

LoveReading Reader reviews of The Marble Collector by Cecelia Ahern

Below are the complete reviews, written by LoveReading members.

Phyllippa Smithson

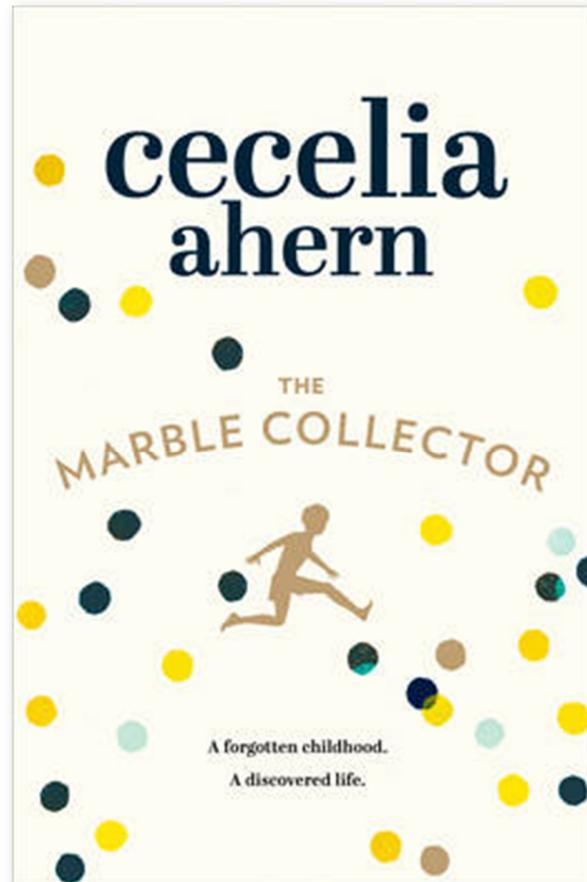
Looking for an undemanding yet intriguing read? Then this relationship offering from Ahern is for the one.

Switching back between his childhood and early adult life, and the man he is now in full-time care after a stroke, we get to meet Fergus. And in this current life, we also get to meet his 33 year old daughter, Sabrina.

But when Sabrina receives three removal boxes containing a collection of very valuable marbles, she is compelled to find out what the meaning is of the toys. And when she fails to come up with any answers by those people who would be obvious prospects e.g. her Mum and her Father's girl-friend, Sabrina is forced to follow a path of discovery.

As the pages unfold, she learns the truth behind her Father's 'other' life. And whilst the shock leaves her initially heart-broken, the discovery also opens up a whole new world and brings meaning to her own monotonous own life.

This is Ahern at her reliable best as she introduces yet another witty and thought-provoking relationship piece of writing.



Suzanne Marsh

Cecelia Ahern is one my favourite authors. This wonderful story about the marble collector took me back to my childhood playing games with my friends with my collection of marbles. It is amazing that 'The Marble Collector' is Cecelia Ahern's twelfth novel. There is so much to look forward with Cecelia Ahern's new bright unusual novel.

This engaging story is about a daughter Sabrina who finds a valuable collection of marbles of her father's. Sabrina finds that all of marbles have been catalogued with their description and value. It appears that some expensive marbles are missing which leads Sabrina to find out who took the most expensive marbles.

What I liked about 'The Marble Collector' is that we had an insight into Fergus life growing up playing marbles with his brothers and friends in Dublin from the age of five. There are so many secrets, so many things Sabrina didn't know. What else can Sabrina not know about her father Fergus?

The story is told from two perspectives from the father's Fergus perspective and from Sabrina. I loved reading about Sabrina and her father's Fergus life. I fell in love with Sabrina and Fergus' world.

*'The Marble Collector' is **a novel about identity and about the importance of memories and about how we don't always know the very people we share a home and life with.***

I cannot wait until Cecelia Ahern's next novel is published.

www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com

Angela Rhodes

I did wonder what kind of story could be written about marbles and no doubt you who are reading this review wondering the same thing. Well I will tell you, a great one, full of dry humour with a little mystery entwined.

Sabrina is given a lot of boxes to look after, her father's boxes, full of his life belongings, as he is ill in hospital. Amongst the items are marbles, hundreds and hundreds of them along with an inventory. Some of the marbles are missing and Sabrina goes on the hunt.

*From Sabrina's view the story is told in a day, but from her father Fergus's view it's told from being a child and getting the very first marble. **A beautifully engaging story unfolds, this is one to reread and recommend.***

Sarah Musk

This is a book about a secret life, a man's lifelong obsession with marbles and a daughter's discovery about who her father really is.

This is a well written book with interesting, quite complex characters. I found the main characters very sympathetic and the effect a parent's personality can have on their child's life is explored in a thoughtful, truthful way. The main problem I do have with the book though is that I can't get very worked up about marbles. I don't find them very interesting so it is difficult to relate to Fergus' obsession with them and why he would want to spend so much time and money on them which ultimately contributes to the end of his marriage.

The book is about obsession, compulsion and secrecy. Why do people have secrets and what effect does it have on those who love them. I did like how Fergus' daughter, who is secretive like him, as she discovers his hidden life finds out not, just about her father, but also herself and the problems she has created in her marriage through keeping parts of herself concealed from her husband.

This is a book about finding yourself and who you really are. It is about love and loss and ultimately having the courage to show the world who you really are - not just what you think people want you to be. As the story progressed I found myself getting very involved but I still don't find marbles all that interesting!

Reba Khatun

Another brilliant touching and emotional read by the talented Cecelia Ahern.

Cecelia Ahern has done it again - she's taken an ordinary subject and turned into an extraordinary story. In this case the subject is marbles. This book was so easy to read and hard to put down. It's told from two points of view: the daughter Sabrina and the father Fergus. It's also told in two timeframes; the present and past. Fergus has suffered a stroke and as a result has partial memory loss and is currently residing in a care home. One day with the delivery of boxes upon boxes of marbles Sabrina discovers things about her father she never knew. This book had me both laughing and crying which is typical of Cecelia's beautiful writing. Cecelia Ahern is still my favourite author and I can't wait for her next book.

Joan Hill

This heartwarming story is 'who-done-it' mystery story about hidden secrets and is also an involving family saga about love, identity and acceptance.

Sabrina's father Fergus Boggs has suffered a stroke and has been resident in a care home ever since, with significant memory loss. When Sabrina is sent an incomplete but valuable collection of marbles belonging to her father, for safekeeping, she is absolutely gob smacked, as neither she nor her mother knew anything about his love of marble collecting and expertise as a player. She resolves to find the missing items and discover the truth about her father's life and secret identity during one precious day off work.

This novel has two narrators: Sabrina and Fergus. It is a family saga; with memories gradually revealed that truly enhance the story. The pace builds up throughout the novel until at last Sabrina finds her father's missing and highly prized marbles, the most valuable in the whole collection. She also discovers her father is a serial secret-keeper. It is with the information she has gathered that she feels that she understands her father's deception and is able to give her father something he can cherish for the rest of his life in the knowledge that his secret life is accepted and honoured by his family. It is a heartwarming mystery story with endearing characterisation, which examines how little we can sometimes know about our loved-ones.

I would like to thank Harper Collins and Lovereading for my early reading copy sent to me in return for an honest review.

You can follow Joan on Twitter: @JoanHillo7

Ann Peet

Poignant story about memories - and losing them - and uncovering family secrets.

I don't think I'll use the phrase "losing one's marbles" again without thinking of this novel. It is one of those books where hidden family secrets are discovered but it has an unusual twist. Fergus is in a care home and losing his memory. His daughter, Sabrina, is sent some parcels of his possessions, and among them she finds a collection of marbles. However two of the most expensive items are missing and as Sabrina tries to find out what has happened to them she unravels secrets from her father's past.

The story is told in the first person in alternating chapters by Sabrina and

Fergus. I liked the descriptions of Fergus's upbringing in a large Irish family but thought more could have been made of Sabrina's character and story.

Cecelia Ahern makes you think about issues of identity and the importance of memories and of how we may not know some people as well as we think we do. It's enjoyable and poignant though perhaps told me more than I wanted to know about different types of marbles.

Neil Williams

Fergus's life story revolves around his passion for marbles. Sabrina his daughter knows nothing about it until a package arrives for him at his care home. A beautifully told story.

A wonderful tale of hidden life and its discovery.

Fergus's life has always revolved around marbles since he was gifted some 'bloodies' by a priest as a boy. He worships them, collects them and plays traditional marble games.

Sabrina, his daughter knows none of this until a package of his collection is delivered to the care home.

A day of discovery follows in this story cleverly told from two perspectives. Sabrina's account throughout her journey to discover what lies behind the marbles, and Fergus's life story, told from his viewpoint as he grows.

I thoroughly enjoyed this and the way it brought the unknown streams of his life into the story. Thoroughly Recommended.

Janet Gilliard

*I really enjoyed this book although the characters surname of Boggs jarred. The story is told from both Sabrina and her father's Fergus point of view. Fergus story covers 55 years whilst Sabrina's story takes place in a day. This is unusual but works. Sabrina is searching for two marbles missing from her father's collection and finds out that her father has many secrets and is not the man she thought he was. **Another unusual novel for the fans of Cecelia Ahern.***

Julie Bertschin

Wonderfully charming, this book draws you into the life of Sabrina as she discovers the hidden past of her father, exploring how little we

really know those close to us until it is almost too late.

Sabrina's father is in hospital after suffering a stroke. After receiving a telephone call from her father's nurse about the delivery of some boxes containing her father's possessions, Sabrina is drawn into discovering an unknown history that her father has kept from his family all his life. The marbles contained in the boxes hold the secret to Fergus's past, his other life which through fear of scorn or belittlement he has chosen to keep only to himself. Fergus's life story unfolds and we learn about the tragedy behind his father's death and the consequences on his family's lives as they are uprooted from Scotland to Ireland. There is a beautiful tenderness in the writing as we learn of Fergus's relationship with his mother and brothers, his anxieties amongst the family dynamic and his ill-treatment at school. The fact that Fergus loses touch with his family after marrying someone he considers above his station adds to the pathos we feel for Fergus as his life becomes more complicated. A true family saga. I loved this story, I am sure many others will feel the same.

Neil Beattie

A truly remarkable book, funny, emotional and damn interesting. Unputdownable from page 1 until the end. A real gripper. You must read this book, its well worth it.

What a remarkable book. I loved this book from start to finish. The author's ability to write gripping fiction is shown to great effect here. She cleverly brings the worlds of Fergus and Sabrina together, and also being able to discover a little more about Fergus life with the turn of each page. Once you start this book you won't be able to put it down. Anyone who played marbles in their youth will understand the games described, but I was amazed to read how valuable some marbles end up being. This book is really worth reading and I hope you enjoy it as much as I did.

Carol Attridge

Who knew a book about marbles would keep you so engrossed?! But of course this is more than a book about marbles it's about people and their relationships which is always fascinating...

I loved returning to Fergus' childhood and the stories of his brothers as much as I enjoyed hearing about Sabrina's life. They were woven together so well and

just left you wanting to find out more about them.

This book doesn't impact you in the same way as say a tense thriller, but you are so drawn into the lives of these people you feel like you really know them. I couldn't put the book down, it was so gently written yet had a powerful message of how destructive secrets can be.

I remember having marbles as a child, though not a serious player, I kept them 'safe' in a tin and treasured them, I hadn't thought about that in a long time. That's the kind of book this is, it gets you thinking.

Joy Bosworth

Interesting - marbles are a whole world of their own.

A deprived childhood spent in Ireland seems to be from the era of Angela's Ashes, but is in fact, from the 1960s, interspersed with a character, Sabrina, who is a modern mother that works and finds everything too much for her and is very much a product of today. She is discontented and disgruntled despite a caring husband, adoring children and even a supportive boss.

The child uses marbles to escape his miserable existence, but it is a secret passion, something that is lost when his figurative marbles are lost.

I found the past elements really good and the descriptions of the various kinds of marbles really interesting, but found the Sabrina sections not so. She's such a self-obsessed character which means events relating to others are relevant to her by how they impinge on ideas she already held.

I so enjoyed Cecilia Aherne's 'The year I Met You' that I found this much weaker. Judged in its own merits then its fine.

Sarah Harper

I loved this book and the whole premise of 'losing your marbles' so much. Fergus, recovering from a stroke and memory loss, is slowly piecing together the snapshots of his life, from his childhood in Ireland to the present day. My heart ached for him as a young boy at the mercy of cruel priests however their actions inadvertently sparked the love of Fergus' whole life, marbles. They are the thread that ties his memories together and his passion for them is absolute. His daughter, Sabrina, is a lifeguard in a care home, handling a resident who tries to drown himself on a daily basis and missing the most exciting moment of her whole career during her tea break. Sabrina needs to resolve her own issues

*but the unexpected arrival of her father's marble collection, of which she was totally unaware, draws her into a quest. She starts searching for the two most valuable items which are missing from the collection and in doing so, discovers that her father led a double life, hiding everything to do with his marbles from his family. The alternating stories of past and present day work really well, smoothly drawing you through the story without any loss of momentum and I found both aspects totally absorbing but the real star of the show for me was the descriptions of the marbles. I could see them in my mind's eye, exquisitely beautiful and evoking a nostalgia for a childhood game which I had long forgotten. The handmade Venetian glass marble with the perfect, entire planet captured within it, clouds scudding over the outer surface, was a work of pure genius. **I loved this book so much. Marbles were an inspired idea for a story and I really enjoyed the whole reading experience because of them.***

Edel Waugh

This is the story about a father called Fergus and a daughter called Sabrina and the secrets this father kept throughout his life from his wife and daughter. Now in his old age and with his memory severely fading his daughter is trying to piece together this man who she now feels she never really knew, thus sending her on an adventure, mystery tour as she tries to put together a puzzle with surprising results.

The story starts when Fergus was a boy and we see and understand why collecting marbles became an important and necessary part of his life that he did not share with most people who were closest to him. He kept this hobby into adulthood where he gained great comfort from it and each one reminded him of better times in his life.

I found the idea of the story very thought provoking about the objects we hold dear to us, each meaning something different to everyone and how they bring us comfort. I loved the plot a lot and Cecelia writes beautifully capturing the Irish charm and wit perfectly while not steering us away from tougher subjects. A beautiful story for all fans of Ceceila!

<http://edelwaugh.blogspot.ie/2015/09/the-marble-collector-by-ceceila-ahern.html?m=1>

Stephanie Blakey

This is one of the most interesting and unusual pieces of fiction I have read this year. How unusual to write a book about marbles! I certainly learnt a lot - I can see that a great deal of research was involved into the origins and meaning of marbles. What a bitter-sweet book this is, full of pathos and history. I loved the characters - Sabrina could be any modern day mum, juggling everything including difficulties in her marriage. I loved the parallel storytelling of Sabrina and her father Fergus - and his other identity whom he hid behind. It gives a glimpse of latter day Ireland and growing up in difficult times. Beautifully observed characters, past and present and very easy to identify with. This would make a great film or screenplay!

Fiona Rothery

This novel is about a sixty year old man called Fergus Boggs who grew up in Dublin with his brothers, his mother and his Step-Father. It begins with a description of his childhood home and experiences and his feelings about his relationship with his mother and his brothers and later the woman he marries.

I found the first half of the novel quite slow, I stopped reading, put it aside for a week not sure I would finish it but I am so glad I did! Half way through the book the story comes alive and the significance of the marbles is breathtaking, starting out as an escape for Fergus which colours his whole life. If, as I did, you find this novel uninspiring at first, please persevere as it goes on to be very rewarding and uplifting.

It is told from the perspective of Fergus and his daughter Sabrina. Sabrina thinks she knows her father but she has never looked beyond the surface until she discovers his secret marble collection. Secrets unfold about Fergus's life and these have a profound influence on Sabrina's own life.

*This novel is about the strength of family connections, memories (lost and found) and the secrets that are often formed by people to escape reality. **I loved this well observed portrayal of the characters sensitivities and was moved by the emotions it uncovers and the magical significance of the marbles.***

Lesley Hart

I loved this book, definitely my favourite of all! A wonderful story of a daughter's mission to get to know her father through his passion

for marbles.

Initially, the story begins with the description of a poverty stricken childhood set in Ireland. The drama of the story is set against a backdrop of a poor family in Ireland and one child's, Fergus Boggs, love of marbles and how all of his brothers share his love of the game, but none were as good at it as Fergus. The bond this built between himself and the older brother he idolised and how marbles came to be his secret love as an adult, one he kept hidden from his family. His daughter only came to uncover some of his past as an adult visiting her father in hospital and she makes it her mission to find out about her father and to give him back his memories of his love of marbles, which are sadly lost to him. A wonderful story and my favourite Cecilia Ahern to date!