

BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE

The Memory Matchmaker

A romance short story by C.R. Lang

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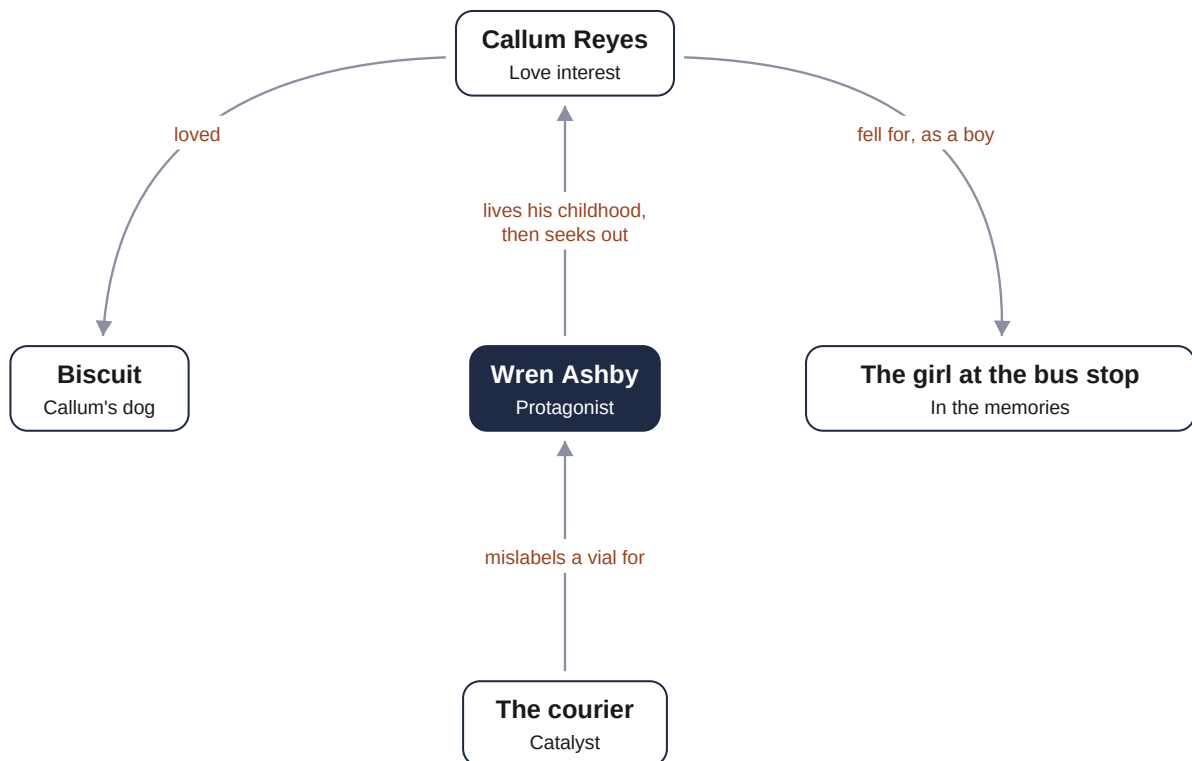
About the story

At a shop where people buy and sell memories, a careful clerk accidentally drinks a stranger's childhood and finds in it a boy who loved a laugh exactly like hers.

This guide assumes everyone has finished the story, so it discusses the ending.

Character map

The main character is in the dark box. Arrows show who acts on whom.



Who's who

Wren Ashby (Protagonist). Works the counter at a memory exchange. Careful, never samples the stock, embarrassed by her laugh.

Callum Reyes (Love interest). Thirty-one, a sound technician who sold a block of childhood memories to pay his mother's medical bills. As a boy he waited on the pier for his father's boat.

The girl at the bus stop (In the memories). Dark hair, a gap in her teeth, and Wren's exact laugh.

Biscuit (Callum's dog). Liked to sleep on Callum's feet.

The courier (Catalyst). Misabeled the shipment that started everything.

Themes to look for

Memory and identity. If you share someone's memories, do you know them? Wren decides you don't, quite.

Resonance. Two people shaped 'by the same hollow' who grew toward each other without meeting.

Generosity. Callum sold his childhood and wished its stranger well.

Starting fresh. Wren asks to begin 'not with the memories. With us.'

Discussion questions

- 1 Wren's rule is never to let herself want what passes through her hands. Why do you think she made that rule?
- 2 What finally convinces Wren that she and Callum are connected: the laugh, the spice rack, the glove, or something else?
- 3 Why does Wren insist that loving the idea of someone isn't the same as love?
- 4 The memory in the clinic, where Callum hopes the buyer will be happy, makes Wren cry 'without being sad.' Why?
- 5 Should Wren return the memories? What does the law protect, and what would she lose?
- 6 Callum's laugh 'was not hers, but it rhymed with it.' What does that image say about soulmates?
- 7 Would you sell a memory? Which kind, and why?
- 8 The last line says they 'began to make a memory that belonged to no one but them.' Why does ownership matter so much in this story?

Craft corner

For writers in the group: two ways to look at how the story is built.

World-building. A memory exchange is never fully explained. Which small details make it feel real?

Inciting incident. A smudged label starts everything. How quickly does the story get there?

Try this together

Each person describes one small, happy memory in three sentences, without saying whose it is. Shuffle and read them aloud, then see if the group can match each memory to its owner.

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