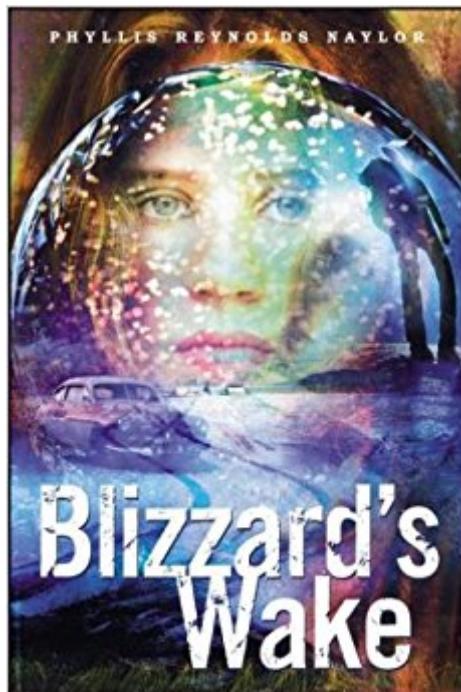


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# Blizzard's Wake



## **Synopsis**

Ever since fifteen-year-old Kate Sterling's mother died four years ago, nothing has been the same. Filled with resentment and sadness, and trying to fill the void left by her mother, Kate has shut herself off from the world and her family. Zeke Dexter is heading home to begin a new life after completing his prison term, but he is filled with anxiety. Will anyone in his small town be able to forget his shameful past -- or the crime he committed -- and let him start anew? And if he's not welcomed at home, where else could he go? Phyllis Reynolds Naylor weaves a taut, gripping story about grief, determination, and healing as the lives of the Sterling family and Zeke Dexter bind together. Set against the actual events of the March 1941 blizzard, Naylor's touching new period novel will be welcomed by her many fans.

## **Book Information**

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

In this taut novel set in 1941 North Dakota, Naylor (Shiloh; the Alice books) brings together a number of freak occurrences-and joins them so skillfully that her story pulses with drama. Separate narrative strands introduce Kate Sterling, a teenager still mourning the death of her mother, Ann, four years earlier, and Zeke Dexter, the drunk driver who killed Ann Sterling and who has just been released from prison a year early, for good behavior. Naylor creates a highly charged atmosphere

right from the beginning, as Kate feigns an interest in high school life while secretly consumed with hatred for Zeke. When an unusually severe blizzard strikes (the storm is historical), Kate, alone at home and realizing that her father, a country doctor, and younger brother are stranded just yards away in an unheated car, resourcefully plans a rescue. Meanwhile, Zeke, lost in the blinding snowfall, has stumbled, frost-bitten, into the Sterlings' car and is being tended by Doc Sterling. Kate, who has long fantasized about making Zeke suffer, is shocked. Naylor doesn't shy away from Kate's darkest feelings (assisting her father in a makeshift operation, for example, Kate administers Zeke's ether and must resist her urge to give him too much-or too little). As unlikely as the plot sounds, the believability of the characters and the complexity of their emotions give the novel psychological truth and strong resonance to its protagonists' slow movement toward forgiveness. Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 5-8-Another winner from Naylor. After four years, Kate Sterling, 15, is still mourning her mother's accidental death caused by Zeke Dexter's drunk driving. She is so inconsolable that she becomes increasingly withdrawn and isolates herself from her peers. Chapters alternate between Kate's and Zeke's voices. As he returns to town after serving his prison sentence, a deadly snowstorm is approaching; simultaneously, Kate's father and brother are returning from visiting one of her dad's patients. They become stranded in the car, and she is able to rescue them before they freeze to death. Unknown to her, she is also saving Zeke, the person she hates most. The succeeding events detail her courage in dealing with her grief and with the presence of the man who killed her mother as he is given refuge in her home. The story takes place in a small, North Dakota town during the famous blizzard of March, 1941. Naylor uses dramatic but accurate details to describe the fury of the storm as well as the prewar period, thus enriching the sense of time and place. An exciting survival story interwoven with one individual's personal struggle to overcome hatred and learn to forgive. Susan Cooley, formerly at Tower Hill School, Wilmington, DECopyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

The books (2) were in good condition. I look forward to using them in my class.

I first read this book when I was around 11 or 12. I loved it then and I love rereading it as a 21 year old. The book really has no set age demographic. Anyone can enjoy it and find something to relate to. Despite its 1940's setting some of the topics are relevant. The part about the draft really pulls at my heart. The younger brother worries if he will have to go and some of the seniors in Kate's school

wonder about what will happen when they turn 21. While we don't have a draft today some of my friends have joined the army, or the plan to join the army. I teared up a bit while reading about the struggle with war because of this. This book is good for anyone learning to deal with grief. Whether it be your Mom, your kid, grandparent or someone else. The theme of forgiveness and how that heals you means something to all ages as well. I really do recommend this book. Some of the topics have been done before, but this book kept it fresh. I can barely put it down. Men and woman can enjoy the story because we see through the point of view of both genders. The characters feel real and you start to care about what will happen to them.

The book I read was called Blizzards Wake by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor. This story took place in Red River Valley, North Dakota in late winter of 1941. Blizzards Wake is a sad story about a family that lost their mom. She was killed driving her car late at night when a drunk driver hit her. Her daughter Kate cannot move on with her life. Her brother and father struggle but move on. It has been five years since this night. The local man in a small town who killed Kate's mom went tp prison for 5 years. He gets released early for good behavior. With no place to go but back to Red River Valley. During the story their lives come together and they find a friendship in a unique way. A huge key event in the book is a horrible blizzard that comes up with short notice. Kate's father and younger brother Jesse drive into town. The man that killed the mother was walking to him home he grew up in. Jesse and his dad got stuck in the car with no heat. The man was out walking when the blizzard moved in fast and furious. He gets lost in the blizzard and stumbles into the stalled car of Dr. Sterling and Jesse. Kate is home alone waiting for her dad and brother. Dr. Sterling lets him in the car, He was frostbite. He recognizes the man is the guy that was driving drunk 5 years ago and killed his wife. But he does the right thing and tries to save him from dying in the blizzard.. They all get home safely. You wonder how Kate and the man that killed her mother lives come together. You are suspense, how she ever forgives Zeke Dexter. It is so sad and touching how his life and those at the woman he killed that night cross paths. I enjoyed reading this book. It did make me sad. I couldn't guess how Kate would ever forgive Zeke for killing her mother. I think this book is for anybody who likes to think about what's going to happen next, somebody who likes surprises.

Kate Sterling lives in a home with her father and brother. Her mother was killed in a car accident by a man named Zeke Dexter who Kate hates. When Zeke gets dismissed from jail early it puts him back on the street with no home and nobody even knowing he is out. One day Kate stayed home while her father and brother went out to the skating rink. On the way back they got stuck in a

blizzard causing Kate to worry. When Kate goes out to rescue them she finds her father, a home doctor, tending to Zeke Dexter for his frostbite. Even though Kate despises him she still lets him room in their house and gradually bonds with him. Blizzards Wake is an excellent story about forgiving and is a great read for middle and high school students. I like the resolution in this book. The resolution teaches the lesson of forgiveness to the reader because even though Kate strongly disliked Zeke she still found room in her heart to forgive him. First she was thinking about hurting him back but she didn't. Instead she opened her arms to a homeless man. This took a lot of courage from her and a lot of heart and that is what forgiveness is all about. This resolution was perfect for this novel. I also like the plot. This story was told by two narrators. Every chapter it switched off to the other. The two narrators were Zeke and Kate. I liked this because it gave you two different perspectives. When Kate and Zeke, were in the same car it told you what Kate thought about it and what Zeke thought about it. The whole book it expressed Kate's feeling toward Zeke and Zeke's feelings about the issue. This made the book easier to understand and more interesting because it provided two different points of view. Lastly I like the moral in the book. The moral in this book taught people to forgive because even though Kate was very mad at Zeke she still forgave him. Zeke wasn't a bad person he just had an accident which caused Kate to despise him. That is what people have to find a way to do know. Lots of people hold grudges over people or seek revenge when the other person really wants to be forgiven. This book teaches the reader to forgive. Blizzards Wake is a very good book. All of the elements of a novel are great in this book. Even though they were not mentioned, the characters, setting, and everything else were very interesting. It taught morals as well as making fun for the reader. This book was told in two perspectives making it highly understandable and more fun to read. All together Blizzards Wake is an excellent read for middle school and high school students. -Byron N.

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