



Wake

Abria Mattina

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Eighteen isn't too young to run your life into the ground, but it's not too old to fix it, either. The desire for change drives Willa Kirk from St. John's, Newfoundland back to hometown of Smiths Falls, Ontario, away from her mistakes and the place where her sister died. She's looking for a place to settle and rebuild, but Jem Harper just wants to get out of town, back to the life he knew before cancer. By letting the tragedies in their lives define them, they are both dying a little more every day. Welcome to the wake.

Wake Details

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From Reader Review Wake for online ebook

Amber Rose says

I'm not invisible. I have desires. I want to be touched and held and told that I'm worth something. I am not pitiful. I am better than you can imagine. I have talents. I have successes and failures. I love my life. I sometimes feel dissatisfied with the world. I come from a place of love, not death. I am special. I matter. I can be the most interesting person in the room. I can blend in and that's okay. I'm somebody. I'm a nobody. I feel deeply and I want to be allowed to show it. I don't want to be judged. I can be judgmental. When you give me platitudes and you belittle my feelings. I'm brave. I'm scared. I'm wandering. I have plans. I will be the best me I can be. I am not who I think I am. I am not who you think I am; I am who I think you think I am, so think well of me, please.

First let me say before anyone goes out and buys Wake that you please be very patient with this one. It's a very, very long book. But it's an absolutely beautiful read.

Jem is a eighteen year old going through cancer remission. Jem got cancer a week after he moved to a new town and school. Jem has no friends and everyone is standoffish towards him because he is the cancer boy afraid he is going to drop at any moment. Jem is tried, and not the perfect, handsome, out going kid he once was. It's an every day struggle with the pain plus to make it to school and seat there lonely. Besides his sweet little sister Elise is there for him. I adored his sister and all the milk shakes that she makes him and her Harry Potter obsessions.

"You worry so much for such a young man," she says. You always were like that; and old soul, I guess."

Then he meets Willa his Social Studies partner. Willa also a back ground with dealing with cancer. Her sister died of cancer. She is an angry, flat out blunt, depressed girl. But Willa has her own secrets. Willa is struggling with not going back to her dark past.

"You're a ginger? "Kirk" "Oh you poor soulless bastard."

The bickering back and forth between Jem and Willa is hilarious. Willa is not scared to talk or touch Jem, she treats him like an actual person. I love how Willa takes great care of Jem, she makes him wonderful and sounds delicious soups that he can eat. Willa treats Jem too good.

You can't love someone if you don't really know them. And if you can't love them at their darkest moments...you just can't love them, period.

It's heart wrenching. I loved the different POV's that I got, I love how at that moment of time I get the feelings from other family members. Jem has a amazing family they are all full of heart.

Even though this book is long as hell I am glad I read it, but you get to see the day in and day out of what all these characters go through. It makes it worth it so much more.

Great job Abria Mattina

Jess Brown says

I adore this book, it's beautifully written. There will be tears, but all is right in the end.

Katie(babs) says

Wake by Abria Mattina was a free book offered for the Kindle, which I grabbed since I'm always interested in reading more self published books, especially young adult. Wake has received positive reviews for the most part, and this is a heavily, emotional young adult novel that's written more an adult audience than a teen one. There's a great deal of adult language, aka cursing, no fade to black love scenes and a lot of talk about dying, euthanasia and death. Wake has a great deal to recommend for it but there are many cons I have, including a big, big issue that unfortunately ruined my reading experience when I found out where this story evolved from.

Wake has many POVs, here, but starts out with the POVs from the two main characters. Jem, the male protagonist is recovering from cancer and is still dealing with the side effects of his illness. His family is very supportive of him, including his younger sister Elise who is very protective of Jem and makes him homemade milkshakes, the only thing he can keep down. Because Jem missed too many days of school because of his cancer, he has stayed back a year. He's not thrilled about going back to school because he's still very sick. He can't eat correctly, lost a great deal of weight that makes him look skeletal and is bald. He feels like a freak and everyone treats him with kid gloves. He just wants to be a normal teenage boy again but his body stops him for doing so.

During his Social Studies class, Jem is partnered up with a new girl, Willa. He and Willa don't hit it off right away. Jem wants to be left alone but for some reason Willa sneaks into his thoughts and he decides to give her a chance and see if they can be friends. Willa on the other hand isn't sure what to think of Jem. She's really not interested in being friends with him or anyone else at her new school. She now lives with her older brother since she can't live with her parents, especially with her mother who can barely look or talk to her. Willa is hiding a big secret that has to do with the death of her sister who also died from cancer. She seems to understand what Jem is going through and goes out of her way to make him soup like she did with her sister to help him gain weight, including establishing a relationship with him, although she doesn't want to rely on Jem too much because there's a possibility his cancer could come back and he could die.

Jem starts to fall in love with Willa and wants to break down those emotional walls she has put up around her. Most of the time she drives him crazy and they end up fighting and screaming and not talking to one another for days. But eventually they come back to one another because of the bond they have created. Then Willa takes a chance and tells Jem her dark secret, which causes Jem to lash out at her where she almost falls into a destructive behavior that could destroy not only herself but Jem who feels the only reason he can keep living is because of Willa.

Wake does hit you hard. Abria doesn't hold back any punches, especially with Jem and what he goes through because of his cancer. For the most part, Jem's illness was handled wonderfully and I do wish there were more YA type books with the POV from the primary male character. I adored Jem and everything he stood for. I rooted for him to get better and wanted him to live a full and happy life. I loved Jem's relationship with

his family, but his sister Elisa is unrealistic because she acts much younger than she is. She's a sixteen year old who acts more like a pre-teen or perhaps even younger and she had a very grating personality.

I couldn't stand Willa. The way she acts is a big contradiction most of the time and the twist regarding her sister fell flat for me, as well as the constant fighting, and tension for tension sake between Jem and her was incredibly annoying. At times I felt these two were perfect for one another, but then something would happen and I wanted to smack them and tell them to search elsewhere for satisfaction. Their relationship was a combustible one, but by the end I did believe their HEA, although the ending was too pat and sudden. A big problem I had with Wake was the length. It could have been cut by 100 or 150 pages. Half way through there's too much head jumping and POVs that threw me out of the story and far too many secondary characters who don't seem to have any importance as a whole to the story. There were also some actions and scenes that don't make sense and again don't bring any importance to the plot or help motivate Jem or Willa. The language and sex is in your face, not watered down, but does have a sense of truthfulness to it. The way Jem obsesses with sex and having sex with Willa is exactly what I would expect from a boy his age. Even though this is considered a young adult novel, again with the situations, language and sex, it fits more of an adult audience. Even though this is about teens, the subject matter is very adult. There's a lot of cursing and many sexual situations, none fade to black that you usually find in young adult books. When it comes to young adult books, IMO, I expect it to be more subtle. But again that's my opinion and a subjective view.

I was ready to give Wake a B- grade because I was engaged to a point, but as I was reading I found out a big WTF for me. I had no idea this was former Twilight fan fiction. Because of that I'm lowering this a grade and can't recommend Wake to readers. Some may think I'm being mean and cruel as a reviewer, but my opinion about publishing fan fiction that has been posted on a fan fiction board, much like E.L. James, among other authors where they make their money off their former fan fiction is very well known and one I don't agree with. If I find out a book I've read is former fan fiction that has been published, as is the case of most Twilight fan fiction being published these days, I will lower my grade, and so is the case with Wake.

Wake has a lot to recommend for it but needs to be heavily edited and fixed to be a more cohesive story. I can see there being a sequel. As for reading that sequel if it does get written, I won't be reading it because after reading some excerpts of Dead on my Feet starring Edward and Bella as Jem and Willa, I've become sour regarding Wake and will try to find other young adult fiction that isn't former Twilight fan fiction.

Was once Twilight fan fic called Dead on My Feet by Cesca Marie. Can be read here:
<http://thelitoftwi.com/documents/Dead...>

Steph LJ says

I did not enjoy this book... not at all.

The author claims a degree in English Literature, yet consistently breaks the I/me rule. This is one of the easiest and common rules of grammar, and if a published author delivers a work with this mistake I find it unforgivable. Was there even a proof reader or editor involved? It is just unacceptable for I to see this error. (see how annoying that is?)

Then there is the problem of the characters and their sad drama. Willa is a damaged smartass living with her not-out-gay brother. Jem is a boy with cancer.

We are subjected to these two constantly insulting each other, Jem vomiting in great detail, and Willa "dealing" with the death of her sister. The characters are never really developed, and when we are told that they have feelings for each other I can't help but ask, "Why?" Why do they have such deep feelings? I never got it.

The book last forever. Every last detail of each hospital visit is described in painful detail. I get it. The kid is sick. But, I don't need to have the gritty details to feel for him. Pretty much, as a rule, just include one or two vomit scenes per book. I know it happens, but don't need the play by play.

In the end I guess they end up happily ever after. The epilogue is set a few months after the end of the book, and I didn't really see the need for it. We are treated to the emotional turmoil of Jem's first haircut. Again, I understand the emotion, but at this point I'm wondering where the therapist is, because these people are NOT handling their grief well.

Tee loves Kyle Jacobson says

First I MUST start this review off by saying I HAVE NEVER read a book that had so many things tie in to one thing. Abria has done a PHENOMENAL job of weaving a story of love, loss and secrets. Where decisions are made and consequences are suffered. I was so emotional reading this book because I had just finished another book that dealt with Cancer and loss.

Jem was a very interesting character for me because he was a snarky little thing. He was angry and confused and hurt and scared all in one and hid it well from his family and friends. He is very close to his little sister and they share every thing and she even gives up her room so he can have privacy when he is sick. He is in remission from the cancer but he is sick from all the medicine and very cranky.

Then Jem starts school again after the treatments but his heart just isn't there because he is always tired and sick. But he keeps going to school and it is there that he meets the new girl Willa. Although he finds out she is not new at all because she used to live there but then she moved away and now she is back. They start off with a lot of banter and snarkiness between them because Willa dishes out what he gives her. They have this love hate relationship and go through a lot together.

Willa has secrets and she is willing to go to the grave with them because all she wants to do is forget. She moves in with her brother to start a new life and move on from the death of her sister from Cancer. She becomes friends with Jem and treats him like he is not sick. They share a lot in common and they are good for one another. Willa realizes that Jem needs her in so many ways and she is willing to help him.

This story was so heart wrenching and so intense that at times I was laughing and crying all in one. This is a must read because it delves into emotions and situations that may arise for so many teens that are sick or who have family members that are sick. It will take you on an emotional ride and in the end it will leave you breathless.

While I was reading this book a song came to mind that reminded me of Jem and Willa. My Love by Sia and here is the link to the video http://youtu.be/mtM_cc4SPJI

Mary Elizabeth says

I think the reason fan fiction works so well is because we all ready have a relationship with the characters, so while there is a little explanation in the start of fan fiction stories about who is who, we pretty much already have it down.

And that was a huge issue with Wake, which used to be Dead on my Feet when it was still a Twilight fan fiction.

I loved the story when it was up on ffn, and I thought for sure I would love it as a book. That just wasn't the case really. A lot of that die to the fact that the author pulled it from ffn, changed the names and title, and published. Sure, a few minor details were changed, but Wake and Dead on my Feet are the same exact thing.

Not to say I didn't like it the second time around, because I did. The only problem I had was that I was not as invested in Jem (Edward) or Willa (Bella) as I was in the original. In fact, I was confused as to who was who for about the first two or three chapters. It took me a minute to figure out that Jem and Harper are the same person a la Edward Cullen - Jem Harper.

The stories plot itself is genius. She takes an ugly plot line and makes it funny, but brutally honest at the same time, and that is something I have always admired about Abria Mattina - she isn't afraid to make us feel uncomfortable. Cancer is scary, and never once did she sugar coat it.

Did I say it's almost 800 pages long? Yeah, she cut nothing, which proved to be kind of boring at times, because while the little sister and her crush worked in the fic, it did not work in the book. None of it worked, and Elsie and Kipp's relationship could have been left out completely ... Elsie (Alice) has a big enough role in Wake as it is. Kipp (Jasper) added nothing to the plot, where in the fic it worked because they are Twilight characters.

In the end I'm glad I read it again. I wish she would have put a little more effort into making it more original, but it's a story that will stay with me for the rest of my life. The last chapter is different and much better than Dead on my Feet's, and that left me with a good feeling. She closed it up nicely.

I will totally rec this to family members and friends who have not read the original fan fiction version, but if you have, don;t bother unless you feel like reading the same thing again ... which you might. It's a fun read. I love their banter.

Anne says

I really enjoyed this book - it felt very honest and authentic without sugarcoating the more harrowing details of Jem's and Willa's lives. When I try to describe this book to people, they usually say 'so, it's like "The Fault in Our Stars then"', but I don't actually rate that book very highly.

"Wake" may not have the acclaim (or the companion movie) of John Green's novel, nor does it ***SPOILER ALERT*** go so far in terms of its commitment to a 'sad' ending, but I was moved by this book in a way I never was by Green's.

Jude says

Wow, Wake was... wow. Insanely long, but not *long*. Sometimes books seem to drag on and on and you're just thinking *When will this end?* even if they are not long you still fell like they're huge. Wake was actually long, but I just wanted more and more and more. Books are small chapters of the characters lives. Wake was many chapters for Willa and Jem and I loved it and I could easily read another book about them.

I got to know the characters inside and out *completely*. Their points of view, their pasts, what haunts them and how they evolve. Which was beautiful. It was not a sad story, not at all; it was tough, but not sad. And the whole ending was great.

From the moment I started the book, Jem's voice sucked me into the story and I was addicted. Both Jem and Will had such strong voices and they were so so *sofunny*! Lots and lots of swearing, but God, I don't think I've ever laughed so much with a book! Especially considering that every single joke here was dark and bittersweet. And no matter how depressing the situation was, there was always some sarcastic bitter joke somewhere. A Fantastic approach to a novel that revolves around a cancer patient.

I highly *Highly* suggest you read Wake. Won't regret it, and you'll be very satisfied. You should do your best to read it slowly, savor each chapter, word and joke. It's so worth it. I LOVED this book. I bow to author Abria Mattina. She wrote an exceptional book, and I'm still blown away by how good it was.

Strong characters, fierce novel and a new favorite. Wake is simply Amazing.

Monica says

This was such a beautiful story. There were so many topics it touched on. The aftermath of cancer and drug treatments & their effects, suffering through illness, assisted suicide, insecurities, forgiveness, rebirth, spirituality, sexuality and homosexuality, family, love, and life after cancer.

This story is told through multiple pov's. Mainly Jem, who has survived cancer and Willa who lost her sister to cancer. There are a few chapters that offer viewpoints of their other siblings as well.

The dialogue is fantastic, the snarky attitudes and slick humor was just right. I laughed, I cried, I smiled and I sighed. Truly a remarkable story.

??™ says

We shall draw from the heart of suffering itself the means of inspiration and survival. - Winston Churchill

in her desire to start a new life, Willa Kirk goes back to her hometown of Smith Falls, Ontario to live with her older brother Frank. she meets Jem Harper who is on remission from cancer and as their relationship progresses, their lives and of those around them will never be the same.

author Abria Mattina's novel is certainly a hefty one and it deals with a lot of subject matter - disease, teenage angst, suicide, sex, family dynamics, friendship, intimacy, homosexuality and deep dark secrets. initially, Willa's and Jem's voices speak alternately. later on in the book, Elise's voice, Jem's sister, is heard. each has a story to tell and through these different points of view, the reader gets a clear picture of what is going on.

the language is contemporary and very graphic especially the dialogs between Willa and Jem. the exchanges are raw, heavy and very emotional and affected me in more ways than one particularly Jem's battle with cancer. his struggle reminded me so much of my Mom whom i lost to the Big C a couple of years ago. memories of those times spent in clinics and hospitals with her kept recurring in my mind.

although this was not an easy read for me, i have only high praises for this book. it is well researched, brilliantly written and filled with flesh and blood characters that leap off from its 700 plus pages.

do not let that number and the heavy themes daunt you or keep you from grabbing a copy of this must read novel. i assure you that the time spent reading this phenomenal book is worth every letter, word, sentence, paragraph and punctuation mark.

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Jovani says

Cancer to you and me is a disease of uncontrollable cell growth. It is the reason we wear pink in October. It's what motivates us to run a marathon in honor of someone who beat it.

But to Jem...He IS Cancer. He dreams sleeps, walks, and breathes It. Cancer has stolen his hair, taken over his wardrobe and wasted his social life. With each look of disgust, he dies a little more inside. He no longer recognizes his reflection in the mirror. His family and friends (lack there of) can't bare to look at him, so they stare past him.

Willa is a gloved wearing, Emo-chick who doesn't take crap from anyone. Willa is also the only person who looks at Jem and actually sees him. Their relationship is based on hiding and running from the world that doesn't understand. Cancer has left them both for dead, but somehow they find a way to live through each other. Willa however is hiding much more than just her hands, she has a much darker secret that will rock the only solid person in her life...

Jem would give anything to go back to the life he had before Cancer. But...was he ever really living? Fantastic, Real, Raw! I loved it!

Joanne Johnston says

The book had my emotions going up and down

There are not many books that i finish and then after, feel emotionally exhausted. i can probably count the ones that do, on one hand.

love, humour, sex, self harm, euthanasia, dying, grieving, drugs

'Wake' not only has a gritty storyline but it is witty, moving and beautifully written. the different perspectives of the same days of the week provide different perspectives of the main characters 'Jem' and 'Willa'.

What i love about both characters is that neither of them hold back. from when they first met both Jem and Willa throw abuse at each other back and forth-i loved how this book had a funny side as well as a very serious side.

at times though i started to resent the characters only to fall in love with them all over again. what i liked about willa at the beginning was her stubbornness for not caring about what anyone thinks about her, and her recklessness. i liked her snideness and her rudeness. then i began to not like her for all these things as it seemed to cause nothing but hurt for her and jem.

what i loved about jem, was his romantic side and his vulnerable side. even though he was so self conscious, he dealt with his illness very bravely, and didn't want to give up. of course feeling sorry for jem was to be expected-especially everything he went through-but at times i wanted to shout at him and tell him to 'man up!' i think he lack of self esteem obviously has a lot to do with his illness and they way people treat him.

willa is exactly what jem needed and vice versa. before each other they were a mess. but together (eventually) they cleaned one another up.

Five stars :-) xxx

Miss Adeo says

ok so the general gist is that this book centres around the two main characters, Willa a troubled girl who from the start has been through a lot but you're not quite sure of what. And Jem who is in a remission from cancer. It deals with themes of loss, guilt, depression and fighting to get your life back after surviving cancer, radiation chemo and all the side effects that come with them.

When I first started reading this book I made a few assumptions about how I thought the story would pan out. As I continued reading, the author, through her incredible characters battered down every single one of my predictions. These characters were honest and for once they react to situations much more realistically than I realise I've come to expect in books. The characters have been through so much and with the book being like 700 pages long we are able to slowly find out all the secrets as they do.

Jem the male lead was so true to life and I love how unlike most books he doesn't just overcome all of his body issues because his love interest says he looks fine. I'm so tired of someone having long term issues with themselves and literally getting over them in 2 seconds. There was a bit of a role reversal in this book in that Willa was the one with the most experience and also the one more reluctant to fall into a relationship.

All the characters, primary and secondary brought something to the table. Jems whole family was awesome but I have to say Elise his little sister was definitely a scene stealer for me. I personally know a few families

who have gone/are going through something similar to what Jems is and I was amazed by how true to life this book was.

I really liked how the author didn't feel the need to fix all the problems, because in real life some things are fixable while other things people just have to come to terms with things and move on.

I didn't quite know what to expect when I read this but I'm glad I did. This book is the result of an author who more than excels in writing honest and larger than life characters. It lets you into the world that millions of families all over the world are going through and it shows that great writing doesn't need massive plot twists to keep the reader hooked.

Also I can't lie I originally wanted to read it cos of the EPIC book cover. Didn't even know what genre it was just like ****click**** to-read! Gosh my good reads to-read button gets some ABUSE

heather - NightlyReading says

I was not sure what to expect when I first started reading this book and please do not judge a book by its cover! Many of us do, myself included and I have found many GREAT books that I would not have really paid much attention to just by the cover. This one included!

Willa and Jem have a lot in common, but they share a lot of differences also. They get placed together as project partners in Sociology class and neither are too thrilled about it. I loved their bantering back & forth during their very first conversations. I guess that I should mention that Jem is in remission of Cancer and Willa had lost her sister to cancer. Jem still wallows in pity and hates the fact that people tip toe around him. He quickly learns that Willa will do no such thing and just treats him like she would treat anyone else. He loves it! Willa is still trying to recover from losing her sister, but she holds a major secret that she had never told anyone. She likes Jem, but tries to stay away when he starts to get too clingy.

The two go on a rocky path between fighting their differences in opinion and trying to work through each of their demons together as well as individually. There will need to be a lot of forgiveness and a lot of hope for the two to come together and finally be able to live the life they were meant to!

My favorite character was Ava, she was very snarky and a wise a\$\$\$. I loved every minute with her! She told it just like she saw it. No sugar-coating needed and if you didn't like it...oh well!

There are many serious issues that this book deals with besides love..there is the aspect of cancer, assisted suicide and suicide itself. I really liked the depiction of each of these scenarios and felt that the writer had hit the nail on the head. I would suggest this book for a very mature teen!

“I like you,” he insists

“I believe you.”

“Willa?”

“Yeah?”

“I think I’m gonna throw up.”

*Holding his head over the basin while he pukes, I can’t help but think: this is exactly how we first met.
Green Jell-O included.*

Nicole says

This is such a heart wrenchingly great book. It hits close to home as I have lived through 3 people near and dear to me fight cancer and finding out someone close to my best friend was diagnosed right after I started reading this. I was sucked into this book from the get go. And honestly it made me severely melancholy - just a forewarning to other readers.

Even though this is like a young adult / new adult novel the writing was exceptional. You really get hit in the gut with the depth of characters and world that the author has created.

Great writing (minor editing issues that I can look over but I know some people are hard pressed on these types of things), amazingly unique plot and a wonderful depth of characters that make you fall in love with them and really feel the bond to them. A must re-read for me.
