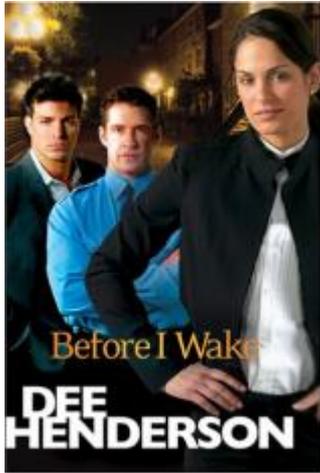


Before I Wake

by Dee Henderson



About the Book

The Sheriff of Justice, Illinois is hunting a killer. Women visiting town are being murdered, tourists in nice hotels, money still in their billfolds, jewelry still on the dresser. Quiet kills --- they go to sleep and never awaken.

The Sheriff is not pleased to find the new detective in town, Rae Gabriella, working a case on behalf of one of the victims' families. She's staying in the same hotel where one of the women died, and her looks suggest she could be the next victim.

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Discussion Guide

1. The word "Justice" is both the name of a town and the name of its sheriff. Does this seem like an appropriate name to you? Explain.
2. In the prologue, we meet Rae Gabriella. What are your first impressions of her? Of Bruce?
3. What might make Rae think she can "disappear" in Justice? Do you think that Rae will succeed in escaping her past by moving there? Why or why not?
4. What is Bruce's motivation for taking Rae on as a partner? In Chapter Four he tells Nathan that she was a good cop and that it will be useful for him to have a female on his team. Do you think his motivation goes deeper than that?
5. What are some things Rae does to get familiar with her new surroundings? How does her approach, as a trained undercover cop, differ from that of a typical newcomer?
6. Nathan and Bruce are both dedicated to uncovering the truth in Justice: one as a sheriff, the other as a private investigator. How did each of them land in their present positions? When do their responsibilities complement each other? When might they clash?
7. Discuss Nathan and Bruce's friendship. What do they have in common? Are their feelings for Rae a potential source of tension between them?
8. Discuss the significance of a labor strike in a town like Justice. Why are emotions running so hot? What are

the issues from the workers' point of view? From the management's point of view? Explain the looming threat of violence.

9. Have you ever personally observed or experienced a labor strike? If so, what was it like? Did it achieve its objectives?

10. Many people are surprised to learn that the underground drug culture is not just an urban blight, but also a real problem in small towns, from marijuana to methamphetamine to heroin. What might be some of the advantages and disadvantages of small-town connections to someone making or selling drugs?

11. What qualities make the "EE" designer drug nearly a perfect formula, as far as illegal drugs go?

12. Nathan has an interesting relationship with his grandfather. Why has Nathan asked Bruce to monitor his grandfather's activities? Do you think that was the right thing to do? Why or why not?

13. Both Bruce and Rae feel that they have changed a lot in the past several years. Do they feel they've changed for the better, or for worse?

14. How did the event in Washington, D. C. affected Rae's confidence in her skills? What questions of faith has it raised for her?

15. In Chapter Fifteen Bruce says, "I'm walking around proof that people can change." What --- or whom --- does he credit with the change? Have you seen evidence of this kind of change in your own life or that of someone you know?

16. In Chapter Forty-Two Rae asks, "How can God let us get so hurt if He loves us?" What is Nathan's response? Do you agree with his response? Why or why not?

17. Do you think Rae will eventually rekindle a romantic relationship with Bruce? Begin a new one with Nathan? Neither? Explain.

Author Bio

Dee Henderson is the author of numerous novels, including TAKEN, UNDETECTED, UNSPOKEN, FULL DISCLOSURE, and the acclaimed *O'Malley* and *Uncommon Heroes* series. Her books have won or been nominated for several prestigious industry awards, such as the RITA Award, the Christy Award, and the ECPA Gold Medallion. Dee is a lifelong resident of Illinois.

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