



Dying to Remember

Glen Apseloff

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When Dr. Christopher Barnes awakens from a coma, his world lies in pieces. A neurotoxin has left the surgeon with a rare form of amnesia that prevents him from forming new memories. Any new information vanishes within moments.

Then he learns that his wife has been murdered...and he'll have to relearn this every day.

He vows to solve the case himself, but the police have their own theory—one that puts him at the center of a conspiracy to commit homicide.

Barnes spends his days piecing the crime together and trying to separate friend from foe. The more the cops build their case against him, the closer he gets to the truth...but the deeper he falls into danger.

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Dying to Remember Details

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From Reader Review Dying to Remember for online ebook

Vivian says

Dr. Barnes woke up from a coma months after he was hospitalized. His short term memory was suspect. He couldn't remember what was said or happened just moments before. Being a well-renowned surgeon, that was difficult to grasp. Even worse was learning that your wife was murdered. How could this be? He felt he had hit rock bottom. Or so he thought.

~ I didn't realize this book was 30 years old until I was a quarter of the way in. So it holds up well. Storyline is good, although pretty far-fetched

Zachary says

Dying to Remember

I really enjoyed this book from beginning to end. Others might say it wasn't for them because of the repetition, but that is the main crux of the story. One of the main things like about this story is when something catastrophic happens to you, that is when you really find out who your friends are. I'm not saying the first few days, the ones that are in it for the long run. Read it....

Jo says

An easy read. Interesting enough to keep you reading although (without giving too much away) because of the illness suffered by the main character in the book, I found the repetition of his daily life a bit boring. I do understand it was probably a necessary part of the story but I felt it could have been explained different rather than using the same words again and again... and again! It's just my opinion!

I also thought the book ended rather abruptly... suddenly we knew who did and why and everything was over.

Having said all of that, it was an entertaining holiday read which kept me occupied for a few days. I don't really need much more when I'm on vacation :)

Sharon says

Glad I don't like seafood, cause if I did I sure wouldn't be eating it again after reading this book. LOL

Chris Barnes is a successful surgeon, top in his field. While at a conference in Canada he ate a plate of mussels and contacted a sort of poison which left him with no short term memory. Every day he has to relearn (with the help of notes he writes himself) that his wife and dog were murdered, that he has memory loss and everything else that he has done since waking up from his coma. The cops suspect that Chris hired

someone to kill his wife and they are determined to prove it. Chris has vowed to find the real killer, which is hard since he has no memory and has to rely on his notes.

This book was good, Not a 'OMG I have to find out what happens next' type of book, but kept me entertained and guessing pretty much until the end who killed his wife and dog (And I have to admit I was more upset the dog was killed than his wife lol). I had it narrowed down to 2 of the characters.

The recaps of what Chris did the previous days got to be a bit much after a while. I know he has no memory and needs his notes to remember, but after a while just saying that he read his notes would have been sufficient. Of course it was pretty sad when he did wake up and noticed his wife was not in bed and him thinking where she could be (work, bathroom etc) until he read his notes to remind him she was dead.

Do have to say I did not like pretty much any of the characters. The cops were asses, just the way they went after Chris and how they wanted to try and use his memory loss against him. Chris' best friend was a jerk. Even Chris himself was a bit of a jerk at the beginning of the book. Though I did feel bad for him as the story went on and he did become more likable as his personality changed due to his memory loss as the story went on.

Denise says

2.0 out of 5 stars -- Predictable and banal mystery...

Dr. Christopher Barnes is in Toronto at a medical convention when he eats some contaminated mussels. After he wakes up from the coma induced by the neurotoxin domoic acid (based on true events), he discovers that his wife has been murdered and he has brain damage. Despite his handicap, he is determined to beat the cops to find the killer and the motive.

Everyone knows I'm a fanatic about medical thrillers. I have read almost every single one I can dig up and I rarely find those that are both a great storyline AND relate accurate and up-to-date medical plausibility. Although I understand why this is set in 1987, it was really jarring and so many things that happened just made the whole plot hard to buy into because of the lack of today's technology. The characters are all complete stereotypes and it seemed to me that the author had either a lack of knowledge, or a lack of respect for nurses, cops and women in general. The protagonist was unlikeable and it really got old with the repetition -- we got it -- he has memory deficits and the inability to create and store new memories. It was almost nauseating how many times we had to read about how much Dr. Christopher Barnes, majorly egotistical jerk and cardiothoracic surgeon, loved his wife -- St. Elizabeth, the beautiful orthopedic surgeon.

After a couple of chapters it was quite easy to figure out the outcome and the story lacked suspense and thrills as the reader waited for Christopher to catch up. I was quite disappointed in this second novel I've read by this author and doubt I'd be willing to try another.

Thank you to NetGalley and Thomas & Mercer for the e-book ARC to review.

Judy Collins says

A special thank you to Amazon, Thomas & Mercer and NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

DYING TO REMEMBER, a medical mystery saga, by Glen Apseloff of one man's journey--a victim of food toxins, loss of memory, a family murdered, and a conspiracy--leaving a surgeon, trying to solve the pieces of his life.

As the book opens, Dr. Christopher Barnes is dreaming about an upcoming surgery, when he awakes with a weird feeling. He had moved out of his marriage home in Boston a week earlier into the Ritz. However, he realizes he is a patient at the moment, versus a surgeon.

He recalls his abdomen contracted in spasms, the violent sickness, from poisoning from mussels. He realizes his wife Elizabeth is not here but he recalls a woman, Cheryl, a dinner, a hotel. They had met a year earlier at a symposium. He had ordered escargot in garlic and butter sauce, and as an entrée, North Atlantic mussels in a white broth. He is thinking it will pass; however, it could be bacterial. However, soon thereafter they are headed to the hospital as he convulsed on the stretcher, and then he was not breathing, an ET tube, coma, and loss of memory.

In the meantime we hear from his wife, Elizabeth Barnes, an orthopedic surgeon, recalling an earlier very heated argument with her husband, Chris. Both she and her husband routinely received calls in the middle of the night. Now she is receiving a call from the hospital about her husband. She cancelled her surgeries for the day and took the first flight out to Toronto.

While she revisits the past, when she moved to the US after completing medical school in London and had become an American citizen only after marrying Chris. The pregnancy now threatened to tear them apart. When she had told him, he was outraged, as he could not control this. She decided she would have the baby with or without him. But she only hoped it was his.

She had never planned on having an affair, certainly not with a neighbor, Marshall, a teacher of creative writing at MIT. His wife had been killed by a reckless driver ten months before. She met as they were walking their dogs and shortly thereafter began writing her poems. After their fourth walk together the affair begun. She did not want to lose Chris. She could not get caught. Either man could be the father.

Now Chris is in a coma in Toronto, and what if he never recovered? The confession of the baby had left him furious, she could only imagine what he would say if he heard the baby may not be his.

Later back in Boston Elizabeth has returned from her trip, at home thinking about her future, when the doorbell rings. We learn she has been gunned down, murdered at her home along with the dog. At the time of the murder, Chris lay comatose in a Toronto hospital.

Flashing back to Chris, eleven days later he opens his eyes and they remove the respirator. He asks about his wife. When the nurse explains it is Dec 9, 1987. He is trying to remember what he was doing when he came to the hospital. A naked woman, Cheryl? Soon the physicians realize has short term memory impairment. The specialist informs him he has had a bout of food poisoning and the toxins have destroyed much of his medial temporal lobes, while they work to try and improve his memory. He learns of the murder.

Since this would be a high profile case, normally in such types of homicide investigations, the husband is always a suspect, or could have hired someone to kill her?

His memory comes and goes, very similar to Alzheimer's and dementia. When Barnes leaves the hospital, he is instructed to write down his thoughts daily and post them throughout the house. When looking at this watch, he has to remember to put the note in his right pocket. He also has to write himself messages, as reminders --each minute he may forget something important. He will need to post them in every room on his house, as his mind slowly unravels.

To further complicate matters, Chris is determined to find out what happened to his wife. Despite the mounting of evidence against him, he could not believe he would harm Elizabeth. Then he receives a letter demanding \$10,000 and to deposit it immediately. Could this be a gambling debt, or did he hire a hit man to kill her and no recollection of the events? He also finds a love letter written to Elizabeth with part of the pages missing. An affair, and if so with whom?

Next readers are introduced to an array of characters, Shirley a colleague of Elizabeth, his best friend, and Claire, an attorney, a lesbian, her college roommate, Claire's current jealous lover/partner Darcie, a judge. All the while he has two detectives on his case daily and he cannot even remember what he did five minutes ago. What about his career, his surgeries?

He also finds a report on Elizabeth's computer about a case she was working on involving a pharmaceutical company. Could any of this be connected and how? Also what about the letter, was she having an affair? What if the killer was after him next? He would need to start writing his notes in French, as these are his thoughts and what if someone broke in to gain this information?

He cannot remember anything from the previous day, and his doctors mention he cannot expect to retain new information for more than a few minutes. It is imperative to write it down immediately on a piece of paper, even he if recalls something from the day before. His notes and his diary entries are a reminder of his ability to form new memories, as his old ones have been severely damaged.

The good and the bad

Good: While the summary was enticing, a good set up, and of all people, toxins intrigue me as I suffer from MCS (multiple chemical sensitivities), with severe food allergies (even preservatives and additives), and medications, with adverse reactions, with anaphylaxis (very scary and life threatening) and equipped with an Epi-pen at all times. I also enjoyed the diary and the notes. Dying to Remember had all the ingredients for a good medical mystery thriller, right?

The negative. A lack of emotion, suspense, or intensity. It was almost robotic, like someone was telling a story; however, failed to add feelings and emotions. It was also very disjointed. So many loose ends left dangling. You arrive at the ending, to discover the identity of the killer; however, no mention of all the other characters, to tie up loose ends you spend an entire book reading about. Very strange. I experienced no emotional connection to any of the characters. Barnes' character could have been so much more. As a reader you do not experience his desperation, or fear (an opportunity for some riveting scenes). A shame, as really wanted to like this one.

If you are looking for an intense suspenseful medical thriller, would highly recommend **TRAUMA**, by *Daniel and Michael Palmer* (5 stars).

Jemma says

Looking at the pretext of this book, I was really excited to read it – and I am pleased to report that it delivered exactly what I was looking for – a suspenseful and authentic mystery which had me on the edge of my seat until the very end.

The unique plot caught my eye whilst browsing books; Christopher Barnes, a successful and high profile surgeon, suffers from severe food poisoning which leaves him with devastating brain damage; a rare form of amnesia which prevents him from remembering everyday things, and leaves his past memories murky and distorted. Not only this, but whilst he was comatose due to the food poisoning, his wife was murdered – and once he awakens, he is determined to find out who did it, despite his serious illness. What Christopher uncovers is an ever-thickening plot which casts suspicion on those around him, including himself. The reader is forced to watch helplessly as he re-learns the death of his wife several times a day, and the flame of justice within him reawakens.

I was utterly engrossed in the gripping and unreliable narrative of a man with a memory disorder – it is unnerving never knowing what to trust. It is an extremely difficult thing to accomplish but the author pulls it off really well – it makes the reader feel like they are trapped inside of the protagonists mind alongside him and the overall effect is extremely claustrophobic. The repetitiveness of the narrative seems like it should be boring – we continually read about Christopher waking up clueless and then re-reading about his new circumstances – but it was actually very disturbing. And the fact that he has to relearn his wife's murder continuously is equally emotive and psychologically unsettling – the end of the book still resonates with me.

The introduction of his disorder was very well executed; the tension builds slowly and whilst there is practically no action, the effect is chilling. The world seems a lot more dangerous with memory lapses occurring sporadically – it made the entire story unpredictable and tense. Chaos looms at every turn, even if Chris so much forgets to put his to-do list in the right pocket it could alter the course of his life indefinitely. 'Dying to Remember' certainly takes you out of your comfort zone – it is uncomfortable watching an educated man come to terms with his brain damage and the huge consequences which will cast a shadow on the rest of his life. Seeing the vulnerability of someone who once was so self-assured is humbling, and that feeling is persistent throughout the story.

Another huge positive is that the entirety of the book seems medically sound, even though the initial concept seemed slightly far-fetched – it is by no means ridiculous as some books in this genre are – and I found every page stimulating and convincing. There was particular attention paid to the cause of food poisoning and it was explored thoroughly – in fact, a lot of it went over my head! There is also a regular description of the mussels that nearly killed Christopher as he revisits the memory continuously – it is understandably one of the most poignant memories that he possesses. One negative I took from this book is that I might not ever be able to eat mussels again, I felt contaminated just reading the graphic and poisonous was they were depicted.

I can give it no higher praise than saying this book was brilliant and unique at every turn with no shortage of red herrings, suspicious characters and hidden motives. It was fantastically written and the unveiling of the mystery at the end was unexpected and entertaining. I can hardly find fault with it, and I highly recommend reading 'Dying to Remember' – and I challenge anyone to solving the case!

I received this book from Netgalley in return for an honest review.

sue says

At first I found this to be looking like quite an intriguing tale.

Something I could 'get my teeth into' but the more I read the less I was eager to continue. It seemed OK, but the writing lacked something, empathy, emotions, feelings which I found quite disconcerting at times being that the subject matter is quite intense and emotional I would have thought.

I read it, and I would say it was an OK book.

Barbara Frank says

There were too many unanswered things in this mystery to satisfy me. What ever happened to the neighbor that the main character's wife had an affair with? How did the murderer become so adept at deception and death? OK story but I was glad to finish it.

Lauren Marlene Sanders-Jones says

I thought I would be frustrated by the plot line of a character with absolutely no short-term memory, but this author handled that issue very well. The story is riveting and compelling. I look forward to reading more works by Glen Apseloff.

Terri says

"Your wife & dog have been murdered & you have brain damage because of a plate of mussels". Imagine having to be told this news everyday because you have lost the ability to form new memories of events that happened after you got sick. You remember falling in love & getting married but you don't remember why they're not laying next to you when you wake up in the morning. You live by the notes you wrote yesterday but you don't remember why you made some of the choices you did. This part of the story is told so well it's easy to forget that "Dying to Remember" (by Glen Apseloff) is a really good murder mystery! It's bad enough that Dr. Chris Barnes has to relive being told that his wife & dog are dead everyday, he also has to convince Boston police that despite being in a coma when they were killed, there is no reason for him to be their main suspect (mind you, if he did do it, he wouldn't remember anyway!). Apseloff artfully lays out a cast of characters & makes it very easy for you to believe it could have been any one of them. I was really impressed that even though the memory loss story was told so well he didn't take shortcuts w/ the murder mystery aspect. He never "dumbed it down" & he had me guessing until the end. This was The first book of

Apseloff's I've read & I'm excited for the next one. I made a note so I wouldn't forget...

Dorianne Swift says

Captivating and sobering

I was captured from the first, and despite having having read the synopsis, I was shocked when Elizabeth was shot and killed. Through the whole story, I railed at the author over Rex. But it is so boring, to realize that what we've allowed to happen to our Earth can cause permanent damage if not death. As an aside, I'm glad I don't eat seafood! You will enjoy this tale, from start to end.

Sojourner says

Dying to Remember by Glen Apseloff is an absorbing medical thriller full of suspense and mystery. While it may lack the finesse of a top-notch thriller, this certainly was still an enjoyable read, not dull and not-at-all predictable. I'm still reeling under the shock of discovering who the murderer of Elizabeth was. What the story lacks was depth and I think the author could have done much better to develop the characters.

Yet, Dying to Remember by Glen Apseloff caught me by surprise. I started with a preconceived notion that it would be a pedestrian affair. But I was way off the mark. What I think was plain stupid was the refusal of Christopher Barnes to have a child though his wife Elizabeth was longing for it. Though there may be some husbands out there who refused to have a child, it doesn't make for a pleasant read.

I badly wanted Cheryl to resurface somewhere in the story but how it pans out didn't allow that. And Chris treatment of Cheryl was a bit disappointing. Not that I wanted him to go all the way with her but having gone that far, a-little-something more would have worked better. Though fleeting, I like Marshall Coburn and his dog Poco. Though his story is mentioned in bits and pieces, there was certainly emotion writ large over it. I though Shirley Collins would provide the much needed succour to Chris but I got it very wrong. All in all, Dying to Remember is an enjoyable read.

Joyce says

Intriguing read. Keeps one guessing as to 'who done it'. Coping with memory loss day to day has been revealing to this reader. Very entertaining read.

Kim says

Surgeon Christopher Barnes collapses after eating mussels. After coming out of a coma he discovers that he can no longer remember things and memories of the past are patchy. He also learns that his wife and dog were murdered. Because of his memory problems he has to relearn these awful facts every day. With his memory impaired he has to use notes to store any information he can gather from his wife's friends and the computer to see if he can help solve his wife's murder. Is he in danger? Could the killer be someone

close to him- and are they trying to frame him?
It kept me reading until I could find out all the answers.
I enjoyed this book and would be keen to read more by this author.
Many thanks to Net Galley for the chance to read this one.
