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## The five people you meet in heaven door Mitch Albom

*Jorien*

**Title:** The five people you meet in heaven

**Author:** Mitch Albom

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### **Title explanation:**

The writer guesses that you will meet five people, after your death, in heaven. These persons have had an important role in your life. Sometimes you know the persons, sometimes you don't. They will give you a better view of your own life, they will explain your life more clearly and they will explain why things have happened. He wrote a story about his guesses; 'The five people you meet in heaven'.



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### **Main character:**

**Eddie:** Eddie is an old man who has lived, in his mind, an uninspired life. He was crippled since he came back from his time in war. His job is fixing rides at a seaside amusement park called Ruby Pier. A tragic accident kills him, as he tries to save a little girl from a falling cart, on his 83rd birthday.

### **Other important characters:**

#### ***Marguerite:***

This woman was Eddie's true love. He married her and he has always loved her, even after her death. She died when she was 47 because of a brain tumor. 'Every life has one true-love snapshot. For Eddie, it came on a warm September night after a thunderstorm, when the boardwalk was spongy with water. She wore a yellow cotton dress, with a pink barrette in her hair. Eddie didn't say much. He was so nervous he felt as if his tongue were glued to his teeth. They danced to the music of a big band, Long Legs Delaney and his Everglades Orchestra. He bought her a lemon fizz. She said she had to go before her parents got angry. But as she walked away, she turned and waved.

That was the snapshot. For the rest of his life, whenever he thought of Marguerite, Eddie would see that moment, her waving over her shoulder, her dark hair falling over one eye, and he would feel the same arterial burst of love.

That night he came home and woke his older brother, Joe. He told him he'd met the girl he was going to marry.' (page 9)

#### ***Mickey:***

He is a friend of the family from Eddie when he's young. He is only in the book in the parts 'Today is Eddie's Birthday'.

'Mickey Sea works with Eddie's dad, fixing the rides. He is fat and wears suspenders and is always singing Irish songs. To Eddie, he smells funny, like cough medicine' (page 23)

#### ***Dominiguez:***

He is a colleague from Eddie. They are friends. Dominiguez is with Eddie when the accident happens. He arranges the funeral of Eddie.

***First person:*** The Blue Man.

***Second person:*** The Captain

***Third person:*** Ruby

***Fourth person:***

Marguerite

**Fifth person:** Tala

**Setting:**

The first chapter takes place at Ruby Pier. The rest of the story takes place in heaven. The environment from heaven looks different all the time. The Blue Man tells Eddie that Eddie isn't in his own heaven but in the heaven from the person he meets. He will go to his own heaven, to wait for the persons who's life he had had an important role in, after he has met his five people.

**Nice to know:**

The book exists out of two parts. The first part is the first chapter and Eddie is alive then. The writer describes a usual day of Eddie's life except he dies in a terrible accident.

Eddie is in heaven and he meets five different persons in the second part. Through the meetings and the lessons he learns from the people are parts called 'Today is Eddie's birthday'. These parts are flashbacks to different birthdays of Eddie's life. The writer gives important information, to make you understand more clearly why Eddie meets a particular person, in these parts.

A few times there is a page with a description about how life is going on, on earth. The days till Eddie's funeral are told here. These pages are not important to understand the story.

**Summary per capital:**

***The End (the title of the first chapter):***

The author describes the last 50 minutes of Eddie's life. It's a day like every other. Eddie is working as maintenance at Ruby Pier and he checks every attraction in the morning. There are parts with information (the rumors, the meeting with Marguerite and his character) about Eddie's life through this story. Eddie thought his life was a waste. He felt unimportant on earth. All the people who Eddie had loved were already dead. Then the accident happens.

'Eddie saw it immediately. Atop Freddy's Free Fall, the new "tower drop" attraction, one of the carts was tilted at an angle, as if trying to dump its cargo. Four passengers, two men, two women, held only by a safety bar, were grabbing frantically at anything they could'...(page14)

"Who's up there?' 'Willie.' 'OK. He must've hit the emergency stop. That's why the cart is hanging. Get up the ladder and tell Willie to manually release the safety restraint so those people can get out'...' (page 15)

"Don't release the CART!' Eddie yelled. He waved his arms. 'HEY! HEEEEY! IT'S THE CABLE! DON'T RELEASE THE CART! IT'LL SNAP!'.... Eddie turned to the crowd 'GET BACK!'" (page 17)

'...crying children. 'Ma, Mom, Ma, Mom' Eddie's eyes shot from her to the carts. Did he have time? Her to the carts. Whump. Too late. The carts were dropping...'  
(page 18)

'The little girl raised her arms. Eddie lunged. His bad leg buckled. He half flew, half stumbled toward her, landing on the metal platform, which ripped through his shirt and split open his skin, just beneath the patch that read EDDIE and MAINTENANCE. He felt two hands in his own, two small hands. A stunning impact. A blinding flash of light. And then, nothing.' (page 18)  
Eddie died.

### ***The Arrival:***

First, Eddie felt wonderful. His second thought was that he was all alone, and his third thought was that he was still on Ruby Pier, but Ruby Pier looked different. He couldn't talk and he didn't feel pain anywhere. He felt incredible, aside from the part that his voice was gone. He started to run and he felt like a child. He heard a voice when he stopped running. He walked to 'the sideshow in the freak house'. He heard a barker voice and he walked to it. Eddie pulled the curtain aside and the barker voice vanished.

'There, sitting in a chair, alone on the stage, was a middle-aged man with narrow, stooped shoulders, naked from the waist up. His belly sagged over his belt. His hair was closely cropped. His lips were thin and his face was long and drawn. Eddie would have long since forgotten him, were it not for one distinctive feature. His skin was blue. 'Hello, Edward,' he said. 'I have been waiting for you.'" (page 31)

### ***The first person Eddie meets in heaven:***

The Blue Man. Eddie doesn't know him when he first see him. The blue man died because of a heart attack. He almost hit a little boy (Eddie) when he was driving his car. This situation shocked the man that much that he got a heart attack. The blue man explains Eddie what's going to happen with him in heaven. (The meetings with the five people.) He also explains that Eddie isn't in his own heaven. The heaven of the blue man is Ruby Pier. Ruby Pier was the only place he felt happy in his life. He could make people laugh at the 'freak show' because he had a blue skin.

The lesson the blue man learns Eddie is fairness. Fairness doesn't govern life and death. If it did, no good person would ever die young. The good thing that came from the death of the blue man was the fact that Eddie could live. Eddie asked the blue man if he saved the little girl from the accident. The blue man did not answer this question. Eddie slumped and said 'Then my death was a waste, just like my life'. The only feedback from the blue man is 'no life is a waste. The only time we waste is the time we spend thinking we are alone.'

### ***The second person Eddie meets in heaven:***

The Captain. Eddie went to the army in the past. The Captain was Eddie's commanding officer. They fought in the Philippines but Eddie had never seen him again afterwards. He thought he'd died in combat. They talk about their period with each other in war and there are many flashbacks. During the war, Eddie and his comrades were gevangen gehouden for a couple of months by four Japanese soldiers. They called them Crazy One, Crazy Two, Crazy Three and Crazy Four. The prisoners (gevangenen) had to work in a mine. Rabozzo, one of the comrades got sick and the Japanese soldiers killed him in the mine while his friends were working next to him. They were really upset and they made an escape plan. Eddie would juggle for the soldiers and the others would try to catch some guns and would shoot them. One night it happened, they escaped and they burn the whole camp. Eddie saw a shadow and he goes back in the fire after a few minutes. The Captain though it was an imagination, so he decided to shoot Eddie in his leg, to stop him. Eddie woke up in the hospital and he couldn't remember what happened after he had been shot. What happened was this: The captain and his comrades rescued Eddie out of the fire and they tried to go to a hospital by car. During the trip, the Captain jumped out of the car to check a gate. The others drove father and while the Captain was running to the gate, he stepped on a land mine. The Captain meant a lot for Eddie during the war. He was someone he really trusted. Eddie is very angry with him when he hears that the Captain shot him. But when he hears the story about what happened with the Captain, he is really shocked. He had no idea, that that could have happened. The heaven of the Captain is the place where he died only without war. Eddie can't see the place without war. The second lesson is sacrifice.

"Sacrifice," The Captain said. "You made one. I made one. We all make them. But you were angry over yours. You kept thinking about what you lost. You didn't get it. Sacrifice is a part of life. It's supposed to be. It's not something to regret. It's something to aspire to'.... 'I didn't die for nothing either. That night, we might have all driven over that land mine. Then the four of us would have been gone" (page 93)

The war had always given influences in the rest of Eddie's life. He had been depressive for a long time and he was damaged geestelijk en lichamelijk his whole life.

### ***The third person Eddie meets in heaven:***

Eddie's father was addicted to alcohol and he damaged his children. He also loved them very much but it was because of the drank that he didn't know what he did. Eddie was very depressive when he came back from the war but his father though it was weakness. He screamed many times 'Get a job!' when he saw Eddie. Eddie had never defended himself. Then this happened:

"Enough!" Eddie yelled, surging to his feet, ignoring the burst of pain in his knee.

He glared at his father, his face just inches away. He could smell the bad breath of alcohol and cigarettes. The old man glanced at Eddie's leg. His voice lowered to a growl. 'See? You ain't so hurt.' He reeled back to throw a punch, but Eddie moved on instinct and grabbed his father's arm mid-swing. The old man's eyes widened. This was the first time Eddie had ever defended himself, the first time he had ever done anything besides receive a beating as if he deserved it. His father looked at his own clenched fist, short of its mark, and his nostrils flared and his teeth gritted and he staggered backward and yanked his arm free. He stared at Eddie with the eyes of a man watching a train pull away. He never spoke to his son again. (page 109)

After the meeting with the Captain, Eddie comes to a snowy field with a small restaurant. He goes inside and he sees his dad. He can't speak with him because his father can't hear him. (Because they stopped speaking with each other.) Then an old woman starts to talk with Eddie and she is Eddie's third person. It's Ruby. Her man had started up Ruby Pier for Ruby when they were young. There had been a huge painting at the entrance from Ruby Pier from Ruby. She told Eddie that she wished her husband had never built that place because of the terrible things that had happened. She also told Eddie, 'thing that happen before you are born still affect you.' If her husband hadn't built Ruby Pier, Eddie hadn't worked there.

Eddie meets Ruby because he doesn't know an important story about his father. Mickey and Eddie's father were both addicted to alcohol. One day, when Mickey was fired, he tries to verkracht Eddie's mother. Eddie's father comes in his first impulse was to kill him but his final impulse was to keep the man alive. Mickey had always been a very good friend of the family, he helped Eddie's father getting a job, he lent money to the family when necessary etc. However, at the end of the fight, Eddie's father rescued Mickey out of the sea. They were laying at the beach, soaked, for a couple of hours. Eddie's father got sick and died in the hospital. The third lesson is forgiveness. Ruby tells Eddie that he have to forgive his father. Eddie did and his pain was gone.

"That's because no one is born with anger. And when we die, the soul is freed of it. But now, here, in order to move on, you must understand why you felt what you did, and why you no longer need to feel it,' Ruby said. She touched his hand.

'You need to forgive our father.'" (page 142)

Eddie goes to his father and forgives him.

#### ***The fourth person Eddie meets in heaven:***

Eddies saw many different weddings from different countries. He heard a bridesmaid talking at the last wedding and he realised that it was Marguerite. Marguerite was Eddie's fourth person he had to meet. The time in heaven with Marguerite is a happy time. They talk about everything. Eddie tells Marguerite his

life after her death. They talk about the great time they had had together, their meeting, their life etc. They kind of marry again, they just pretend a marriage because their wedding was a little messed up.

'Lost love is still love, it takes only a different form' is the fourth lesson Eddie learns in heaven. Eddie had always loved his wife and Marguerite told him that she knew that. This time in heaven made Eddie happy again.

### ***The fifth person Eddie meets in heaven:***

Marguerite disappeared and Eddie had gone to another heaven. He saw thousands of children playing, splashing with water in the river etc.

'He studied the small bodies, some jumping, some wading, some carrying buckets while others rolled in the high grass. He noticed something else. There were no adults. Not even teenagers. These were all small children, with skin the color of dark wood, seemingly monitoring themselves.' (page 181)

One girl stands up and waves at him. Eddie goes to the girl and she is the last person who Eddie has to meet. It's Tala and she is the girl Eddie had seen in the fire during the war. Eddie felt enormous guilty and he asked what he could do for her. Tala said he had to wash her and while he is doing that, her burned skin becomes beautiful again. Tala tells Eddie that the hands Eddie felt were hers and that he saved the little girl from the accident. She also told Eddie that Ruby Pier was the place where Eddie was supposed to be. He kept children safe. That's his last lesson. Tala brings Eddie to his own heaven. It was Ruby Pier, with many children and of course, Marguerite.

### **Why did the accident happen?**

A young man, called Nicky, had lost his key during one of his rides in Freddy's Free Fall a few months before the accident. This key wedged a pulley. The pulley had ripped the cable's steel wires until they were nearly severed.

### **Did Marguerite and Eddie have children?**

Marguerite and Eddie couldn't get children. They didn't know the reason. Especially Marguerite had always loved children but Eddie loved them also. There were children at many birthdays of Eddie but I don't know who these children were. I think it were their nephews or maybe children from Ruby Pier.

### **Where did the children at Ruby Pier joke about?**

Children made always jokes about the shirt Eddie was wearing during his work. They always said, Eddie Main-ten-ance. They joked that maintenance was his last name instead of his work.