# Address Book with solid fillMeet Me at the Museum by Anne Youngson

## Synopsis

In Denmark, Professor Anders Larsen, an urbane man of facts, has lost his wife and his hopes for the future. On an isolated English farm, Tina Hopgood is trapped in a life she doesn’t remember choosing. Both believe their love stories are over.

Brought together by a shared fascination with the Tollund Man, subject of Seamus Heaney’s famous poem, they begin writing letters to one another. And from their vastly different worlds, they find they have more in common than they could have imagined. As they open up to one another about their lives, an unexpected friendship blooms. But then Tina’s letters stop coming, and Anders is thrown into despair. How far are they willing to go to write a new story for themselves?

## Discussion questions

1. Meet Me at the Museum is an epistolary novel, meaning it is written entirely in letters. How is reading an epistolary novel different than reading more traditional firstperson narration?
2. Is there anyone in your life with whom you regularly correspond, rather than meeting in person or talking on the phone? Discuss the differences between those types of interactions.
3. In her first letter, Tina writes, “I am writing to you to see if you can help me make sense of some of the thoughts that occur to me. Or maybe I am hoping that just writing will make sense of them.” Later, she tells Anders, “I have become clearer to myself as I made myself clear to you.” How does writing to one another change the way the characters approach their lives and identities?
4. Tina and her best friend, Bella, always planned to go to Denmark together to visit the Tollund Man, but they never made it. Is there something you’ve always meant to do yet keep putting off?
5. Anders tells Tina about a debate he has at work about making up names for the bog people in the museum (i.e., naming the Tollund Man “Knut”): “To give them names, said the marketing people, would make them seem more human. But, I said (and not only me, fortunately), to give them names would make them only human, rob them of their mystery.” What do you think he means? Have you had a particularly memorable, powerful experience at a natural history or archaeology museum?
6. Anders and Tina often discuss their adult children. Anders writes: “I am ashamed to say I don’t remember ever having understood it was my job to make my children happy.” Tina agrees, and takes it further: “We should look inside ourselves for fulfillment. It is not fair to burden children or grandchildren with the obligation to make us whole. Our obligation to them is to make them safe and provide them with an education.” Do you agree with this approach to parenting? Why or why not?
7. Do you think there is any similarity between Tina’s friendship with Anders and her husband Edward’s affair with Daphne Trigg? Why or why not? Did you feel any sympathy for Edward or Daphne?
8. The ending of the novel is left ambiguous: we never see Tina and Anders actually meet. Do you believe they will? What do you imagine their lives looking like in a year? In five years?

*Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250295163/meetmeatthemuseum*