



READING GUIDE

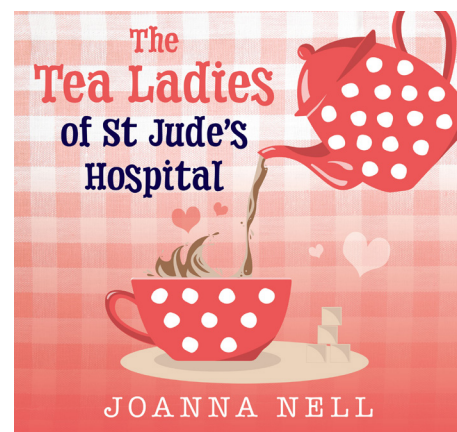
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The Tea Ladies Of St Jude's Hospital

Joanna Nell

Synopsis

The Marjorie Marshall Memorial Cafeteria has been serving refreshments and raising money at the hospital for over fifty years - long after anybody can remember who Marjorie Marshall actually was.



Staffed by successive generations of dedicated volunteers, the beloved cafeteria is known as much for offering a kind word and sympathetic ear (and often unsolicited life advice) as for its tea and buns.

Stalwart Hilary has worked her way up through the ranks to Manageress; Joy, the cafeteria's newest recruit, has been late every day since she started; seventeen-year-old Chloe, the daughter of two successful surgeons, is volunteering during the school holidays because her mother thinks it will look good on her CV. But when they discover the cafeteria is under threat of closure, this unlikely trio must band together to save it.

Discussion points

1. Was Hilary a likeable or sympathetic character? Did her circumstances excuse her behaviour towards Joy? Did your opinion of Hilary change at the end of the novel?
2. What did the relationship between Hilary and Nancy tell you about the bond between sisters?
3. What is the significance of the cafeteria and its potential closure? How does it symbolize the broader themes of the novel?
4. How did the book affect you personally? Did it change your perspective on any issues, or leave you with any lingering thoughts?