



6-20 September, 2022

Hello to everyone who has decided to get on board with this year's Together We Read program through OverDrive. I'm absolutely thrilled that my book, *Happy Hour*, was chosen as the title for this year's event and I can't wait to hear what you all think.

I am a library gal through and through, indeed big chunks of *Happy Hour* were written at a couple of my local libraries, and I continue to rely on the library as my weekly bolt hole while writing book number two. There's just something so inspiring and comforting about these amazing community spaces, staffed by marvellous people.

Happy Hour is my debut novel. It tells the story of Franny Calderwood who, gin in one hand, paintbrush in the other, has turned her back on the world after losing her beloved husband. We meet Franny three years after the accident that killed Frank and she's living a life of decadent seclusion, with only her two dogs, Whisky and Soda, a stuffed cat, cocktails and memories to keep her company.

Then the Salernos move in next door. The troubled but charming trio - beleaguered mother Sallyanne, angry teenager Dee and eccentric eight-year-old Josh - cannot help but pull Franny into the drama of their lives. But despite her fixation with independence, Franny's wisecracks and culinary experiments hide considerable trauma and pain, and when her eccentric behaviour has life-threatening consequences, she faces a reckoning of sorts. Yes, Frank is dead, but did the woman he loved have to perish with him?

While there is a lot of humour in the book, there are also darker, more reflective moments. I'm constantly fascinated to see which aspects of the story connect with readers most, from the idea of lost soul mates to the effects of grief, the power of friendship, even the recipe for the perfect G&T. I will be interested to see what comes out of the Together We Read discussions, especially as *Happy Hour* includes not one but two book clubs in the storyline. Looking forward to learning whether you prefer online or "in life" bookish discussions.

Thanks again for reading *Happy Hour* and being part of Together We Read. I hope you enjoy the experience.

Jacquie Byron
September 2022