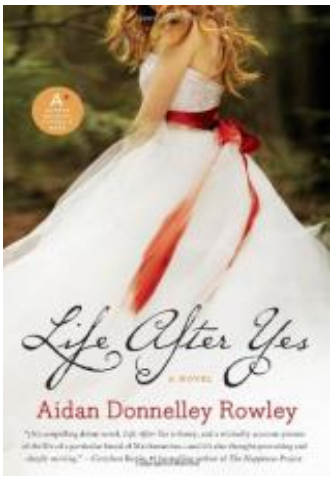
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Life After Yes

by Aidan Donnelley Rowley



About the Book

"Music plays. Dad appears. I walk with him, eyes fastened to the floor. When I look up, something is very wrong. There are three grooms."

This is the story of Quinn --- born Prudence Quinn O'Malley --- a confused young Manhattan attorney who loses her father on that tragic September morning that changed everything. Now, at an existential crossroads in her life, Quinn must confront impossible questions about commitment and career, love and loss. Her idealistic beau desperately wants a wedding, and whisks her away to Paris just to propose. But then Quinn has a dream featuring judges and handcuffs and Nietzsche and Britney?and far too many grooms. Suddenly, her future isn't so clear. Quinn's world has become a minefield of men --- some living, some gone, and traversing it safely is going to take a lot more than numerous glasses of pinot grigio.

Life After Yes is a blisteringly honest, thoroughly modern tale of life and love in chaos, marking the arrival of a truly exciting new voice in contemporary fiction.

Discussion Guide

1. Life After Yes begins with a dream (or nightmare) that comes back to Quinn throughout the book. What is the significance of that dream? Ultimately, what is it that Quinn is so afraid of?

2. Quinn (a.k.a. Prudence) struggles with her name from a young age and is called different things by different people: Sage calls her Quinn, but Phelps, her first true love, teases her as Prudence. The law firm knows her as Quinn, but her family calls her Prue. What do these two names represent for her?

3. Do you think our society is overly concerned with the virtue (or vice) of prudence?

4. Quinn seems like a typical lawyer when she?s talking and reasoning with other people ---confident and rational --- but her interior monologue is much more insecure. Do you think this is common, namely that our exterior selves are more polished than our interior selves?

5. In the book, the word ?blackberry? refers to both the technological gadget and the fruit. How do these different meanings come together to define Quinn?

6. Do you know anyone who is a ?Berry baby?? Are you? Why do you think people feel the need to check their Blackberrys at all times?

7. Quinn?s best friends, Kayla and Avery, are very different people and seem to represent the contradictory parts of Quinn herself. As Quinn changes, so do they. How do their lives mirror Quinn?s?

8. The loss of Quinn?s father is prevalent all through the book. How does Quinn deal with this loss? How does her father influence her decisions even after he is gone?

9. Both Quinn and Sage have lost a family member, but they deal with their respective losses in very different ways. How have these losses impacted their relationship? How have these losses changed their families?

10. Alcohol plays a conspicuous role throughout Quinn?s story. Do you think that Quinn ? and others --- rely too much on alcohol to cope with existential unrest? Do you think **Life After Yes** paints an accurate portrait of the ubiquity of alcohol in modern culture, or do you think the portrait offered is exaggerated?

11. Do you agree that **Life After Yes** is not a fairy tale?

12. Do you agree that there is usually one nurturer in a relationship?

13. Quinn?s mother says that growing up is not a fact, but a decision. Do you agree? When do you think childhood traditionally expires? When one marries? When one?s parent dies? Or does childhood expire over and over?

14. Fishing is an important theme throughout Quinn?s story. Discuss the significance of this particular theme to Quinn?s character and to questions of life and love.

15. Late in the novel, Quinn realizes that her parents? marriage wasn?t quite as perfect as it seemed. How does this affect her feelings about Sage and her impending wedding?

16. Quinn isn?t exactly faithful to Sage and yet they seem to understand each other better after they both face infidelity. Why does this bring them closer?

17. Do you agree with the theory that it is never too late to become a good person?

18. If you were Quinn, would you have chosen Sage or Phelps? Why? Do you think most women have a Sage and a Phelps in their life?

19. As Quinn evolves, she comes to realize that we often don?t find the best things in life when looking, but stumble upon them while living. Do you agree?

20. Shortly before the end of the book, Quinn realizes that sometimes beginnings and ends ?bleed into each other.? Why is this important for her? Do you agree that life is a series of overlapping beginnings and ends?

21. Life After Yes ends with a good deal of uncertainty. We do not know where exactly Quinn is headed professionally and personally. This is hardly the typical Hollywood ending, but it is also more real. As a reader, are you frustrated by the ending?s murkiness or do you find it satisfying in that it reflects reality?

22. If there were a movie based on **Life After Yes**, whom would you choose to play the main characters?

Author Bio

Born and raised in New York City, Aidan Donnelley Rowley graduated from Yale University and received her law degree from Columbia University. She is the author of a previous novel, LIFE AFTER YES, and the creator of the Happier Hours Literary Salons. She lives in Manhattan with her husband and three daughters.

Critical Praise

"Rowley skillfully dissects the myth of having it all in this unputdownable late coming of age story set in rarefied Manhattan. Her flawed and complex characters will stick with you long after Life After Yes?s final pages since they are all too human as they struggle with love and loss."

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