



## **Book Club Book of the Month June 2021** ***Spring Clean for the Peach Queen (Pantera Press)***

### **Summary**

After a night out partying leaves her boyfriend dead and her acting career in tatters, Lottie Bentz escapes the media spotlight by returning to her hometown of Bonnievale. However, her mother won't speak to her, she struggles to find common ground with her old school friends, and she has nowhere to live. So, when kindly Mrs Brooker offers Lottie a rundown caravan on her farm, Lottie gratefully accepts the invitation in exchange for helping the older woman clean out the spare room. Despite Mrs Brooker's hospitality, her son, Angus, soon makes it clear Lottie is not welcome on his family's property. Determined to rid herself of everything that got her into trouble previously, Lottie begins her own Marie Kondo styled declutter, beginning with her phone, social media and the numerous white lies on which she has built her public image. Set against a backdrop of the dynamics and complexities of life in a country town, *Spring Clean for the Peach Queen* is ultimately a story about finding forgiveness, sparking joy and stripping away the pretence to embrace who you truly are.

### **About the Author**

After completing a PhD in feminist literature, Sasha Wasley worked for several years as a copywriter until her debut novel was published in 2015. Sasha then gave up her copywriting business to pursue her writing career, which has included her Daughters of the Outback series (*Dear Banjo, True Blue* and *Love Song*). She also writes adult and YA paranormal

romance under the name S. D. Wasley and is an ambassador for the Books in Homes Australia project. Sasha lives and writes in the Perth hills with her partner and two daughters. A lover of animals, Sasha spends her free time pottering in the garden with her flock of backyard chickens.

### Questions for discussion

1. The book opens with the following comment by protagonist Lottie Bentz: 'For some it was the scent of peaches, but for me it was the inky tang of newspaper that conjured my childhood in Bonnievale'. What smells evoke memories of *your* childhood?
2. Why do Lottie and her mother clash so much? What precipitates a shift in their relationship? Are you able to understand the perspective of both mother and daughter, or did you find yourself empathising with one more than the other?
3. Why do you think Mrs Brooker initially invites Lottie to stay? How does their relationship evolve over time?
4. Why is Angus initially resistant to Lottie's presence in his family home? What causes his change in attitude towards her?
5. Angus has 'sworn off relationships' while Lottie has 'sworn off acting and makeup'. What are they each trying to achieve (or avoid) by making these declarations?
6. What does Lottie discover about herself by the end of the novel?
7. What are the signs that Mrs Brooker's memory is not as good as it once was?
8. How does *Spring Clean for the Peach Queen* speak to the notion of aging, particularly with regards to independence and being treated with dignity?
9. What perceptions of life in the country are conveyed in the book? How does this support or challenge your own ideas and experiences of small towns?

10. Which character do you identify with the most (or the least)? Why?
11. Do you agree or disagree with Angus's actions regarding the Olde Peach Tree? What would you have done in a similar situation?
12. Lottie invokes Marie Kondo's notion of evaluating what sparks joy. If you were to assess your own life, what is one thing that gives you an 'infinite spark of joy' (p. 471)? And what is one thing you might choose to 'spring clean' from your life?

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*Wherever You Go* by Monique Mulligan, Pilyara Press, 2020

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*Something to Talk About* by Rachael Johns, Mira, 2020

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