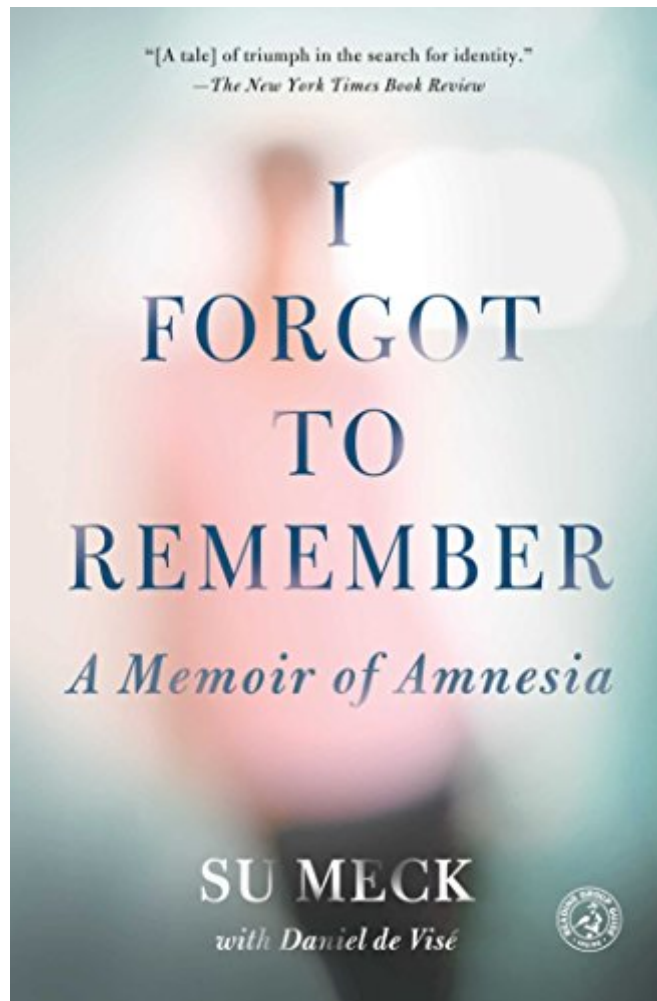


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I Forgot To Remember: A Memoir Of Amnesia (Simon & Schuster Nonfiction Original Hardcover)



Synopsis

The courageous memoir of a woman who was robbed of all her memories by a traumatic brain injury "and her more than twenty-five-year struggle to reclaim her life: [A tale] of triumph in the search for identity" (The New York Times Book Review). In 1988, Su Meck was twenty-two and married with two children when a ceiling fan fell and struck her on the head, erasing all her memories of her life. Although her body healed rapidly, her memories never returned. After just three weeks in the hospital, her physicians released Su and she returned home to take care of her two toddlers. What would you do if you lost your past? Adrift in a world about which she understood almost nothing, Su became an adept mimic, gradually creating routines and rituals that sheltered her and her family from the near-daily threat of disaster "or so she thought. Though Su would eventually relearn to tie her shoes, cook a meal, read, and write, nearly twenty years would pass before a series of personally devastating events shattered the "normal" life she had worked so hard to build, and she realized that she would have to grow up all over again. In her own indelible voice, Su offers a unique view from the inside of a terrible injury as she "recounts her grueling climb back to normalcy |in this heart-wrenching true story" (>). Piercing, heartbreaking, but finally uplifting, > is the story of a woman determined to live life on her own terms.

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Customer Reviews

Su Meck's extraordinary book, "I Forgot to Remember: A Memoir of Amnesia," made me feel like I was reading a tension-filled child-at-risk suspense thriller rather than a memoir. I became totally engrossed, practically gripping the book in two white-knuckled hands. I could barely put it down. It held me spellbound. It filled me with a whole array of negative and positive emotions. Mostly, I desperately wanted someone to help this woman! The "child" was Su Meck, a 22-year-old woman who suffered a traumatic brain injury (a ceiling fan falls on her head) and, after a remarkably brief three-week stay in the hospital, is released to the care of her 23-year-old husband. He obviously loves her and wants to do the best for her. He's described as a sort of software geek; it becomes quiet obvious very early that this guy is immature, selfish, and has a severely damaged ability to empathize with what his wife is going through. Despite the fact that she had virtually complete retrograde and anterograde amnesia and was, for all intents and purposes, an infant, she was expected to take care of herself, two infant boys (18-month-old Patrick and three-year-old Benjamin) and have dinner on the table and the house cleaned when her husband came home from work. This was a woman who didn't know what a stove was, much less how to use one! She had to be taught how to comb her hair and eat with a fork. She only had a vocabulary of about 100 words. If you showed her a can opener, she had no idea what it was. In addition, she had an extremely faulty short-term memory that was, at least in the first three years post accident, almost totally unable to retain anything. She couldn't remember what to eat, when to eat, how to shop, how to do laundry, etc.

I had a friend in college that had TBI (Traumatic Brain Injury), and at the time, I didn't understand it. I chose this book because my dad died of dementia, which is a totally different brain injury, but I was curious as to know what living with TBI is like. This book didn't disappoint as the author (with help) wrote a very honest assessment of what her life was like. It starts off in a halting way, as she tried to remember the day she lost herself. It was a freak accident. She ended up losing all of her memories and had to be retrain on even how to do some of the simplest tasks like brushing her teeth. She was released from the hospital in three weeks with little physical therapy. This is her story of how she tried to reclaim her life day by day, often-times forgetting even the simplest things. As I read this story, I am struck anew by a simple fact. Ms. Meck has had no physical therapy to help her navigate

her new world. She has had no help in raising her children that she doesn't even remember giving birth to. My college friend had physical therapy for years in just how to remember the simplest things and when I met her, she would adhere to a routine in studying that was very intense. It was the only way she could study is by repetition. As young as I was then, I didn't understand her need for repetition. After reading Ms. Meck's story, I do understand it more. It is amazing how a simple cut to the head can shatter a life. One of the issues that bothers me is the way her husband treated her throughout their marriage. I am glad that she's able to deal with it on her own terms, but it was uncomfortable for me to read. Another issue that bothers me is the lack of support Ms. Meck got from the medical community and from other people in her life.

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