protection, or something else? Do you see this as a healthy way to approach love and loss?
6. How did your sympathies for Rose and Landon change over the course of the novel? Did you identify more strongly with one of them at different points in the story?
7. By the end, Rose and Landon each make a choice that echoes an earlier decision. Did you expect this ending? In what ways are their final choices repetitions, and in what ways are they different?
8. Poppy and Conor are witnesses to Rose and Landon's relationship—both its joys and hardships. What does the novel suggest about the role friendship plays in our lives? If you were in Poppy's or Conor's position, would you have done anything differently?
9. In what ways do Rose's relationships with her parents shape her decisions throughout the novel? Why might she choose to forget her loved ones after experiencing the pain of being forgotten herself?
10. Would you find the forgetting pill freeing, horrifying, or a mix of both? If you always had the option to restart your life without its memories, how might that change the way you live?