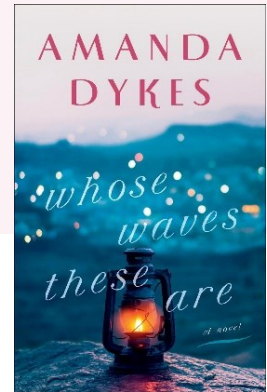




# LEADER'S GUIDE

## WHOSE WAVES THESE ARE BY AMANDA DYKES



*"When I look back at where this tale came from, so much is a blur. But one single thing is clear. It came from a place of being held. A place where God gathered up all of me in my brokenness in a time of deepest grief and just closed His grip around me tight, holding me close to His heart."*

**AMANDA DYKES**

### THEMES

Belonging

History

Grief and Loss

Redemption

Purpose

Hope

### HEADS UP! (TRIGGERS AND DELICATE TOPICS)

Violence

Holocaust Survivor Stories

Death

Racism

### CHARACTERS

*Robert (Grandbob)*, a fisherman from Maine, has the ocean running through his blood. As a young man, he grows up fiercely protective of his brother, believing Roy is the family's hero. When Roy is called to war and doesn't come home, Bob's world is turned upside down. The love of his life, Eva, and his God-given purpose to build the lighthouse, give him hope.

*Roy*, Robert's twin brother, is a doting son and husband who has been subscribed to serve in the war. After rescuing Holocaust survivors out at sea, Robert tragically dies from his injuries, leaving behind his wife Jenny, and baby son, William.

*William*, Roy's son, arrives as a young teen, dishevelled and almost hopeless, at Bob's door. After his mother remarried and later died, William was neglected by his stepdad. He is a quiet, withdrawn and fearful boy, who, under Bob's watchful eye, comes to life. He is a natural born leader, and dedicates his life to serving his country, just as his father had done.

*Annie Bliss*, daughter of William, believes herself to be a "washed up anthropologist who makes spreadsheets about buying habits all day" (p127). Annie returns to Maine a lonely, broken girl whose hopes

and dreams of restoring communities and making a difference in people's lives has been utterly crushed. Being in Maine, and retracing her family's stories, cracks her facade and remoulds her, but it also becomes her place of healing and hope.

*Jeremiah* is an Emergency Medical Technician who took a job at Ansel-by-the-sea and, by default, also became the town postman. He is withdrawn, private and hurting after losing his beloved wife, yet as he develops a friendship with Annie, he slowly begins to trust and heal again.

## STORYLINE

1940s-1950s

Twin brothers Roy and Robert grow up in small-town Ansel-by-the-Sea in Maine with their friend, Jenny. As they grow, Robert follows in his father's footsteps and becomes a local fisherman, while Roy and Jenny marry. Just as Jenny discovers she is pregnant with William, Roy is called away to war and, during an incredible act of bravery, saves a woman (Liesl) and her children from drowning. But in the process, suffers critical injuries which ultimately leads to his death.

Robert, in his grief, writes a poem. It's a call to grieving families worldwide to send a rock to Maine in memory of their lost loved ones, so he can build a lighthouse and 'light up the darkness' in remembrance. Jenny decides to leave Maine with baby William and remarries a man who, after her death, neglects William.

Robert marries Eva, and when William appears on his doorstep needing food, shelter and love, Bob takes him under his wing. The two set to work on the lighthouse together, and William marries Liesl's daughter, Anneliese, uniting himself to the family his father died rescuing.

After an accident in the boat house destroys the lighthouse lens (which cost Bob his life's savings) and leaves Eva crippled in a wheelchair, William flees Ansel-by-the-Sea in utter distress, and his and Bob's relationship seems broken beyond repair.

2000s

Annie arrives in Maine after receiving a message that Bob (her great uncle), has been injured and is in a coma. Desperate for him to wake, she set out to discover his story. Why are there rocks in boxes piled up in his home? Why does her father, William, never speak of Bob? Why is there a rift in the family?

Alongside Jeremiah, the town's postman, Annie uses her curious anthropology mind and investigates. She discovers Bob's poem, the unfinished lighthouse, the story of the boat shed accident and why her father fled. Annie makes it her goal to see the lighthouse completed. When Bob wakes and discovers Annie, Jeremiah and William are out at sea during a storm, he sets fire to the lighthouse to guide their way during the storm and bring them home.

Epilogue

The lighthouse is built to completion. William and Bob's relationship is restored, and Annie and Jeremiah marry and live on the Lighthouse Island, running tours and sharing the message of hope and light.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. Which part of *Whose Waves These Are* did you enjoy most? Why?

### TALKING POINTS

- The dual timeline or historical insights.
- The character's stories (Ed's story of overcoming racist oppression, Leisl's holocaust survival story)
- Bob's Poem.
- The romance; Bob and Eva, Annie and Jeremiah.

2

Q. Which character from *Whose Waves These Are* did you relate to the most?

### TALKING POINTS

These are some reasons we may feel connected or drawn to a particular character;

- Empathy or sympathy for their circumstances.
- We may share similar character traits or personalities.
- We may share similar desires, hopes, or dreams.
- We may have made similar mistakes or poor decisions in our own lives.
- We may like or dislike particular characters because of our experiences with others.

3

Q. Annie is an anthropologist who understands the value of tradition, culture, and places. Ansel-by-the-Sea is a small town at risk of becoming "irrelevant" (p54). How do you hold onto cherished traditions or cultural activities unique to your family?

### TALKING POINTS

Good traditions become woven into our lives so that they are also habits and customs. "A tradition is a planned habit with significance" (Noel Piper);

- Traditions pass down information, beliefs and worldviews from one generation to another through regular repetition, ceremonies or celebrations.
- We often have special traditions for birthdays, Christmas, Easter, long weeks, school holidays, and anniversaries.
- Something to ponder; Have we lost traditions that we would like to get back?

4

Q. At the story's start, Annie believes that "God is distant... real enough on the pages of the Bible, but not one to speak directly to the likes of her" (p142). How did this change for her? Can you relate to how Annie felt?

### TALKING POINTS

During the storm at sea, when all hope seems lost, Annie has a powerful encounter with the living God, who says, "Lift your head Annie Bliss" (p347). It's right there, amongst the chaos, where Annie truly encounters God and begins to understand that He is not some far-away God who doesn't care for His creation but a God who desires to be close to us, guide, love and protect us.

It's often during the storms of life when we've reached our end that God shows up powerfully to provide light in the darkness.

# 5

Q. "You can do hard things" (p75), is one of Bob's mottos. Can you share a Bible verse, phrase, poem or song which has encouraged you during a difficult season of your life?

## TALKING POINTS

You might like to take notes of each woman's favourite encouragement so you can share them on your group's social platform after the meeting.

# 6

Q. For Bob, William, Annie and Jeremiah, burying their pain is a coping mechanism for the grief and loss they've experienced. Yet they all begin to heal when they confront their pain and seek fellowship with others. How does acknowledging the pain and life-giving community help the healing process?

## TALKING POINTS

A safe space within a life-giving relationship (which includes the loving presence of our Heavenly Father) can help us heal because;

- Often healing begins when we feel safe enough to admit we've been hurt, have trauma, or can't keep going anymore.
- When we have no safe space, we may be so busy trying to survive that there is no room or emotional capacity to deal with the past; so it remains buried but still festering within. These issues left undealt with, continue to impact our emotional wellbeing, decision making and relationships.
- Until we can recognise and admit something is wrong, we can bury our pain or feelings, which often show through bitterness, anger, anxiety or depression.
- Having fellowship with other Christian women is vital for healing. In a community, we can share our hearts without judgement. We can receive prayer and comfort. Our sisters can mourn with us, speak encouragement and life into us, correct our wrong thinking with scriptural truth, and help love us into health and happiness as the Holy Spirit guides them.

# 7

Q. On his deathbed, Robert says to Bob, "Don't get stuck in the dark Bob... There's a whole lotta light, go there instead" (p171). How did those parting words change the course of Bob's life?

## TALKING POINTS

When Roy dies, Bob's world has "gone dark". During the mourning process, when Bob is tempted to give in to depression and hopelessness, Bob instead decides to honour Roy and seek the light. When Bob lifts his eyes to Jesus, the beautiful poem (which inspires so many people worldwide) is poured into his heart, revealing his purpose in building the lighthouse.

# 8

Q. The terrible storm Annie, Jeremiah, and William find themselves caught in, is symbolic of the trials and suffering they are enduring. When the storm breaks and they finally see the light of the lighthouse, there is peace and joy, restored relationships, new love and hope, both within themselves and with one another. How can God use the storms of our lives?

## TALKING POINTS

As we endure trials and hardship, often we become more compassionate towards others. As our hearts draw nearer to the Lord, we become sensitive towards others and their needs. We desire to bless them just as the Lord has blessed us during our suffering;

- Trials and suffering join us in Christ's suffering.

- Trials develop endurance, endurance develops strength of character, and character strengthens our confident hope of salvation (Romans 5:4).
- Trials refine us and reveal the areas of our hearts that need attention.
- If we allow them, trials help us to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Sometimes our suffering seems too much to bear, and we may become heartbroken or begin to distrust the Lord. God intends to grow us during suffering and for us to seek our peace, joy and hope from Him, ultimately maturing our faith. This is a challenging process and is only made possible through the faithfulness of Christ, who promises to finish His good work in us. If there is someone in the group in this dark place, pray that the Lord would show them His enduring love, that He would help them to forgive and heal and rest in the hope of heaven.

## 9

Q. Read Bob's poem on page 198 and discuss.

### TALKING POINTS

*Lighthouse*

So send your rocks  
And raise your hearts  
And set to the work of living.  
For the joy and the loss,  
The gold and the dross –  
The lives who were lost, still giving,

Stone upon stone,  
Strength upon strength,  
Their courage shall rise from the sea.  
Where their lives, at the shore,  
Are igniting once more  
To light the way home fearlessly.

And in the light...  
At least, at least...  
In the light, at last, there is life.

## 10

Q. How did you feel about Bob's and William's reconciliation? Did it encourage you to reach out to someone in your life, hoping for restoration or peace?

### TALKING POINTS

Living in a broken and sinful world, many of us exist with hurts, unforgiven offences and damaged relationships with others. The Lord calls us to forgive and cancel the debt owed to us and, where possible, reconcile the relationship.

Before a relationship is restored, we need first to repent and forgive. This is true in most cases whether we are the receiver of the hurt or the person who has sinned;

- When relationships are damaged within families, churches and friendships, we often find both parties have unknowingly hurt and offended the other; to reconcile, both individuals need to say sorry and forgive the other person for the pain they have caused.
- It takes maturity and trust in Christ to seek forgiveness from someone we unknowingly or unintentionally offend.

- When done with sincerity, our repentance and forgiveness are always acceptable and pleasing to the Lord, whether the person chooses to forgive us or not.
- We cannot force someone to accept our apology. We can live in freedom knowing the Lord forgives us and by avoiding similar mistakes again.
- Someone may accept our apology and offer forgiveness yet choose to remain at a distance from us while trust is rebuilt.
- Sometimes reconciliation never happens. As long as we have followed the Lord's prompting to repent and seek restoration, we cannot be held accountable for another person's decision.
- There are exceptions to this general rule (repent and forgive). One example would be survivors of abuse who have done nothing wrong and need the Lord's help to forgive the perpetrator but do not require an act of repentance themselves.
- Forgiving a person who has not repented does not condone their sin; it hands their judgement over to our Holy God, who will seek justice on our behalf.
- Forgiving a wicked and unrepentant person does not require us to allow them a place in our lives. With God's help, we can forgive the undeserving person and continue to protect ourselves by keeping them out of our lives for our safety and wellbeing.



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