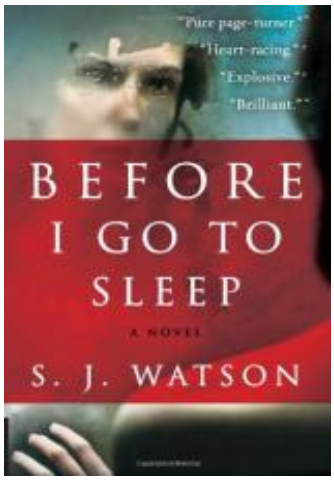
Before I Go to Sleep

by S. J. Watson



About the Book

Memories define us.

So what if you lost yours every time you went to sleep?

Your name, your identity, your past, even the people you love --- all forgotten overnight.

And the one person you trust may be telling you only half the story.

Welcome to Christine?s life.

Discussion Guide

1. Christine doesn?t feel a strong sense of love for her husband, but wonders if that is normal after so many years of marriage. Do you think it?s inevitable that a marriage changes in this way?

2. Christine says that feels like an animal. Living from moment to moment, day to day, trying to make sense of the world. Do you think this is what it must be like to be in her situation? Do you think animals really have no sense of their past? Is the abililty to remember years gone by all that separates human beings from animals?

3. Christine doesn?t feel she achieved all of her childhood ambitions. She feels disappointment in the life that she has made for herself. Is this common for a woman as she approaches fifty years of age? Do you think she is right to be disappointed, or were her childhood ambitions unrealistic?

4. How important is memory to our sense of identity? What are the events in your life that have been important to in shaping who you are? Can you imagine what it might be like if you couldn?t remember them? How would you be different as a person?

5. Christine can?t remember Adam, or Claire. She can?t remember her wedding day or writing For the Morning Birds. Have these people and things changed her personality anyway, though, even though she can?t remember them? Is not remembering something effectively the same as it not having happened?

6. What are Dr. Nash?s feelings towards Christine? Do you think he is behaving in a professional manner? He says he is writing up her case ? are his motives for helping her entirely selfless? Is he being completely honest with her?

7. Do you think that Christine?s affair is out of character for her? Why do you think it happened? Why do you think she risks her marriage? Does she treat her husband well? And Mike? Was she being fair to him?

8. Christine believes Ben doesn?t tell her about Adam so that she doesn?t get upset. Would he be right to do this? Or does she have a right to know about him no matter how painful that knowledge might be? Are there other examples of people keeping things from Christine ?for her own benefit?? Do you think this is ever the right thing to do?

9. Towards the end of the book Nash calls round at Christine?s house, but she can?t remember asking him to, even though he says she did so earlier that morning. Do you think she did so, but then forgot? Or is Nash lying to cover up the fact he had come uninvited?

10. Do you think Christine feels like a sexual person? Do you think she would be nervous about sex, and about her own body? Do you think every sexual experience would feel like the first for her? Does her husband have a right to expect her to have sex with him, even if she feels she has never met him before?

11. Did you like the ending? Did it represent closure for you? What about Christine? Do you think she will remember what happened to her when she wakes up?

Author Bio

Educated in the U.K., S.J. Watson was born in the Midlands and lives in London, England. In 2009, Watson was accepted into the first Faber Academy Writing a Novel course, a rigorous and selective program that covers all aspects of the novel writing process. **Before I Go to Sleep** is the result.

Critical Praise

"A brilliant, nasty noir. It drags you down into deep, dark and disturbing water. . . . Certain books are so good that they

remind you of the vast pleasures good writers can give you if you?re willing to pay them attention."

Before I Go to Sleep

by S. J. Watson

Publication Date: February 7, 2012
Paperback: 368 pages
Publisher: Harper Paperbacks
ISBN-10: 0062060562
ISBN-13: 9780062060563