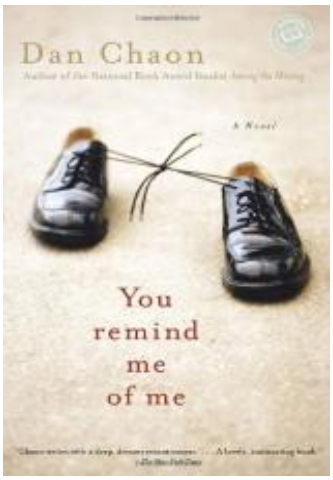
You Remind Me of Me

by Dan Chaon



About the Book

With his critically acclaimed **Among the Missing** and **Fitting Ends**, award-winning author Dan Chaon proved himself a master of the short story form. He is a writer, observes the *Chicago Tribune*, who can "convincingly squeeze whole lives into a mere twenty pages or so." Now Chaon marshals his notable talents in his much-anticipated debut novel.

You Remind Me of Me begins with a series of separate incidents: In 1977, a little boy is savagely attacked by his mother's pet Doberman; in 1997 another little boy disappears from his grandmother's backyard on a sunny summer morning; in 1966, a pregnant teenager admits herself to a maternity home, with the intention of giving her child up for adoption; in 1991, a young man drifts toward a career as a drug dealer, even as he hopes for something better. With penetrating insight and a deep devotion to his characters, Dan Chaon explores the secret connections that irrevocably link them. In the process he examines questions of identity, fate, and circumstance: Why do we become the people that we become? How do we end up stuck in lives that we never wanted? And can we change the course of what seems inevitable?

In language that is both unflinching and exquisite, Chaon moves deftly between the past and the present in the small-town prairie Midwest and shows us the extraordinary lives of "ordinary" people.

Discussion Guide

1. Why did Nora give up her first baby and not her second? In turn, how did each child pay the price of her decision?

2. How do Jonah's scars influence his life the most?

3. Why is Jonah so much more interested in the baby his mother gave up than Troy is about being adopted?

4. How do you feel Jonah and Troy's lives would have been different if Nora had been honest with Wayne Hill, Troy's natural father, about being pregnant?

5. How are Steve and Holiday, and Jonah important to each other? Why did their relationship end?

6. Why couldn't Jonah recognize the circumstances he could change/influence so his fate would turn out differently?

7. How would Jonah and Troy's lives been different if Jonah had been honest with Troy about their connection when they first met?

8. Why do you think Jonah didn't tell Troy the truth about Nora's life and personality when they first meet? Would this have changed the relationship between Troy and Jonah?

9. At what point did you recognize that Jonah has seriously broken with reality?

10. What is the significance of names in this novel? Why do you think the author chose each name?

Troy
The Mrs. Glass House
Jonah
Gary Gray
Mrs. Keene
Lisa Fixx
Loomis
St. Bonaventure

Author Bio

Dan Chaon is the author of several books, including ILL WILL, a national bestseller that was named one of the 10 best books of the year by *Publishers Weekly*. Other works include the short story collection STAY AWAKE, a finalist for the Story Prize; the national bestseller AWAIT YOUR REPLY; and AMONG THE MISSING, a finalist for the National Book Award. Chaon?s fiction has appeared in *The Best American Short Stories*, the Pushcart Prize Anthologies, and the O. Henry Collection. He has been a finalist for the National Magazine Award in Fiction and the Shirley Jackson Award, and he was the recipient of an American Academy of Arts and Letters Award in Literature. Chaon lives in Cleveland.

Critical Praise

"Beautiful, painful, and sure footed, *You Remind Me of Me* tracks the delicate connections between a handful of lost and poignant lives, in the process giving them the radiance of a stained-glass window. What a writer. Dan Chaon is going to have a breathtaking literary career."

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