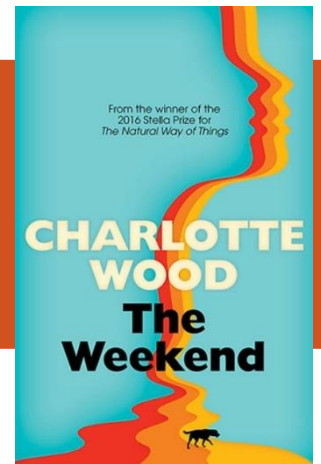




The Weekend

Charlotte Wood



Author Background

Charlotte Wood is the author of six novels and two books of non-fiction. *The Weekend* won the 2020 Australian Book Industry Award for Literary Fiction, and was shortlisted for the Stella Prize, the Prime Minister's Literary Award for Fiction, and the Australian Literature Society Gold Medal. Her previous novel, *The Natural Way of Things*, won the 2016 Stella Prize, and the 2016 Indie Book of the Year, among others.

Charlotte has a PhD from the University of New South Wales, a Master of Creative Arts from the University of Technology Sydney, and a BA from Charles Sturt University. She won the Writer in Residence Fellowship at the University of Sydney's Charles Perkins Centre where she worked with health specialists to offer literary views on the complex topic of ageing.

Her latest project is a podcast, *The Writer's Room with Charlotte Wood*, in which she interviews authors, critics and other artists about the creative process. Charlotte is also working on her seventh novel.

Book Summary

Four older women have a lifelong friendship of the best kind: loving, practical, frank, and steadfast. But when Sylvie dies, the ground shifts dangerously for the remaining three. Can they survive together without her?

They are Jude, a once-famous restaurateur, Wendy, an acclaimed public intellectual, and Adele, a renowned actress now mostly out of work. Struggling to recall exactly why they've remained close all these years, the grieving women gather for Christmas at Sylvie's old beach house - not for festivities, but to clean the place out before it is sold.

Without Sylvie to maintain the group's delicate equilibrium, frustrations build and painful memories press in. Fraying tempers, an elderly dog, unwelcome guests and too much wine collide in a storm that brings long-buried hurts to the surface - and threatens to sweep away their friendship for good.

The Weekend explores growing old and growing up, and what happens when we're forced to uncover the lies we tell ourselves. Sharply observed and excruciatingly funny, this is a jewel of a book: a celebration of tenderness and friendship that is nothing short of brilliant.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ How does Charlotte Wood treat aging in *The Weekend*?
- ❖ Of the three women—Jude, Wendy, and Adele—who is your favourite and least favourite, and why? Talk about their four-decade relationships with one another, as well as their long-held grievances toward each other.
- ❖ Despite their long-held grievances, what is it that keeps these women together, as beloved friends, throughout their lives?
- ❖ While watching Wendy's dog, Finn, through the kitchen window, Jude considers him "pitiful." How does Finn represent the state of old age?
- ❖ Part of the pain of aging is the difference between how you see yourself and how others see you. Does that feel familiar to you personally? How does this gap in perception affect the three women in *The Weekend*?
- ❖ If you are in your mid-50s, or older, how do you view aging? How do you view yourself and your life as opposed to when you were in your 20s, 30s or 40s? What has changed?
- ❖ Quote from the book: "And how could this be? The 30's were the age you fell most dangerously in love, Adele had discovered, after the fact. Not with a man or a woman, but with your friends."

Do you have a circle of long-time friends who make you feel this way? What is it about your group of friends that keeps you together?

References

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