



Discussion Questions

Unwrap Me in *UNWRAP ME*

by Susan Lyons

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Thanks so much for reading my novella, *Unwrap Me*. I hope you enjoyed it, and I'd love to hear from you. I'm happy to provide bookmarks and autographed bookplates; just send me your name and address. Please visit my website for information on other titles, insights into how each book came about, excerpts, a monthly contest, and other good stuff. You can also sign up for my monthly e-newsletter and receive notice of new books, blogs, signings and so on.

Now settle back, kick off your shoes, and make sure you have a nice glass of eggnog or wine, or a cup of tea or coffee, and let's reflect on the book.

1. *Whose side are you on?* Jude Benedetto and Nick Buchanan have very different opinions about Christmas. Which one do you sympathize with the most? What are your own feelings about the Christmas season? What have your experiences been? Perhaps you're of a faith that celebrates a different holiday, or has no particular celebration at Christmas; if so, how does it feel to be part of a larger society that makes such a big deal about Christmas?
2. *Christmas Grinch.* Jude doesn't like Christmas. Why is that? Do her reasons make sense to you? If you'd had her experiences with Christmas, how do you think you'd feel?
3. *Christmas fan.* Nick, on the other hand, loves Christmas. Why?
4. *Parents and children.* Both Jude's and Nick's mothers had a huge influence on how they view Christmas. Do you think their moms exerted too much influence? For example, how would you feel about being named after a Christmas character? Or how would you feel about having no tree, no presents, no celebration? Did Nick's mom pressure him and his brother into opting in wholeheartedly to the seasonal festivities? Did Jude's mom let her own pain have a negative impact on her daughter?
5. *A well-meaning friend.* Karen is Jude's friend and Nick's sister-in-law. When she sends Nick as Jude's Secret Santa gift, what do the two of them think she's doing? What do *you* think Karen's doing? Does she have a deeper motivation than just saving the two of them from being lonely over the holidays?
6. *Well, if you insist . . .* After Jude and Nick realize what Karen's done, how do they react? Why do they end up deciding to see each other rather than just say goodbye?

7. *Respect my wishes.* That's one of Jude's messages – to her mom, to Karen, and to Nick. Is it fair to ask your friends and family to respect your wishes when they disagree? Are they ever justified in ignoring the request. How successfully do Jude's mom, Karen, and Nick obey Jude's request?
8. *A subtle practical joke.* Nick decides to loosely interpret the "twelve days of Christmas" by giving Jude a gift each day. What's his motivation? Do you think this is a good idea, or is it being disrespectful of Jude's desire to banish Christmas? Did you pick up on all twelve of the gifts?
9. *Some people resist change.* Think of examples in this story, and reflect on why the characters didn't want things to change. For example, Nick and his brother Kris, Jude's mom, and Jude. Do you sometimes resist change? Why, or why not?
10. *Nick's influence.* Slowly but surely, Nick has an influence on Jude. What signs of this did you notice? Were there times when you thought he went too far, or not far enough, in his campaign to persuade her that Christmas can be a good thing? When you're convinced that you're right and a friend is wrong, what strategy do you use to try to persuade them?
11. *In her deepest heart . . .* Gradually Jude begins to realize her deeper feelings about Christmas, and about being abandoned by men she'd believed loved her. What are those feelings? Can you understand how they have influenced her behavior?
12. *Old wounds cut deeply.* Jude's mother thinks she's changed when she marries her new husband and finds a new sense of love and hope. But then, on the anniversary of past heartbreak, she panics. Does that ring true for you? Have you had similar experiences?
13. *Jude becomes persuasive.* When Jude's mom panics at the last minute, Jude convinces her to believe in her and her new husband's love, and to enjoy Christmas. That's a big turnaround for Jude. How did she arrive there? Did she give good advice to her mother?
14. *Jude's decision.* Ultimately, Jude changes her mind about Christmas. The process is gradual, then she has a setback, but she works things through and makes a decision. Is this believable? How does the change in her thoughts and feelings come about? Do you think it will last?
15. *Happily ever after.* Jude and Nick have known each other for only a short time. What have they learned about each other? How do they treat each other? Do you think they're a good match? Will their relationship grow, and last?
16. *Favorite scene.* What's your favorite scene in the book, and why?

I'd love to hear your thoughts on some of these questions and issues! Feel free to drop me an email at susan@susanlyons.ca.