



Me Again

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"A beautifully wrought tale of courage, hope, and awakenings of all kinds."

~ Sara Gruen, author of *Water for Elephants*

Miracles can be damned inconvenient. That's what thirty-four-year-old stroke victim Jonathan Hooper learns when he wakes up after spending six years in a coma. Everyone calls Jonathan's recovery a "miracle," but since nobody had expected him to recover, his sudden awakening becomes an awkward intrusion on the lives of his family and friends. To make matters worse, Jonathan doesn't even recognize these people. The stroke has wiped away most of Jonathan's memory, while the coma has withered his body. In short, Jonathan's not the man he used to be - whoever that was.

The only bright spot for Jonathan is Rebecca Chase, a young woman he meets in the hospital's long-term recovery unit. A stroke has drastically changed her personality, making her a stranger to her husband. Gone is the vivacious trophy wife, replaced by a shy, awkward woman with a knack for saying exactly the wrong thing.

They don't fit in. And they'll never be the same. But now they've got to decide what matters most: who they were, or who they can become?

A steadily accelerating story exploring the irony, humor, and opportunity that can accompany personal calamity, *Me Again* follows the intertwined paths of two people forced to start over in life: one looking for his place in a world that has moved on without him, the other struggling to navigate a relationship with a man who wishes she were someone else.

Me Again Details

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From Reader Review Me Again for online ebook

Natalia Sylvester says

I read this book in a plane, while I waited in shopping lines, while at family get-togethers (in moments I could steal away for a few minutes). It was such a lovely reading experience that I kept wanting to go back in and see what happened next to the characters. Despite the seriousness of the situation these characters find themselves in after suffering strokes, the narrator (and Cronin, of course) has such an endearing sense of humor that you care about him instantly. I'd often laugh out loud as I read this book, while other times it tugged at my heart. It was an incredibly satisfying read.

C.M. Barrett says

You might expect a book about a young man recovering from six years in a coma following a stroke to be depressing. From the first paragraph of the novel, though, the narrator, Jonathan, alters our expectations.

"I was born on a Tuesday morning. It was a difficult birth, because I was thirty-four years old."

The author doesn't sacrifice reality for humor. The difficulties and discouragement of Jonathan's efforts to regain a functioning body that can walk and talk aren't ignored. Jonathan has other problems that are even more troubling. He doesn't know his parents or brother; he doesn't remember the ex-girlfriend who visits to tell him she's moved on; and he begins to suspect that he was far from a nice or even an honest person before the stroke.

Rebecca, the woman he meets in physical therapy has similar problems. Once described as "bubbly," she has become self-aware and painfully (at least to others) honest. Her marriage is in trouble.

Part of the plot focuses on Jonathan's relationship with Rebecca, but this is no typical love story. They are brought together by the mutual determination to thrive rather than merely survive, burdened by the expectations of others to either become the people they once were or to suffer as brain-damaged vegetables.

Written with a deft blend of wit and compassion, *Me Again* can inspire readers to recognize that any situation can be improved with liberal applications of courage and humor.

Audra (Unabridged Chick) says

This is the second novel I've read this year featuring someone in their late 20s/early 30s having a traumatic brain injury that changes their personality. It wasn't my intention to double up since it's not a plot device I'm particularly drawn to, but it was interesting for me to do a compare-and-contrast with the other novel (*The Art of Forgetting*). I preferred this novel over *The Art of Forgetting* as I found the characters a bit more likable, appealing, and relatable.

I had described *The Art of Forgetting* as a Hallmark movie; I think this book might be more ABC Family Night. There's a bit of mystery as Jonathan, the hero, learns that he was a very different man before his stroke, and he has to balance healing himself and making peace with his past. I found his family to be a bit

aggravatingly tight-lipped and emotionally damaged in a way that made me want to put them all in to family therapy. There's a cute romantic entanglement and some quirky wrangling-a-mistake-into-a-victory twist that was a bit too neat and kind of fun all at once.

The novel has a bit of on an inspirational feel but isn't a 'clean' novel; it's a bit predictable but there's some satisfaction in the story unfolding in a way you can anticipate. I rather liked Jonathan -- he was funny and genuine -- and I liked Rebecca, the romantic interest.

I wasn't minding the vibe or narrative style until the author whipped out 'fag' as an insult to the straight male lead. The character that uttered it is supposed to be an earthy sort of man (he leers at all the women), but good (he clues the hero in to when the love interest needs some help) so it's not as if the author inserted this in as quickie shorthand to make the character unlikable. It felt unnecessary and affected my ability to really get in to the rest of the book. This sounds like a little thing, I suppose, but it was so unnecessary and so callous, it was like having someone slap me in the middle of a conversation for no reason; I spent the rest of the time skimming the book, waiting for the next slap to come. (There wasn't one, so the single instance of 'fag' felt all the more outrageous.)

Jessica Keener says

How can you resist these opening lines: "I was born on a Tuesday morning. It was a difficult birth, because I was thirty-four years old."--and not keep reading?

This heartfelt story is driven by a powerful trio of engines: humor, wisdom and insight about about who we are, who we were, and what we can become. There's an underlying optimism here that transforms two stroke victims' losses into something uplifting and promising.

Stephanie says

Me Again was a surprisingly heartwarming story which I thoroughly enjoyed! Will be reviewing this book for TLC Book Tours mid-September.

Adriana says

Me Again was a quick heartwarming read. It reminded me of the Harrison Ford movie Regarding Henry.

A man, Jonathan, wakes up from a 6 year coma with his memory gone. As we get to know the man who woke up, we see him try to piece together the man he used to be, and he begins to realize that he probably wasn't a very nice, or good person. He learns of certain things he did, and while he is unable to recall doing them, he still has to come to terms with the shame he feels at having been that sort of person.

Mr. Cronin obviously did his research with regard to traumatic brain injuries and the various changes that can manifest as its subjects try to recover. It was completely believable how Jonathan and his friend Rebecca, who he meets in the hospital as she also tries to recover from a stroke, underwent drastic changes in their personalities.

Jenny Whetzel says

I enjoyed reading this book, especially as I could relate to the characters having some medical issues. I think Keith did a fantastic job giving a view of what a person with medical issues may have to deal with, not only physical but mental as well. I have not read anything by this author before and am tempted to see what else he has written.

Elizabeth A. says

When thirty four year old Jonathan Hooper wakes up after six years in a coma following a stroke the world is a blank slate to him. He doesn't remember who he is or how he ended up in the hospital, he can't talk, his muscles have atrophied, and he has no concept of numbers or time. Not having expected him to ever recover, his family and girlfriend have moved on with their lives, a situation which may bother Jonathan more if he actually remembered any of them. The fact is, however, there's very little Jonathan does remember. And so begins the arduous task of relearning how to live.

During the course of physical therapy Jonathan meets Rebecca Chase, who's also in the process of recovering from a stroke suffered at an unusually young age. Unlike Jonathan, Rebecca didn't lose her memory after her stroke. Not her memory of people and events anyway, she just doesn't remember why she ever found any of it appealing...including her husband. Together the two of them help each other rediscover who they were, and who they want to be. Okay, I know. On the surface it sounds like Lifetime Movie of the Week material, but there's more to it than that.

To begin with, author Keith Cronin smoothly infuses Me Again with a very healthy sense of humor. Jonathan's rediscoveries of certain things provide opportunity for humor in and of themselves (check out the book trailer below), but it's the way he accepts the challenges in his new life with such matter-of-factness and sense of self-deprecating humor which gives him an utterly charming voice as the story's narrator. It's not all shrugged off with a laugh, however. As Jonathan rediscovers his past he realizes he wasn't exactly a straight-shooter. In fact, he becomes pretty sure he was involved in some kind of embezzlement from the accounting firm he used to work for. Rebecca is also faced with some difficult realizations post-stroke. From her fellow church goers to her friends to her husband, everyone keeps waiting for her to "get better" and be the person she used to be. But she and Jonathan both know they don't ever again want to be the people they once were, and come to understand that moving forward can only happen after breaking free from the past, even if that means leaving certain things - and people - behind.

Me Again is not the type of book I typically read, but I'm glad I took a chance on it. Cronin has a wonderfully down-to-earth, engaging style of writing which makes reading about a potentially touchy topic very comfortable. He accomplishes this in large part by not sugar-coating or romanticizing what Jonathan and Rebecca are going through, but rather by allowing the reader to experience the recovery process alongside his characters, warts and all, without fear people will be put off. It's a level of self-assured writing one would expect to find from an author with multiple works under his belt, making it all the more impressive that Me Again is a debut offering. I certainly expect to be seeing Keith Cronin's work again.

Staci says

First thoughts after finishing: "What a lovely debut novel. I bought it hook, line, and sinker."

"And Dad?" I reached out and touched his arm, startling him. We stopped, standing among the graves of people unknown to us, looking at each other.

"Even though I don't remember you," I said, frightened about what I was about to say but convinced of it being what I needed most to say, "I love you. Here and now. I love you."

(from Me Again page 242)

That writing absolutely struck a chord with me because I had almost the exact same conversation with my beloved Grandfather when he was in the final stages of Alzheimer's. I was visiting for what would be one of my final times. I held his hands and looked him in the face and told him how much I loved him and that he was the best grandpa in the whole world. He then looked right at me and said, "Sis, I don't know who you are, but I do know that I love you." Knowing that a loved one's memory is affected regardless of how it happened is never easy to deal with, but I think Keith Cronin took a step in the right direction by taking his reader along for the journey as Jonathan tries to find his way back to life after waking up from a coma. I loved this book and most of all I loved Jonathan. There is nothing contrived about this story and I believe that it may help readers think twice about the difficulties one faces after being stricken down by a stroke. I think one of the important views of the story were from Jonathan's family. It was hard for them to reconcile themselves to the fact that the new Jonathan was NOTHING like the old Jonathan. In a way, it was a bit harder for them to deal with than Jonathan because he didn't remember anything of his old life.

Recommend? Absolutely! This is a solid story and one that I was immersed in for a few days. It helps shine a light on the debilitating effects of strokes and how even though someone may look fine on the outside, it doesn't truly represent how far their mental abilities may have been diminished. I cared about Jonathan and those close to him...what more can a reader ask for?

Sherry says

Love it so far, funny, sad, realistic. wonderful story about younger people that suffer from strokes. Kicker is that 25% of the profits go to the charity.

Barbara Garren says

I came across this book by accident. I forget who it was, but someone I follow on Twitter sent a link to Keith's post on QueryTracker about doing a book trailer. First I read the post. Then I watched the trailer. Then I ordered his book. Then I read it. In one sitting. I couldn't help it - it's THAT GOOD!

Keith sucks you in and makes you so wrapped up with Jonathan and his recovery, then adding small helpings of Rebecca and the other characters, you just can't leave it. And the ending? Sweet lord, this man has talent!

And yeah, book trailers work. If they're done that well. Check it out: <http://querytracker.blogspot.com/2013...>

Mary says

The cover on this book is the first surprise. It in now way prepares for what follows. The book is sad and yet funny and the characters are very real because of the realistic dialogue. This book is different, but a good read on a snowy day.

Janeene says

I won this book though a Goodreads First Reads giveaway. "Me Again" is the fictional story of a Jonathan Hooper, a man who has a stroke when he is 28-years-old which leaves him in a coma for 6 years. When he wakes up he has forgotten almost everything. He doesn't remember his parents, his former girl friend, or even how to count. Over time he learns how to function in the world again and he comes to realize that it's okay to be the new Jonathan and not try to fit into the mold of who he was before. This book has a few twists and turns, but it is easy to follow the story line.

Well written and easy to read. There were a few characters in the book, however, that swore more then I cared for, but overall I really liked this book.

Brian Tracey says

"Well," Dad said, "let's not tell your mother about that, if it's all the same to you."

A father and son conspiracy to protect the feelings of the mother.

Cronin has written a moving tale about two people -- Jonathan and Rebecca -- who've lost pasts worth losing and fight for new a beginning. Funny and honest in the face of tragedy, it's easily one of the best books of the year.

Laura Drake says

Keith Cronin's blend of weighty subjects, humor, and true to life emotions makes for a wonderful read.

The characters are well-rounded, and the voice true.

It was a clever premise, and I bought into the plot right away, and went along for the ride.

I'm looking forward to more books from this author.

Jessica McCann says

This was a great read -- funny, compelling, heartwarming and authentic.

Jonathan Hooper awakes from a 6-year coma, defying all the odds after suffering a massive stroke at the age of 28. As he works to regain his ability to speak, walk and take care of himself, he also must come to terms with the fact that he remembers almost nothing of his previous life. During his month's-long recovery in the hospital, Jon becomes friends with another young stroke victim, Rebecca. While Rebecca's memory is intact following her stroke, she has suffered a complete personality change and is now a stranger to her husband. While Rebecca struggles to somehow "fix" what has been broken, Jon struggles with the gradual realization that he might not have been a very "good" person in his previous life. Together, they navigate the daunting and "weird" path of rebuilding their lives and discovering who they have become.

The author's writing style is witty, sharp and authentic. The dialogue rings true, the main and supporting characters are multidimensional, and the story moves along at a quick pace. While I saw some of the plot twists coming from a mile away, others caught me completely off guard. Overall, this was an entertaining, heartwarming read that left me emotionally satisfied upon turning the final page.

One other thing worth noting is that the author has promised to contribute 25 percent of his earnings from the book to the American Stroke Association.

Anna Marie says

A freebie on Amazon, I was intrigued with the idea. The story is about a 36 year old guy who wakes up after six years after having had a massive stroke. It's a very 'Regarding Henry' kind of story, except for the fact that it's witty and in turns funny, where 'RH' was all drama.

Basically, Jonathan was NOT a nice person before the stroke. He was a swindler of an accountant living it up in Chicago, stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars from clients in scams. But he doesn't remember doing it. Or being that way. Heck, he doesn't remember his parents, brother, or even how to count or talk. And when he starts to put himself back together again, to rediscover his life, what he sees that he was before is distasteful to him.

At the same time, Rebecca is also recovering from her own stroke at the same rehabilitation center. She hasn't forgotten a thing from before her trauma, but something inside of her has changed. She's not that person, anymore... and she doesn't like her husband, friends, the artifice they all want to plunge her back into. She feels like there's been a shift, and she's not able to continue as she was before. Much like her therapy buddy, Jonathan.

Jonathan's journey (which he makes with Rebecca as his friend) is a sweet, funny, interesting one. The only problem I have with it is that it's... well, a little bi-polar. First it's a light-hearted satire about Jonathan's physical recovery. Then it shifts, and it's this TV-series about the threat of his scam partner and where he hid the money, becoming almost a mob-boss story line. Then it shifts again and becomes this sad saga of the long-lost sister with family drama in four-part harmony. Finally, it fades into a quirky romantic comedy with the hero rescuing the heroine from her dopey brute of a husband, so that they can fall in love on the very last page.

It's NOT a romance... or a drama... or a comedy... or a mob story, for that matter. I'm not saying that it was disjointed, per se, just that it was like a sonata - with very different parts that didn't always flow into each other smoothly. And if you're looking for a romance, there is little development of emotions in this one,

ladies. BUT... I liked it. I really liked it. The rehabilitation was done well. The characterizations were done well. The writing was engaging. It was just... a sonata.

Amy Lignor says

Keith Cronin is not only an author, he is also a musician who has recorded and/or performed with everyone from Bruce Springsteen to Davy Jones of The Monkees. This is one author who has a great deal of artistic experience and, thankfully, he shows a great deal of that in this, his debut novel.

Jonathan Hooper is our main character and boy, does he have a rough start the minute he opens his eyes and finds himself in a hospital room surrounded by people he doesn't even know. You see, six years ago, Jonathan suffered a stroke and has literally been in a coma for all that time. Here he now is, a thirty-four-year-old man who recognizes no one around him, and is being heralded as a true miracle by his family, doctors - everyone!

However, one of the worst things about his 'magical' recovery is the fact that...when you are literally gone for six years, and no one expects you to ever come back, the rest of the world has already left you behind and gone along without you. The people surrounding him, his family and friends, have already accepted the fact that Jonathan was never going to come back to them, so they went on with their daily lives and have already coped with Jonathan's demise. Therefore, when his eyes open and his memory remains lost, he becomes almost a burden to his family, friends, and society in general.

Rebecca Chase is a woman who is also in the hospital struggling with her days in the long-term recovery unit. She is also going through the aftereffects of a stroke, but hers is a bit different. Rebecca wasn't in a coma for the last few years, she is simply a woman who is having to deal with the fact that because of her illness, her mind and personality have become drastically different. And it doesn't help that she was once a go-getter who was literally her husband's "trophy wife," who is now dark, nervous, timid, and weak - something her husband can not bear.

The hilarity ensues as Rebecca and Jonathan spend more time together, and Jonathan suddenly begins remembering the fact that he wasn't all that nice of a guy before the stroke. Every part of this book is filled with kindness, laughter, and fun, as well as strong emotions of fear, frustration, and the attempt at trying to find how to like yourself once again. A great debut!

Miriam says

Promising in the beginning but became mushy in the middle and then a ridiculous plot towards the end. He might have problems with numbers but to give away 300k to charity and then use it for his friend/love to get her divorce and annulment is ridiculously stupid.

Cathy says

A truly wonderful story about what makes us who we are. The authors writing style makes this seem like a true story as opposed to the fiction it actually is. I received this book as part of the goodreads giveaway program and am truly grateful for having been given the opportunity to read it. Thank you Goodreads!

