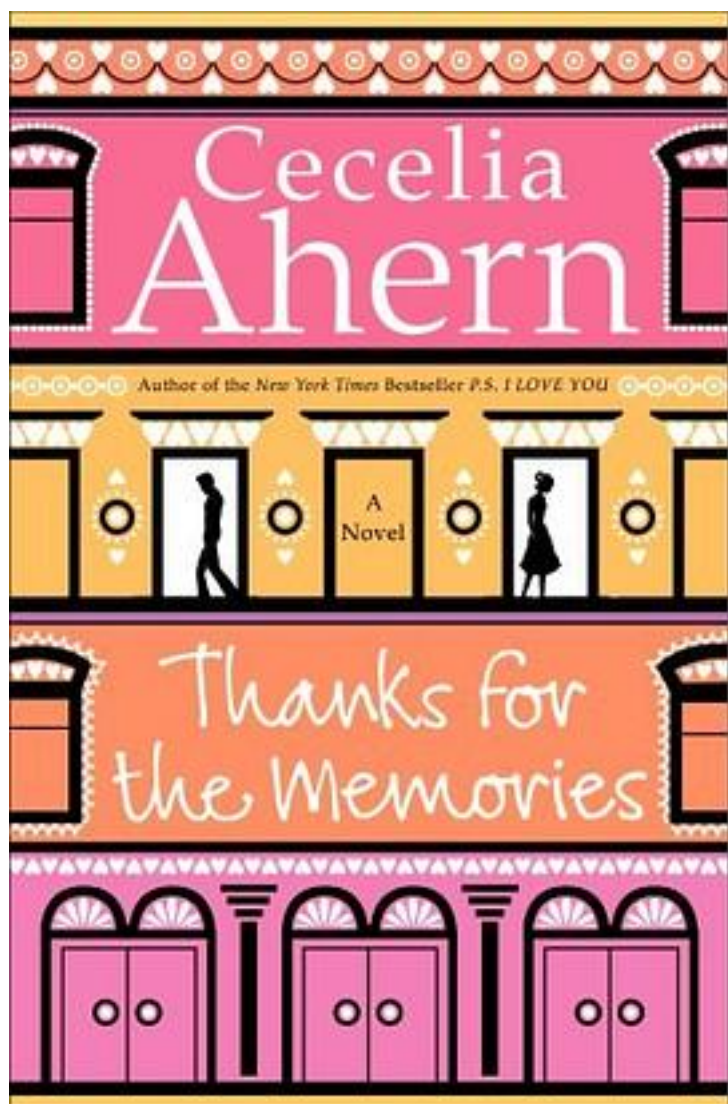


Thanks for the Memories



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出版者:Greenwood Pub Group

出版时间:2006-9

装帧:HRD

isbn:9780275988791

"Thanks for the Memories" challenges the myth that young men and women went about the business of war and stayed on the straight and narrow path. Rather, World War II provided new opportunities for sexual experimentation, for hasty marriages, for flourishing prostitution - and for love connections that have stood the test of time. Young men in the military, far away from family and home, "did things" they might never have done. Young women, many of whom went to work for the first time, experienced a freedom and independence most women had never known. Because of the war, courtships were cut short, couples married more quickly, and husbands and wives were often separated for several years. Despite attempts to get back to "normal" after the war and the apparent "togetherness" of the 1950s, World War II had set change in motion, heralding the second wave of the women's liberation movement. This book discusses the experiences of soldiers in general, gay soldiers, African-Americans, and 'Rosie the Riveters' and other working women. Moreover, the book questions the post-war "return to normal," seeing it as, in many ways, a charade. Millions of women who had gone to work to keep the war machine rolling had tasted independence. Men who had gone to war and returned found that women had become much more self-reliant and not as willing to go back to the home. Mothers shaped by World War II gave their daughters mixed messages about the feminine mystique and the importance of carving out a life of their own. The apparent calm of the 50s thus masked the tensions that would bring the feminist and sexual revolutions of the 60s and 70s.

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