



Before I Forget

André Brink

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Chris Minaar is a distinguished South African writer, an old writer, but a writer who has lost whatever gift he had for writing. It is on New Year's Eve, courtesy of his stalled car, that he meets Rachel, a young sculptress who becomes the great love of his life, a love greater for being unfulfilled.

He finds himself captivated by Rachel and drawn into a close friendship with her husband. As their friendship develops, Chris must reconcile himself to an unaccustomed type of intimacy but one that inevitably threatens this precarious triangular relationship.

Woven through this is the story of his life and of a lifetime's loving. For he has known many women. As it becomes clear that this book is the final writing act of Chris's creative life, so we understand that these recollections are an attempt to bring order to an otherwise chaotic existence.

Before I Forget is the history of a life set against the history of a nation, and the history of a transforming love.

Before I Forget Details

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Author : André Brink

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From Reader Review Before I Forget for online ebook

Babak Fakhamzadeh says

Brink is a good writer, but this book is a bit of a bore. An old, leading South African writer, after the sudden death of a young female friend, tries to come to terms with his life through the many fucks he has had over the course of his life.

The book is full of fucking and it appears Brink wrote the book primarily to shock his prudish South African audience. The twist at the end is reasonably surprising, but by the time I got there, I just didn't care enough. I bought the book after I asked an older woman working at a local Exclusive Books what she thought was Brink's best book. Well.

Kel Sta says

Although perhaps a little self-indulgent, this is quite a beautiful book with fascinating, well-developed characters, and an interesting attempt to mention the political and the personal in parallel.

Lois says

I am the biggest Brink Fan on the planet. He is my favourite author so I am biased with all of his work. Don't expect a balanced review from me. This is the slightly erotic story of an older man with his younger lover. As with all Brinks work the backdrop is apartheid South Africa and the struggles of white and black alike.

Adri says

Brink's prose is beautiful, but I found this book a complete drag. It had the feel of an autobiography about it and also felt like one man's brag fest about all his sexual exploits. I can't say that I enjoyed this and feel let down.

Rebecca Woodall says

Quite an appropriate title as most of the book read like the ram lungs of an old man. Even more, a man who has never been able to commit to one woman. Luckily for him, it seems most of the women in his life don't mind. Too and he couldn't grow up & find a woman his own age instead of continually describing his past sexual encounters. With a political backdrop as tumultuous as South Africa you would expect a more intellectual storyline but you will be disappointed.

Mollie says

I think this is one of the finest erotic books I have ever read. It offers unique and beautiful descriptions of sex and body parts, with stories about current events interwoven with the memories of an old man. Exquisite writing. One of the things I loved about the book is his treatment of older women as lovers. You don't see that often in any novel.

Ari says

I must say this before I forget. Brink is good. Definitely.

I have liked very much Brink's novels about apartheid in South Africa. In later novels it is not that much in leading role but it is always there like dark background vocals. In this novel a bit more once again as this was "memoirs" covering a long period in South Africa's violent history - not directly Brink's own memoirs but obviously very close.

A long series of women and romances. Very different women from different periods of life. All described with love and affection; even the deceitful ones. A dash of melancholy as everything is bygone - the narrator is over 80 years old.

Absolutely worth reading. As all Andre Brink's novels.

Kun vielä muistan.
WS Bookwell Oy, 2006

Jan Razny says

Very elegant and beautiful. It was one of the best books I've read in last 2-3 years. Action is secondary, emotions and reflection on delicate nature of relationship between men and women and passage of time are primary subject.

Helen says

I'm sure Brink is an amazingly skilled wordsmith but this book left me cold. It seemed to be a vehicle for his writing ability - a subject who is an author (!) rather tediously remembering, in his ripe old age, all of his various conquests. Good, you can write and describe endless different female forms. A plot would have been welcome.

Ilyhana Kennedy says

I found this slow to start, not easy to get into and quite a long wade through to the conclusion.

Set against the struggles of South Africa's liberation, it seems to contrast a life lived indifferently with the same life lived with purpose. Yes it's odd.

The trivia of the memories of countless sexual escapades contrasts with the brutality of the oppression in South Africa and then a step further with the invasion of Iraq.

I couldn't help but wonder about the attitudes of the main character, the gender bias, the age bias. The author has painted a picture of a totally unlikeable character (I thought so anyway) and extraordinary stereotypes emit from the character's psyche. He is painted as a Casanova.

The writing style tends to affirm the indifference of the central character to his own behaviour ...he acts as though it is his personal privilege to taste every feminine dish on the menu of his life. And then he voyeuristically berates the partner of a love interest for infidelity. Hardly in the moral position to take the higher ground.

Eventually he is challenged to realise his own hypocrisy.

I wonder about authors who write books about thoroughly unlikeable people.

The writing style is very dry and heady. The dialogue sounds unnatural, almost stilted.

At best I found the novel a study of shallow character, a man attempting to justify his existence.

Before the novel concludes, the reader may be entirely bored by descriptions of pubic hair, but eventually the author resolves things somewhat.

Dora Okeyo says

"Have you changed the substance of my life or just the contours?"

Chris is a South African Writer who finds love at a time in his life where he can only begin to go back in time to all the women he loved and the choices he made.

I do not know much about weaving, but Andre Brink did spin such a tale that I could not put this book because I was curious to know whether Chris' love was fulfilled.

Nana Fredua-Agyeman says

An old man recollects his life with the women he came across... before he dies...

Follow the link to read my review on my blog.

<http://freduagyeman.blogspot.com/2010...>

thanks

Arja-täti says

Kirja johon tartuin täysin sattumalta mutta joka vei minut mennessään. Rakkautta, suhteita, rakkautta ja suhteita. Iäkkään miehen kertomus elämänsä naisista.

Tätä lukiessa täytyi ottaa lasi konjakkia ja nauttia. Aivan jotain muuta mitä yleensä luen.

Yuliya says

nice mix of sexual encounters and history of South Africa. well written. Makes you interested to read to the end with all those stories jumping back and forth from the past to the future. I liked a lot the parallels between relationships with different women and connection of all of them in a woman of all life.

Noura Abdullah says

Simply one of the most mesmerizing books I've read; a troubled and jaded writer decides to tell the tale of the great love of his life, a love greater for being unfulfilled. Through exploring the triangle of this love for this woman, and the deep friendship he develops with her husband, he begins unraveling the many relationships his life is composed of. Deep, heart-wrenching and bursting with beautiful reflection, this book will remain one of the best I've come across.
