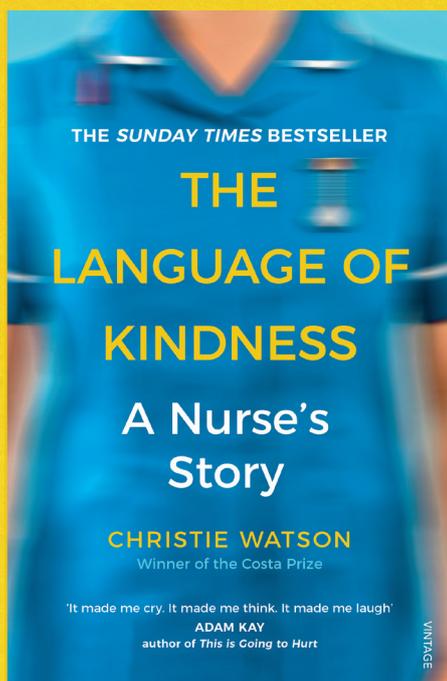


# VINTAGE READING GUIDE



## THE LANGUAGE OF KINDNESS BY CHRISTIE WATSON

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Christie Watson was a nurse for twenty years. Taking us from birth to death and from A&E to the mortuary, *The Language of Kindness* is an astounding account of a profession defined by acts of care, compassion and kindness.

We watch Christie as she nurses a premature baby who has miraculously made it through the night, we stand by her side during her patient's agonising heart-lung transplant, and we hold our breath as she washes the hair of a child fatally injured in a fire, attempting to remove the toxic smell of smoke before the grieving family arrive.

In our most extreme moments, when life is lived most intensely, Christie is with us. She is a guide, mentor and

friend. And in these dark days of division and isolationism, she encourages us all to stretch out a hand.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christie Watson was a registered nurse for twenty years. Her first novel, *Tiny Sunbirds, Far Away*, won the Costa First Novel Award and the Waverton Good Read Award, and she was named as *Red Magazine's* Hot Woman of the Year (Creative). *Where Women Are Kings*, her second novel, was also published to international critical acclaim, and her works have been translated into twenty-two languages. Christie has recently won a Future Shapers Award from *Marie Claire* for nursing activism, and awarded an honorary Doctor of Letters, honoris causa for her contribution to nursing and the arts by the University of East Anglia. She is patron of the Royal College of Nursing Foundation.

### ENDORSEMENTS

'A **REMARKABLE BOOK** about life and death and so **BRILLIANTLY WRITTEN** it makes you hold your breath'

**RUBY WAX**

'A **POIGNANT AND POWERFUL** account of what it's like to be a nurse. It's a profession that touches all our lives, delivering expert and compassionate care from the cradle to the grave. A **MUST-READ** for nurses and those interested in understanding the true art and science of nursing'

**PROFESSOR JANE CUMMINGS, CHIEF NURSING OFFICER FOR ENGLAND**

'If it's taken a very long time to get a memoir written by a nurse, then it was certainly **WORTH THE WAIT**. I have rarely read anything that has moved me as much or taken me by the hand so confidently into an unknown world, teeming with life and haunted by death... A **REMARKABLE BOOK** that I will be pressing on everyone I love'

**ALLISON PEARSON, AUTHOR OF I DON'T KNOW HOW SHE DOES IT**

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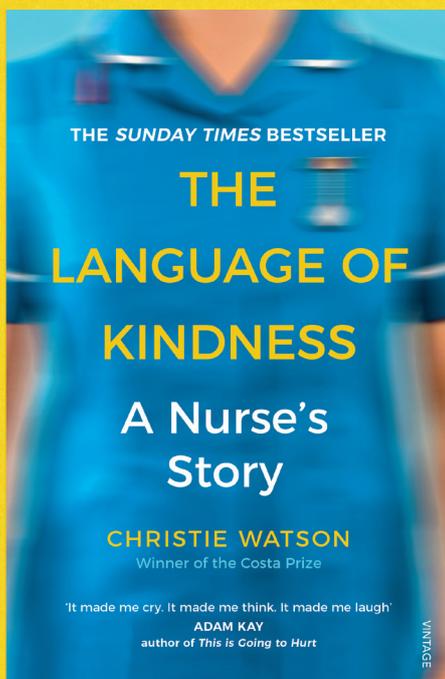
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## QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION POINTS

- Christie meets so many different people in her decades as a nurse. Which of her patients' stories particularly resonated with you?
- Mental health nursing, paediatric intensive care and elderly care all hold unique challenges. Did any of the wards Christie worked on surprise you? Was there a difference for you in reading about those respective departments?
- 'We are all nursed at some point in our lives. We are all nurses', Christie writes. In what ways have you experienced nursing? Does *The Language of Kindness* reflect, or even change, your perspective on these experiences?
- How did Christie's understanding of nursing change when her father became ill?
- Memoirs by doctors and surgeons have been very popular in recent years. In what way is *The Language of Kindness* different from these books, if you have read any of them? Why is it important to read the stories of nurses as well as doctors and in what ways are these stories different?
- Christie is passionate about celebrating and protecting nurses and the vital work they do. Has *The Language of Kindness* affected the way you think about the NHS?
- The kindness and compassion that Christie advocates extend beyond our hospitals. In what ways could you apply the messages from her book to your daily life.



## FURTHER READING

*When Breath Becomes Air* – Paul Kalanithi

*This is Going to Hurt: Secret Diaries of a Junior Doctor* – Adam Kay

*The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands* – Mary Seacole

*How to Treat People: A Nurse's Notes* – Molly Case (April 2019)

*Do No Harm: Stories of Life, Death and Brain Surgery* – Henry Marsh

*The Emperor of All Maladies: A Biography of Cancer* – Siddhartha Mukherjee

*Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death and Surviving* – Julia Samuel

Every day thousands of people rely on the care of nurses, midwives and healthcare assistants. The RCN Foundation gives vital support to these caring professionals. To donate to the RCN Foundation and help to support and strengthen nursing, visit their website: [www.rcnfoundation.org.uk/support\\_us](http://www.rcnfoundation.org.uk/support_us)

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