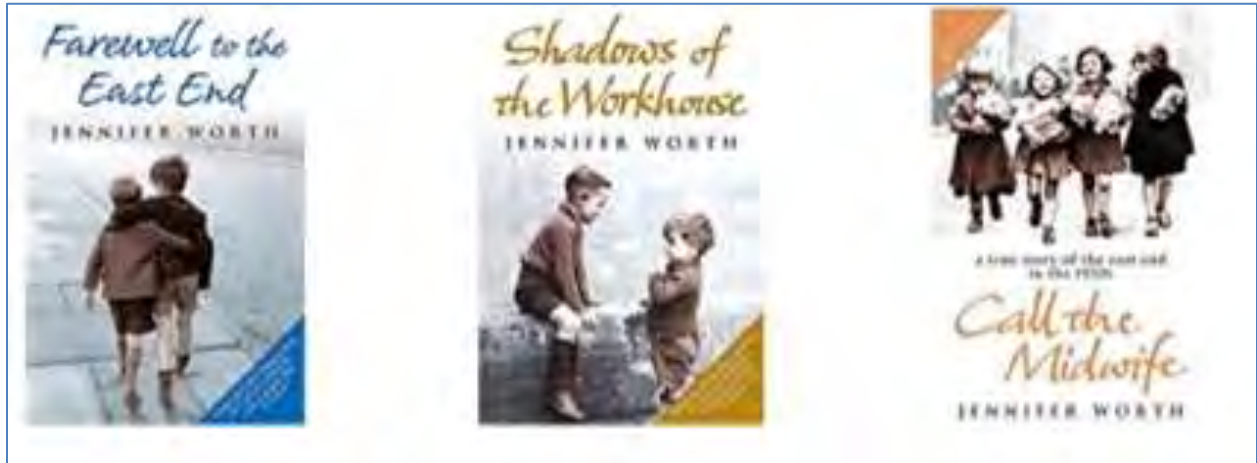


Angels in our lives? Book trilogy review

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Angels in our lives?

I'm re-reading the trilogy of books by Jennifer Worth which have been made popular in the TV series "Call the Midwife". I almost never re-read books, but reading these was such a rich and moving experience that I have felt drawn to them again to be good companions during my recuperation from surgery. I highly recommend that you read them.



In the 3rd one, "Farewell to the East End" in a chapter titled 'The Angels', Jennifer writes about memorable experiences with Sister Monika Joan, the eldest of the nuns in the convent known as Nonatus House, from which a religious order of nuns and other trained midwives served the families of the East End for 80 years. She describes in this trilogy stories from 1950's and 60's. From page 197 the author records her memories of a conversation about accepting the calling to fight against evil. Sister Monika Joan says, "You do not have to be a nun to be at war with the devil. To be in the fight, on the side of the angels, is all that matters." How strikingly true that statement is!

Jennifer Worth's trilogy also explains a lot of British history related to the East End. I have found them absolutely fascinating, and am reading them all a 2nd time during my recovery from surgery which took place in May. On the day of surgery I think I had an experience of angels. I recorded it in my diary the day after so I would catch how it felt as closely as possible. This is what happened.

The day before the surgery my dear friend Siew Lian Gardiner sent me a Whatsapp message at 23.40:

"Dearest Susan, we will be praying for the success of your operation tomorrow. God bless!"

Then at 23.41, "Just remembered, did you email Chung Pyung to request for the assistance of medical angels during the operation?, and then at 23.42 " If not yet, you can do it tonight and I can tell you the information they'll need."

I was trying quite seriously to go to sleep before having to leave the house the next morning at 6.30, so I was reluctant to sit up and really wake myself up. But then another message came from Siew Lian (what a dear persistent friend!) at 23.49, "You can email Sachika at cpintl2013@gmail.com to request for medical angels to assist in the surgery. No donation required. Here are the details she'll need: Patient's name, Name of hospital (specify the UK), type of surgery, Date of surgery: Morning time UK time 29th May 2018, Name of Doctor, Name of illness."

Well, all that information made it sound so easy to do! So, I sat up, and sent the email, took my midnight dose of Protocel and sent a "Thankyou " back to Siew Lian at 00.26

Then on May 29 at 12.18 a.m., I emailed Chung Pyung, "Please arrange for prayer support for Mrs. Susan Crosthwaite. She is having a mastectomy at the Royal Marsden Hospital, Sutton, Surrey, UK. It will take place on Tuesday 29th May, morning after 7.30. Regarding name of the illness: carcinoma. The team leader surgeon is Ms. Krupa. Thank you."

May 29 at 1.35 a.m Greetings from Chung Pyung. We will offer the medical angels today. We wish you a speedy recovery. Sincerely, Christine

May 30 I answered: Thankyou Christine! I felt bathed in beautiful love all day. The surgery went smoothly. A patient opposite from me in my room said "I want to look like you!" when she returned from recovery. It was very lovely to share heart with her because she opened up to that. Thank you, Susan Crosthwaite

And she answered: Dear Mrs. Crosthwaite, I am glad the operation went smoothly.

Please stay strong and healthy and always know that you are beautiful inside and out~ Sincerely, Christine This is what I meant by "I felt bathed in beautiful love all day":

When I woke in the recovery room breathing was so wonderful ! In & out, sweet, easy, light. Immediately I felt grateful for God's love, love of family – each one came into my mind's eye as I breathed in 'grateful'. Next breath, 'I AM a daughter of the loving God', breath out , 'thankyou'. As I breathed in, friends' love and prayers seemed to be all around me – in my mind and chest and above my eyes was a lovely pink brightness – beautiful, peaceful. Out breath, 'grateful'.

I was back in the ward about 45 minutes later. Another lady returned from surgery 2 hours after me. As we started to sit up we greeted each other and she leaned forward a little and said , "I want to look like YOU." (I looked in the mirror soon after to try to see what it was which was so attractive in my appearance! but I saw only a rather ruffled hair-do, so I think she must have been seeing the beautiful spirit around me.)

That certainly opened up a friendly conversation about what I am doing to look healthy! We talked, and also with her sister and parents, for several hours and shared so much heart and love. She and I hugged each other when we went home early in the evening.

So, back to Jennifer Worth's books. The TV series is inspired largely by "Call the Midwife". Most of the pages are filled with varied and riveting tales of ladies having babies with the midwives help, but they also visited homes for general nursing care in the East End. The other 2 books fill in so much background and context, making the first so much richer, and as is nearly always the case books are so much more soul-stirring than the films inspired by them. In "Shadows of the Workhouse" she describes the historical background of the Workhouse, extraordinary stories about Sister Monika Joan and lastly many details of her care for an 85 year old WWII veteran Mr. Collett. She had struck up a deep friendship with him and supported him through the last years of his life when he was alone without wife and children who had all passed away before him. She went far beyond the call of duty to be with him in some of his loneliest days. She describes a very unexpected moment in her life 15 to 20 years after he had passed away. "Mr. Collett visited me. I was happily married, my daughters growing up, my life in full flow. I had not thought of Mr. Collett for years. I woke in the middle of the night, and he was standing at the side of my bed. He was as real as my husband sleeping beside me. He was tall, and upright, but looked younger than when I had known him, like a handsome man of about sixty or sixty five. He was smiling, and then he said, 'You know the secret of life, my dear, because you know how to love.' And then he disappeared."