# *In Five Years* by Rebecca Serle

## Synopsis

When Type-A Manhattan lawyer Dannie Cohan is asked this question at the most important interview of her career, she has a meticulously crafted answer at the ready. Later, after nailing her interview and accepting her boyfriend’s marriage proposal, Dannie goes to sleep knowing she is right on track to achieve her five-year plan. But when she wakes up, she’s suddenly in a different apartment, with a different ring on her finger and beside a very different man. The television news is on in the background, and she can just make out the scrolling date. It’s the same night --- December 15 --- but 2025, five years in the future.

After a very intense, shocking hour, Dannie wakes again, at the brink of midnight, back in 2020. She can’t shake what has happened. It certainly felt much more than merely a dream, but she isn’t the kind of person who believes in visions. That nonsense is only charming coming from free-spirited types, like her lifelong best friend, Bella. Determined to ignore the odd experience, she files it away in the back of her mind.

That is, until four-and-a-half years later, when by chance Dannie meets the very same man from her long-ago vision.

## Discussion questions

1. From the very beginning of the book, we learn that Dannie has rules and plans laid out for everything in her life. Do you believe this helps or hinders her? How does her philosophy regarding keeping everything in its place change over the course of the novel?
2. While Bella is a tragic character, she is not painted simply in an angelic light. Early on in the story, Dannie describes her as being “spoiled, mercurial, and more than a little bit magical” (page 6). Is Bella’s portrayal as a complicated, sometimes flawed character unique given the ending of the book and the typical depiction of the tragic heroine?
3. The scene between Dannie and Aaron in Chapter 3 is mirrored by the same scene in Chapter 41. How did your impressions of the two characters change over the course of the book? Why do you think the author chose to frame the story with two identical scenes that will mean different things to the reader at different points in the story?
4. How does Dannie and Bella’s relationship change after Bella’s diagnosis? How does it affect the other relationships in Dannie’s and Bella’s lives? Why do you think it’s easier for Bella to be around Aaron than it is for her to be around Dannie?
5. Were you surprised that Dannie and Aaron kissed when he reveals that the apartment is a gift from Bella? Do you think it amounts to a betrayal of Bella’s trust?
6. Fate is a concept that is played with often throughout the novel. Dannie fights to change the fate she saw laid out in her vision. Aaron told Bella he was fated to end up with her. How do fate and free will interact in the novel? Do you think the book comes down on the side of one over the other?
7. Were you surprised that Dannie and Aaron did not end up together? What do you think this means for Dannie’s journey and her future relationships?

*Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/in-five-years/guide*