



Wake in Fright

By Kenneth Cook

First published in 1961

Genre and Subject

Australian fiction

Horror

Synopsis

Wake in Fright tells the tale of John Grant's journey into an alcoholic, sexual and spiritual nightmare. It is the original and greatest outback horror story. Bundanyabba and its citizens will haunt you forever.

Author Biography

Kenneth Bernard Cook (5 May 1929 – 18 April 1987) was an Australian journalist, television documentary maker, and novelist. Born in the Sydney suburb of Lakemba, Cook attended Fort Street High School. After leaving school he worked around Australia in a variety of jobs including laboratory technician, journalist and television documentary-maker, and boatshed operator.

Several of Cook's novels were adapted for the screen. Wake in Fright was filmed in 1971 by Ted Kotcheff, starring Donald Pleasence and Gary Bond (released under the title Outback in Europe and the US). Stockade was filmed by Ross McGregor and Hans Pomeranz, also in 1971. In 1976 The Bushranger was made into a telemovie, starring Leonard Teale, John Hamblin and Kate Fitzpatrick. Cook also wrote one episode of the Australian TV children's adventure series The Rovers (1970).

In 2007 Cook's novel The Man Underground was adapted as a radio drama by ABC Radio National.

A 72-minute audio interview with Cook by Hazel de Berg was recorded in 1972, in which he discusses his family, his work for the ABC, the background to Wake in Fright, his ventures into film production and his novels. The interview is preserved in the collection of the National Library of Australia.

He also wrote novels under the pseudonyms Alan Hale and John Duffy.^[12] Cook's literary estate is managed by Curtis Brown Australia.

Discussion Starters

How did you experience the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"?

How did you feel reading it?

What did you think of John Grant?—personality traits, motivations, inner qualities.

- Are his actions justified?
- How has the past shaped him?

How does Grant change by the end of the book? Does he learn something about himself and how the world works?

What main ideas—themes—does the Cook explore? Does he use symbols to reinforce the main ideas?

What passages strike you as insightful, even profound? Perhaps a bit of dialog that's funny or poignant or that encapsulates a character? Maybe there's a particular comment that states the book's thematic concerns?

Is the ending satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?

If you liked this book, you may also like...

- *Maggie Cassidy* by Jack Kerouac
- *The Moon is Down* by John Steinbeck
- *Island* by Aldous Huxley

Author biography from Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenneth_Cook

Discussion starters from LitLovers <https://www.litlovers.com/run-a-book-club/questions-for-fiction>

Read-a-likes from What Should I Read Next? <https://www.whatshouldireadnext.com/isbn/1921922168>