

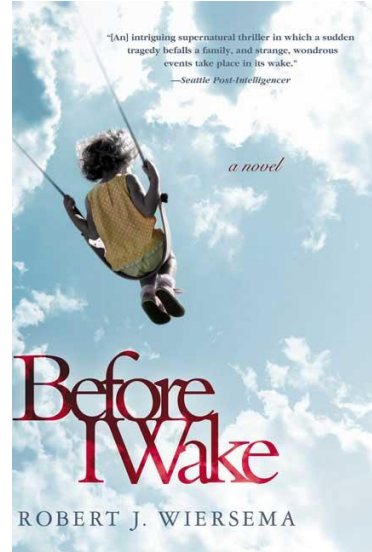
READING GROUP GUIDE

Before I Wake

By Robert J. Wiersema

ISBN 13: 978-0-312-38105-9

ISBN 10: 0-312-38105-0



About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *Before I Wake* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *Before I Wake*.

About the Book

After an unthinkable tragedy happens, an unbelievable miracle begins. . . Three-year-old Sherry is the adored only child of Simon and Karen Barrett. But when Sherry is critically injured in a hit-and-run accident, the fault lines in the Barretts's marriage begin to show. As her parents' marriage falls apart, it is discovered that Sherry has miraculous healing powers.

As word of Sherry's powers spread, her parents must decide how best to shelter their daughter and help the many sick and dying who are drawn to her side. At the same time, a larger battle is brewing-- one that has been raging for two thousand years, and one that might yet claim the lives of Sherry and her family.

Robert J. Wiersema's brilliant debut novel sheds light on the inner lives of characters struggling against tragedy, who find each other and themselves in the darkness. *Before I Wake* reveals the power of forgiveness, and the true nature, and cost, of miracles.



READING GROUP GUIDE

About the Author

Robert J. Wiersema has been a bookseller for more than fifteen years. A journalist and reviewer who contributes regularly to many major Canadian publications, he lives in Victoria, British Columbia, with his family.

Discussion Questions

1. Forgiveness and redemption form one of the themes of *Before I Wake*. How does this theme apply to Henry? To Simon? To other characters?
2. In keeping with the above, do you think Simon had done enough to redeem himself, to earn Karen's forgiveness?
3. Tim and the stranger both have what could be called secret identities. How early in the novel did you first become aware that Father Peter was not who he claimed to be? Who did you think he really was? Was the eventual revelation of his identity a surprise?
4. *Before I Wake* uses multiple first-person points of view to tell the story of its characters. What did you like about this use of multiple voices? Were there particular advantages to this approach? Disadvantages?
5. At one point, Tim tells Henry that "the cost of miracles is dear." In what ways do the characters of *Before I Wake* pay for the miracles around them?
6. The question of religious belief is central to the book. Both Simon and Karen are agnostic: what impact does this have on their actions in the story? Do you think they would have reacted differently had they been religious?
7. There are several narrative twists in *Before I Wake*. Was there one particular moment, event, or outcome that surprised you more than others?
8. The novel ends on a note of ambiguity. What do you think happened in Sherry's sickroom?

For more reading group suggestions, visit

www.readinggroupgold.com

