



BOOKS IN A BAG

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THE WAKES

AUTHOR: Dianne Yarwood

ABOUT THE BOOK

This is a story about Clare, Louisa and Chris. And sometimes Paul, and less often, Beth. It is most certainly not about frittatas (a terrible concession), and more to do with lemon tart (a perfect contrast of textures). It is about what to do when your husband tells you that he doesn't love you anymore. And what to do when your wife leaves you after too many rounds of IVF. It's about helping your new friend with her funeral catering business, and discovering that, sometimes, the most unlikely of pairings are the very, very best. It is about food that is outrageously good and comforting to sad people. And, for once, not being sensible, and throwing away everything you know.

Catering, like life, doesn't always go according to plan, and as Clare, Louisa and Chris's stories become more intertwined, they will learn that life will always manage to break in to remind you of just how good it can be. This is a book about living. After all, the thing about death is that it makes life important.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dianne Yarwood worked in accounting and corporate advisory in London and Sydney. She also nurtured a love for cooking and catering. At the age of forty, with three young children, she became very ill and her life was saved by an emergency doctor. This brush with mortality gave her the courage to do what she's always wanted to do - write. Dianne lives in Sydney with her husband. *The Wakes* is her first novel.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *The Wakes* explores some profound themes about life and death and yet it is also laugh-out-loud funny at times. Do you have a favourite humorous moment from the book?
2. *The Wakes* has been described as 'bittersweet'. What is one bittersweet moment in this book that resonates with you?
3. Though the plot revolves around four funerals, this story is ultimately an uplifting one. How does this contrast reveal important messages about life?
4. The narrative jumps between the points of view of different characters, in different timeframes. What purpose does this serve?
5. How do the voices of Clare, Louisa, Chris and Paul differ from each other in tone and in their perspectives on the events of the book? How are they similar?
6. Unmet expectations cause this book's characters to re-evaluate what they want in a romantic relationship. What are some of the core expectations you believe are essential to make a relationship (romantic or otherwise) fulfilling?
7. A key relationship that drives the story is that of Clare and Louisa, two unexpected friends. How does this blossoming friendship enable Clare to break free of expectations and her past life?
8. Paul is portrayed as a brash and at times obsessive man, unable to let go of an unrequited love. How do Paul's personal struggles influence his relationships with Beth and his peers?
9. In *The Wakes*, death is a catalyst for many characters to reflect upon their current lives. What does death reveal to Clare, Louise, Chris and Paul individually?

