

Jennifer Ryan

(AUTHOR)

The Kitchen Front

(BOOK TITLE)

DATE

TIME

11 JAN 2022

8:00PM ET

HOLLY FURTICK

Book Club!

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR - JENNIFER RYAN

- Lives in Washington, DC with her husband and 2 daughters.
- Jennifer loves to cook!
- Author of 3 National Bestsellers THE CHILBURY LADIES' CHOIR, THE SPIES OF SHILLING LANE, and THE KITCHEN FRONT
- Her novels are inspired by her grandmother's tales of the war in Britain

ABOUT THE BOOK

- A story told from the perspective of 4 very different women who are all experiencing difficulties of their own on the homefront during WWII. In an effort to help housewives with food rationing, a BBC radio program called The Kitchen Front is holding a cooking contest—and the grand prize is a job as the program's first-ever female co-host. All 4 women are competing and hoping that this will be what helps bring needed change to their lives.

SETTING:

- Fenley Village (outside of London)

THEMES

- The resilience of women
- Friendship
- Women helping women
- Family
- Second chances
- Hope
- The homefront of war times

MAIN CHARACTERS

- Audrey Landon - Widow of Matthew, mother of three boys, pie business
 - Zelda Dupont - Head chef for the factory, pregnant, former chef at the Dartington Hotel
 - Lady Gwendoline Strickland - Audrey's sister,
 - Nell Brown - Head cook's assistant, winner of the cooking contest (did anyone else picture Daisy from Downton Abbey??)
- I loved how each character was neither the good guy nor the bad guy. I was mad at each of them at some point and I was cheering for each of them at another!

SUPPORTING CHARACTERS

- Sir Strickland - the owner of Fenley hall, Gwendoline's husband
- Mrs. Quince - Head cook at Finley Hall
- Ambrose Hart - BBC presenter for The Kitchen Front radio show
- Paolo - an Italian POW working on Finley farm, teach Nell how to make chicken cacciatore, they did not finish this part of the story
- Jim Denton - Zelda's ex, Gwendoline's competition help, and then some.
- Madeline - Zelda's daughter
- Alexander - Audrey's oldest son
- Ben - Audrey's middle son
- Christopher - Audrey's youngest son
- Brackett - Butler
- Barlow - a farmer who sold on the black market

THINGS I LOVE ABOUT THIS BOOK

- Even though living through a pandemic is not nearly the same as living through a world war, in a small way I could relate.
 - I remember trying to buy 3 dozen eggs at the grocery store about a year ago and the cashier telling me I was only allowed 2.
- I loved the idea of substitutions in cooking because my husband is a low carb for life guy and I am always trying to come up with hacks. Before we get Jennifer on, what is your favorite substitution?
- I could place myself in the story, imagining myself growing vegetables and raising chickens. I would draw the line at the pig I think.

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS

- What was your favorite scene?
- Which character did you want to win the contest?
- Did you cry when Mrs. Quinn died?
- Were you satisfied with the ending? Do you think Nell should have won?

MEMORABLE SCENES

- When Nell stood up for Gwendoline when Sir Strickland was going to kill her.
- When Alexander, Audrey's oldest son, made her cook the first meal for the competition.
- When Nell cooked the food for Mrs. Quince's memorial.
- When Zelda taught the boys about the planes.
- The part about the importance of talking to the bees. The bees in general.
- When Zelda decided to keep the baby.
- When Ambrose, let Nell talk about the restaurant, and handed the show over to Nell.
- Gwendoline at Matthews funeral
- Zelda helping Audrey not kill Gertrude
- Ambrose's overall character development and how he became one of the good guys.

COOKING COMPETITION MEALS & SCORES

- Round 1:
 - Winner! Audrey - wild mushroom soup - 10
 - Gwendoline - Sardine Rolls - 6
 - Nell - Seared hare and elderberry wine sauce - 9
 - Zelda - Coquilles St Jacques - 7

Round 2:

- Audrey - Mock Chicken - 7
- Gwendoline - Whale Meat and Mushroom Pie - 6
- Winner! Nell - Rabbit cacciatore - 10
- Zelda - Raised Spam and Game Pie - 8

Round 3:

- Audrey - Eggless Apple and Honey Cake - 8
- Gwendoline - Mock Apricot (Carrot) Tart - 7
- Nell - Summer Pudding - 9
- Winner! Zelda - Croquembouche - 10

Contest Totals:

- Nell (27)
- Audrey (25)
- Zelda (25)
- Gwendoline (19)