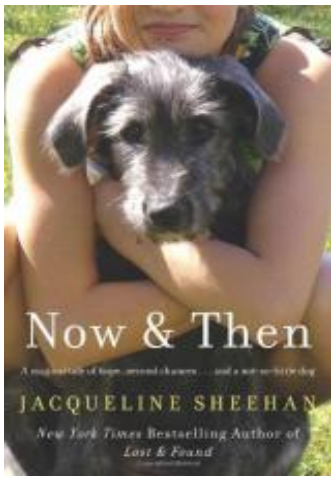
Now & Then

by Jacqueline Sheehan



About the Book

Anna O?Shea has failed at marriage, shed her job at a law firm, and she?s trying to re-create herself when she and her recalcitrant nephew are summoned to the past in a manner that nearly destroys them. Her twenty-first century skills pale as she struggles to find her nephew in nineteenth-century Ireland. For one of them, the past is brutally difficult, filled with hunger and struggle. For the other, the past is filled with privilege, status, and a reprieve from the crushing pain of present-day life. For both Anna and her nephew, the past offers them a chance at love.

Will every choice they make reverberate down through time? And do Irish Wolfhounds carry the soul of the ancient Celts?

The past and present wrap around finely wrought characters who reveal the road home. Mystical, charming, and fantastic, *New York Times* bestselling author Jacqueline Sheehan?s **Now & Then** is a poignant and beautiful tale of a remarkable journey. It is a miraculous evocation of a breathtaking place in a volatile age filled with rich, unforgettable, human characters and one unforgettable dog named Madigan.

Discussion Guide

1. Anna and Joseph?s time traveling experience is dreamlike, with aquatic and primal overtones. Their journey to the past leaves them barely alive. Did the descriptions of time travel in **Now & Then** surprise you? What notions of time travel do you have that **Now & Then** either defied or complied with?

2. Glenis says to Anna, ?You say yes or no like the English do, as if all the world fits only one way or the other. We don?t think that way. You see, the hope can?t be scratched out of us. There is always a place where a thing is mostly not, or tis, but for a wee bit. We Irish are much more specific about what is and what is not.? How do you think living in the ?modern world? has shaped our relationship with language as a society, and for you as an individual?

3. In the past, Anna ?had started to adjust to the interminable pauses between sentences that people of this time used. No one talked over the middle of someone else?s sentence. And they were profoundly good listeners? No one was multitasking here.? Do you think, with the role technology plays in our lives today, that we?ve lost a bit of our ability to communicate with each other, or that our quality of communication has changed?

4. Anna and Joseph find themselves in vastly different circumstances upon their ?rescue? in Ireland. Anna must quickly conform to a hard-scrabble existence of living off the land, while Joseph falls into the lap of luxury living at the colonel?s estate. What do they learn from their experiences on the end of the quality-of-life spectrum? How do you think the story would have been different if Anna had been rescued by the colonel?s men, and Joseph had to pull his weight on Glenis and Tom?s farm?

5. Anna and Joseph both find love in the past. What do their romances in Ireland teach them about the people they were, and the people they can become?

6. Taleen?s outburst sheds new light onto the O?Shea?s troubled family line, where fathers and sons are incapable of expressing love toward each other. What is revealed about Joseph?s peculiar place in his lineage? Do you believe curses can run through families?

7. It?s mentioned several times that there are severe penalties facing Irish who are caught speaking Gaelic, their native language. What other ways does the English rule try to break the spirit of the Irish people?

8. All of the women Anna and Joseph encounter in Ireland are strong and willful in their own way --- Glenis, Deidre, Taleen, Biddy Early. What do Anna and Joseph --- strangers from another time --- admire most about them, and what are the important lessons they learn from them?

9. What aspects of life in 1844 Ireland struck you as most surprisingly different from how we live today? What would you miss most if the modern amenities we are used to suddenly weren?t at your disposal?

10. What significance do the Irish Wolfhounds and Madigan have in **Now & Then**? Do you feel the magical and mystical elements in the story seem more believable in the story that takes place in the past versus the present-day plot?

Author Bio

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