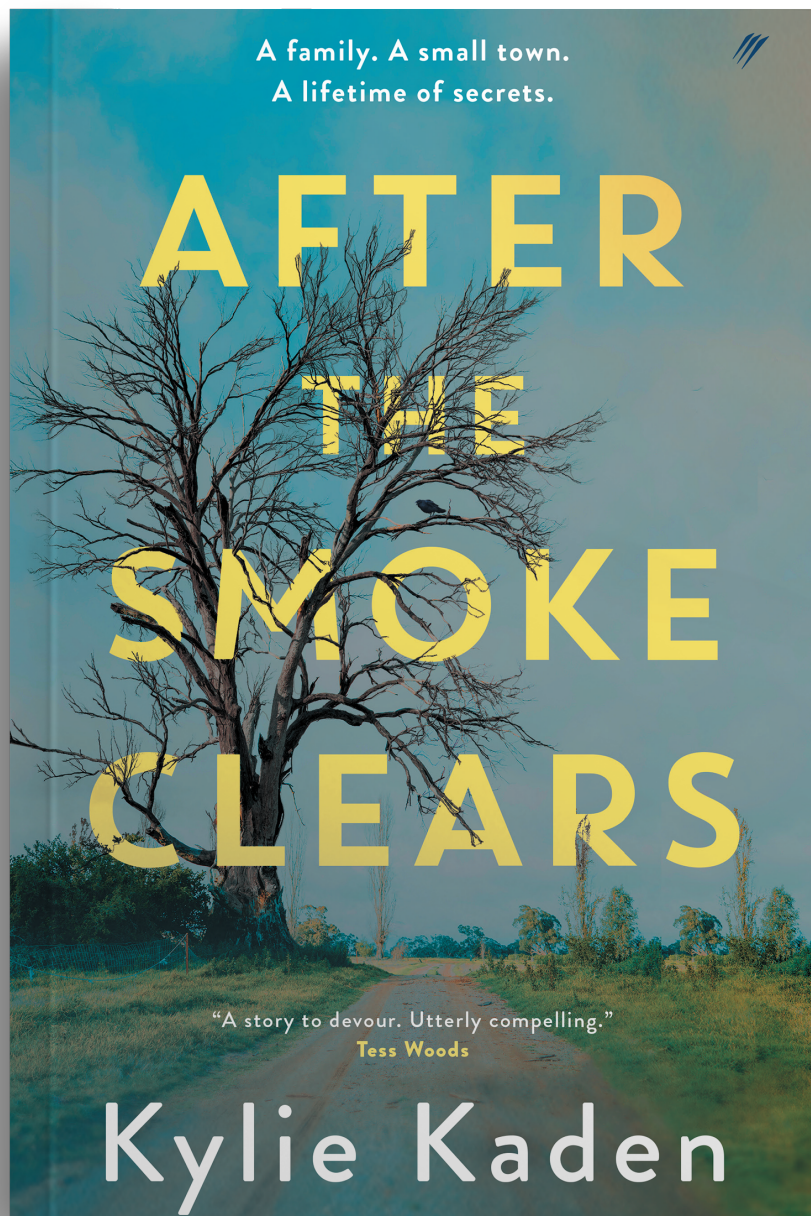


BOOK CLUB NOTES



'A story to devour. Utterly compelling.' **Tess Woods**

'A nuanced story that delves into the best and worst traits of a cast of characters that represent a confronting, and sometimes terrifying modern snapshot of Australian life.' **Lily Malone**



AFTER THE SMOKE CLEARS

By Kylie Kaden

ABOUT THE BOOK

Her family offered a life of power and privilege, until Lotti turned away from her father's grand plans – and towards a life that felt more like her own. With a new start as a teacher, Lotti may have even found the right man, a rough-around-the-edges single dad who'd never fit in with her high-brow upbringing, but who has started to feel like home.

But Lotti isn't the only one running. August's strong silent demeanour may be part of his appeal, but as they get closer, his inability to talk about his past begins to jeopardise their future.

After August receives a cryptic message prompting him to leave in the dead of night, Lotti follows him with his six-year-old son, Otto, on a road trip to his dusty hometown, where decades of lies begin to unravel. When details of a shocking crime emerge, Lotti is forced to decide if she trusts the man August has become more than she fears the man he once was.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kylie Kaden has an honours degree in psychology, was a columnist at *My Child Magazine*, and now works in the disability sector. She knew writing was in her blood from a young age when she snuck onto her brother's Commodore 64 to invent stories as a child. Raised in Queensland, she spent holidays camping with her family on the Sunshine Coast. With a surfer-lawyer for a husband and three spirited sons, Kylie can typically be found venting the day's thoughts on her laptop, sometimes in the laundry so she can't be found.

1. Why do you think rural town settings are so popular in Australian crime fiction?
2. What do you think the meaning is behind the title *After the Smoke Clears*?
3. What item/s would you put in a time capsule?
4. How do you think Lotti's life choices are influenced by her parents' opinions?
5. Do you think Lotti and Augie are good for each other? Why/why not?
6. Why do you think Lotti chose Augie over the stability of Grayson?
7. Do you think Otto's deafness impedes him in any way?
8. Do you think that it is uncharacteristic of Augie to leave Otto behind with Lotti?
9. Why do you think August and Brookes's friendship has lasted as long as it has?
10. How did other members of Brightside cope with the trauma they experienced?
11. Did you suspect the identity of the remains that were found? Were there any clues that you noticed?
12. Why do you think Margo takes the fall for a crime that wasn't hers?
13. They say 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger'. Does this ring true for the characters? What childhood factors may have impacted their resilience in times of adversity?
14. How does Lotti and Augie's relationship evolve over the course of the novel?
15. What role does the setting play in the story? How are the characters' behaviours influenced by their environment?

PREVIOUS BOOKS FROM AUTHOR

