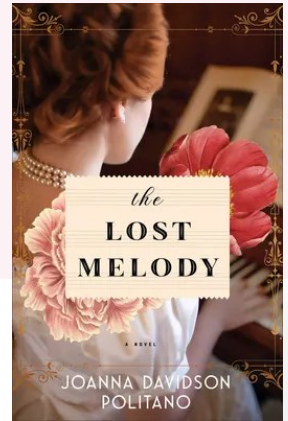




PARTICIPANT GUIDE

THE LOST MELODY BY JOANNA DAVIDSON POLITANO



"Music opens up what we once believed lost. It penetrates, influences, and restores like nothing in a bottle can."

FREDERICK HARFORD



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1

Q. Light and Darkness are important themes in 'The Lost Melody'. How does the novel explore the tension between light and dark? Discuss the various ways in which light is referred to, spiritually, symbolically, and tangibly throughout the novel.

2

Q. In the author's note, Joanna mentions that Canon Frederick Harford was a real man who brought music therapy into hospitals and asylums. Did it surprise you to learn that while this story is a work of fiction, the theme of music as an instrument of healing, is real?

3

Q. What did you find most shocking about the Hurstwell Pauper Lunatic Asylum?

4

Q. A common misconception during the 19th century was that some people were hopeless or beyond help. Frederick says, "There is no such thing as a hopeless case... only those who have lost hope" (p38). How has care for people suffering from mental, physical or emotional illness changed since then?

5

Q. During Vivienne's imprisonment at Hurstwell, she experiences a crisis of faith and feels abandoned by God. How does God reassure her that she's not alone?

6

Q. Vivienne desires to help oppressed women. Discuss Vivienne's journey from grief and despair at her entrapment in Hurstwell to realising that God had answered her prayers but in a challenging and unexpected way. What may have happened to Rosamond if Vivienne had never walked into Hurstwell?

7

Q. On page 75, Vivienne discovers that she is deeply interested in people's stories and wonders how a soul could end up in a place like Hurstwell. Discuss some of the characters from the story. Which Hurstwell patient or staff member were you most interested in? Why?

8

Q. Many characters in the novel struggle to know where they belong or have a deep desire to be home. Can you relate to this yearning? What kind of emotions do these words evoke in you?

9

Q. Mitchell struggles to overcome grief and his inability to save his wife's life. While he is not a patient at Hurstwell, he is just as trapped as the women he cares for. How does Mitchell find the courage to leave Hurstwell?

10

Q. Thornhill is both a victim and a villain. At what point does a person become responsible for the harm they cause others?



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