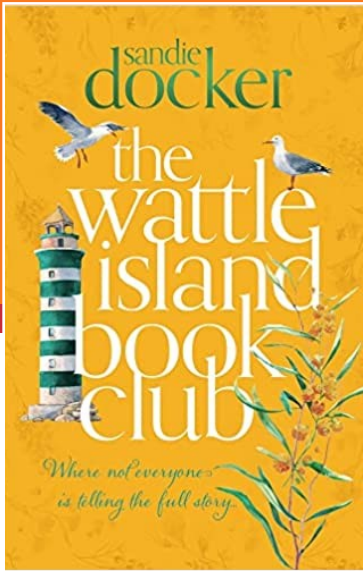


Wattle Island book club

By Sandie Docker

First published in 2021



Genre and Subject

Australian fiction

Islands

Secrecy

Synopsis

Is it ever too late to rewrite your own story? Courage. In 1950, teenager Anne flees Wattle Island, desperate to make her own way in the big city. As she begins to establish her new life, though, she is faced with a choice that could destroy all she has worked so hard for. Then when tragedy strikes, establishing the Wattle Island book club is the only thing that offers her solace. Passion. Spirited librarian Grace has been writing bucket lists since she was a child, and is ticking off as many challenges as she can now that life has handed her a hefty dose of perspective. Heading to Wattle Island on one of her adventures, she is determined to uncover a long-held mystery surrounding the town's historic book club, unlocking a buried truth that has been trapped between the dusty pages of secrecy for years. Hope. All too aware of how fragile life is, Anne and Grace must come together to help the residents of Wattle Island find the bravery to move beyond the trauma that tore the book club apart. Budding relationships offer new hope, along with a library project for the town's future - but it will take more than a few lively literary debates to break the silence and heal the past. Welcome to the Wattle Island Book Club, where new chapters begin and end, and not everyone is telling the full story.

Author Biography

Australian author, Sandie Docker grew up in Coffs Harbour, and first fell in love with reading when her father introduced her to fantasy books as a teenager. Her love of Women's Fiction began when she first read Jane Austen for the HSC, but it wasn't until she was taking a translation course at university that her Mandarin lecturer suggested she might have a knack for writing – a seed of an idea that sat quietly in the back of her mind while she lived overseas and travelled the world.

Now back in Sydney, Sandie writes about love, loss, family and small country towns. Her debut novel, *The Kookaburra Creek Café*, was released in 2018, *The Cottage At Rosella Cove* in 2019, the German edition of *The Kookaburra Creek Cafe - Das kleine Café der großen Träume*, was released in Jan, 2020, *The Banksia Bay Beach Shack*, was released in, 2020, and her fourth novel, *The Wattle Island Book Club*, was released on August 31st, 2021.

Discussion Starters

1. When we first meet Grace, she has a very extensive bucket list of things she hopes to achieve in life. What would be on yours?
2. Grace arrives on Wattle Island with a view to embracing adventure and ends up enriching her own life. In what ways does her presence there also come to enhance the lives of others ?
3. Anne believes that 'age doesn't always bring wisdom'. Addie, the youngest character in the book, shows great wisdom. What is it, other than age, that shapes wisdom ?
4. Discuss the ways in which the book club on Wattle Island helps the various characters in this story. In what ways is your own book club valuable to you ?
5. The Japanese art of kintsugi – translated as 'golden joinery' – celebrates imperfections. How does Grace use this to help Sam understand his own pain and grief? Do you think our scars make us more beautiful ?
6. While Grace is determined to uncover the truth about the book club's past, she seems reluctant to share her own personal story. Is it fair to keep Anne and Sam in the dark for so long, or does she owe them the truth earlier ?
7. Another person Grace hides the truth from is her mum. Why does she do this? Is this justified ?
8. Discuss the role of art in the novel, and in particular the role it plays in Anne's relationship with Tadashi. What other examples can you find in the book of the way art can connect characters and heal them? Have you ever found healing through art or another creative outlet ?
9. Racial intolerance was prevalent in Australia after the war. Do you think we have made any real progress in this respect since ?
10. Do you have a book that is as precious to you as Anne's copy of Anne of Green Gables is to her ?
11. The ending to The Wattle Island Book Club is bittersweet. Do you feel this is a fitting end to the story? Is the epilogue satisfying ?
12. Anne's journey to finding love with Tadashi isn't smooth. In which other novels by Sandie Docker do we find the theme of forbidden love ?

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