

SPELLS FOR FORGETTING  
ADRIENNE YOUNG

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BOOK CLUB KIT





# A LETTER FROM ADRIENNE



Dear Reader,

I have never been one for regrets, but there is one thing that has always been true about me—I long for the past.



Not just my past. Any past. There's this built-in nostalgia in me that doesn't want time to move forward. It creeps up in typical ways, like not wanting to let a certain stage of childhood go for my kids or not wanting my favorite wildflowers to stop blooming in the summer. But it shows up in unexpected ways, too. Almost any object in an antique store can bring me to tears and I get a lump in my throat when I think about my grandmother's screened-in back porch. The muddy boots beside the door. The little cupboard in the wall that held canned peaches. The rocking chairs that faced the side yard, where the vegetable garden could be seen over the fence. They're the tiny details of a moment that can't be recreated—and that makes me long for it.

There are so many memories I have that I wish I could pull back into existence. Feelings, too. Like the first time I saw the ocean, bare feet sinking into hot sand. One night in eleventh grade when I was driving down a dark country road with the windows down, singing at the top of my lungs with my two best friends. The moment the doctor put my son into my arms and, in an impossible instant, I was made a mother.

This somewhat peculiar part of me was the wellspring from which I wrote *Spells for Forgetting*. Saoirse Island and the people who live there are, in a way, stuck in time. They're grappling with these same feelings about what once was in the midst of navigating complicated relationships, murky motives, and an uncommonly rare love. There are things that can't be undone: A girl is dead, lies have been told, and promises broken. But so much of the story is an examination of the past and how it can mean different things to different people, the finality of something or someone being gone, and how hard it is to learn from mistakes.

This book allowed me to go deep into those places and the result is an island I feel that I've actually been to, filled with people I've met. Had supper with, even. I found a very special common ground with Saorise and her people. It's almost as if I've created memories with them, and that's a lovely, strange thing. My hope is that once you've finished the story, you might feel the same.

Happy Reading,  
Adrienne Young



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What did you think of August and Emery when you first met them? How did your perceptions of them change through the novel?
2. Saoirse plays a large role in *Spells for Forgetting*, almost acting as another character in the novel. What did you think about the island setting? How did it enhance the plot and how did Young bring it to life?
3. There are a lot of compelling elements in this book: ancestral magic, a love triangle, a small-town mystery. Which element was your favorite?
4. Young writes, "There was more than one secret on this island." Did you notice a lot of foreshadowing in the story? Were there any clues that helped you guess the ending?
5. The magic in *Spells for Forgetting* takes place in common, everyday settings. How does Young bring together the ordinary and extraordinary? What role does folklore play in the narrative?
6. There are many natural elements involved in the story: fire, the sea, the orchard. How does nature move the plot forward and change the lives of the characters?
7. *Spells for Forgetting* takes place in two different times: the past and the present. What did you think about the multiple timelines? Did reading about the characters' pasts effect your perception of their current states?
8. Discuss the theme of justice in the novel. Do all of the characters get what they deserve? Why or why not?
9. If you had the ability to cast spells, how would you use this power? What would you do first?
10. Have you read any of Young's YA novels? How is *Spells for Forgetting* similar or different?

# FIRE-CIDER TONIC

*Courtesy of MarthaStewart.com*



## INGREDIENTS

- ½ cup thinly sliced fresh ginger (from two 4-inch pieces)
- ½ cup peeled, diced fresh horseradish (from a 5-inch piece)
- 1 head garlic, cloves smashed and peeled
- 3 sprigs rosemary
- 2 jalapeno or serrano chiles, halved lengthwise
- 1 teaspoon whole black peppercorns
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- ½ small onion, cut into 1 ½-inch pieces (⅓ cup)
- 1 lemon, cut into 1 ½-inch pieces
- ½ orange, cut into 1 ½-inch pieces
- 2 cups raw, unfiltered apple-cider vinegar, such as Bragg, plus more as needed
- ⅓ to ½ cup honey, preferably raw and unfiltered

## DIRECTIONS

1. Place ginger and horseradish in the bottom of a 1-quart Ball jar or similar resealable glass container. Add garlic, rosemary, chiles, peppercorns, cinnamon, and onion; then add lemon and orange pieces, pressing down to firmly pack ingredients in. Add vinegar, adding more as necessary to fully submerge ingredients and fill jar. Seal jar (if using a metal lid, place a piece of parchment between jar and lid to prevent a corrosive reaction with vinegar). Store in a cool, dark place, shaking for a few seconds every day or two, at least 3 weeks and up to 6 weeks.
2. Strain through cheesecloth or a fine-mesh sieve; discard solids. Stir in honey. Store in a sealed container in refrigerator up to 1 month.

# BROCCOLI APPLE SOUP

*Courtesy of SimplyRecipes.com*

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 large bunch broccoli (about 3 heads with stems)
- 3 tbsp. butter
- 1 cup yellow or white onion, thinly sliced or finely chopped
- 1 good cooking apple (a non-tart apple such as Jonagold, Golden Delicious, McIntosh), peeled, cored, chopped
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 cup unfiltered apple juice or apple cider (not hard cider)
- 4 sprigs lemon thyme or thyme
- 2 long strips lemon zest
- 1 tbsp. fresh chives, chopped, for garnish



## DIRECTIONS

1. Prep the broccoli: Separate the broccoli florets from the stems. Peel the outer tough skin of the stems with a vegetable peeler. Slice the stems into rounds and chop finely (a mini chopper food processor works well for this step).
2. Cook the sliced onions and apples in butter: Heat a thick-bottomed medium large (4-quart) saucepan on medium heat. Melt the butter in the pan. Add the onion and the apple and lower the heat to low. Cover and cook for 10 minutes, until onions are translucent and apples are softened.
3. Add broccoli, stock, cider, thyme, lemon zest: Add the broccoli florets and the chopped broccoli to the apple onion mixture. Add the stock and the cider. Tie up the thyme sprigs with kitchen string and add to the pot. Add strips of lemon zest to the pot as well. Increase the heat, bring to a boil, reduce the heat to maintain a low simmer, covered. Cook for 20 to 25 minutes.
4. Purée soup: Remove from heat. Remove thyme and lemon peels from the soup, and discard. Working in batches, filling up the blender bowl to no more than one third full at a time, purée the soup.
5. Adjust seasonings: Return soup to the pot, reheat, and adjust seasonings to taste. Garnish with chopped fresh chives to serve.

# OLD-FASHIONED EASY APPLE CRISP

*Courtesy of TheChunkyChef.com*



## INGREDIENTS

- 6 golden delicious apples, peeled and chopped (other varieties can be used, can also be sliced)
- 2 tbsp. granulated sugar
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, divided
- 1 ½ tsp. lemon juice
- 1 cup light brown sugar
- ¾ cup old fashioned oats
- ¾ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup cold unsalted butter, diced into small cubes
- Pinch of kosher salt

## DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter an 8×8 -inch baking dish, or spray with non-stick cooking spray. Set aside.
2. In a mixing bowl, add chopped apples, granulated sugar, ¾-tsp. of the cinnamon and lemon juice. Stir to combine, then transfer to prepared baking dish.
3. In a separate mixing bowl, add topping ingredients (brown sugar, oats, flour, 1 tsp. cinnamon, salt, and diced cold butter). Use a pastry cutter to cut the butter into the oat mixture, using a slight downward twisting motion, until mixture resembles pea-sized crumbs. Alternatively, you can use two forks or even your hands to cut butter into the mixture.
4. Spread topping over apples in baking dish and gently pat to even it out. Bake 40-50 minutes, until golden brown and bubbly.
5. Serve warm and enjoy!