



The
Extraordinary
Hope
OF DAWN
BRIGHTSIDE

Reading Group Questions

1. In the opening chapter we learn that 'Dawn needs to hide; start again'. What are your initial impressions of Dawn? Do you think the opening of the novel does a good job of creating intrigue about what Dawn is running from and why she needs to start again?
2. When Dawn says she doesn't have a permanent address, everyone seems to look at her and 'they're thinking she doesn't look like someone who would get themselves in such a pickle'. What do you think of the way people react to Dawn saying she's homeless? How do you think you would have treated Dawn if you'd have met her? Has the novel changed your perception of homelessness?
3. Like her name, Dawn is always looking on the bright side. What are the personality traits that make Dawn a compelling character and how did your impressions of her change throughout the novel, from seeing her in the present and also learning about her past?
4. Grace tells herself that when things fall apart, it doesn't mean you have to. Do you like Grace as a character? Why or why not? How do you think Grace manages to stay so strong when doing such a difficult job?

5. The novel is told in alternating chapters from both Dawn and Grace's perspectives. What did you think of the way the story was told? Did you like having the different viewpoints, especially with one being a resident and the other the manager of St Jude's?
6. Peter tells the residents of St Jude's that 'learning to accept help is important'. Do you think Peter being open about his own struggles makes it easier for the residents to relate to him? What do you think of Peter's story?
7. In Chapter 15, Jack says 'everyone looks at us like we're scum in our town. But it's hard when you're trying your best to change and prove them all wrong'. How did you feel about the other residents of St Jude's? Did any of the characters or their stories resonate with you?
8. What did you think of the way the residents react to the news that St Jude's is threatened with closure? How did you feel about Dawn inspiring the other residents to fundraise to save it? Community and a sense of belonging is so important in the novel – is there a community space that's important to you? If you had to fundraise, what ideas from the book would you try?
9. What do you think the future holds for Dawn and Grace? Were you satisfied with the way the book ends?
10. Kindness and hope are key themes in the novel. Did you think this was an ultimately uplifting book and why? What do you think the author wanted readers to take away from the novel?

