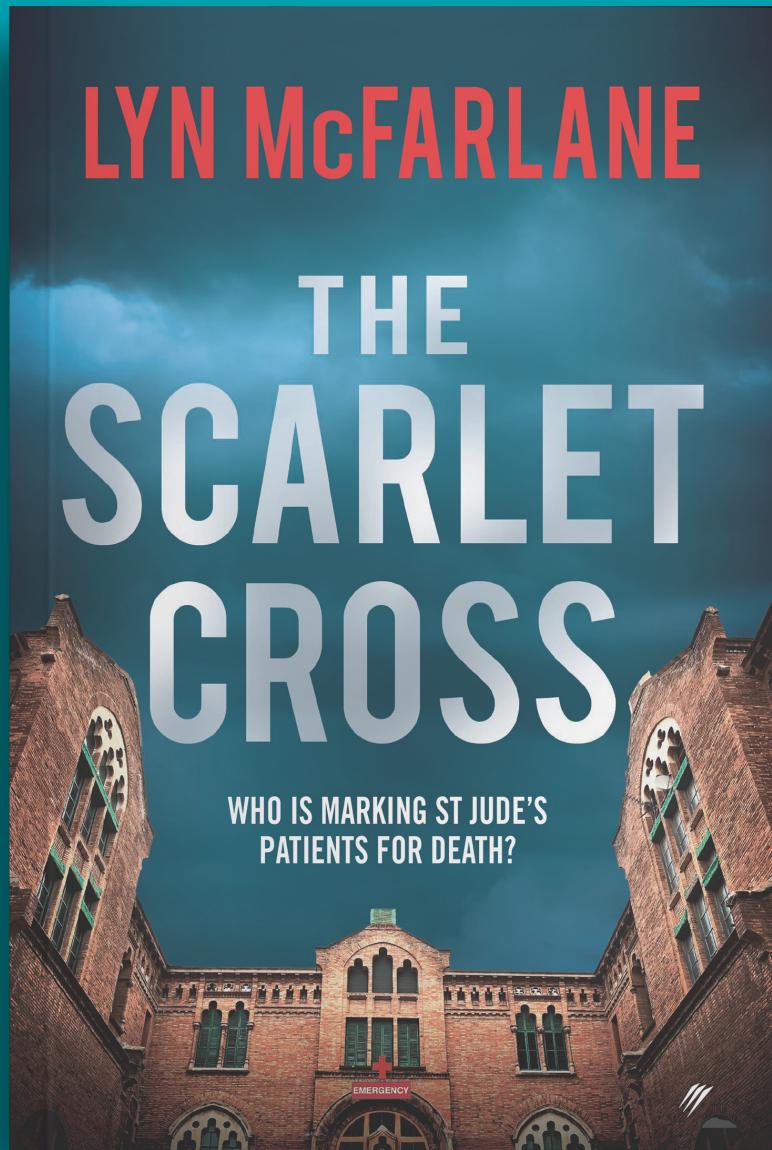


BOOK CLUB NOTES



SPARKING
IMAGINATION,
CONVERSATION
& CHANGE

THE SCARLET CROSS

by Lyn McFarlane

Meredith Griffin manages the emergency department at St Jude Hospital. A specialist in psychiatric nursing, she's also an expert at hiding her own problems – and solving everyone else's.

When women with the same fatal injury begin turning up in Meredith's emergency ward, their deaths are labelled as suicides. But Meredith isn't so sure. With the help of Detective Leo Donnelly, she begins an investigation to prove that the women were murdered.

As pressure mounts from all quarters to stop her, questions arise about why the women were targeted – and why the hospital is so desperate to cover things up.

In a battle against addiction, self-doubt and a corrupt institution that may be hiding a serial killer, Meredith finds herself in the crosshairs of a network of powerful people – all of whom will stop at nothing to protect their privilege and keep her from the truth.

An atmospheric and intelligent crime thriller set in a hospital where nothing is as it seems.

About the author

Lyn McFarlane is a Canadian-Australian writer who splits her time between Sydney, and Vancouver Island. She's a former freelance journalist and holds degrees in economics, journalism and law.

Lyn is a member of the Australian Society of Authors and the Crime Writers of Canada, a graduate of The Faber Academy and a mentee with the Australian Writers' Mentorship Program. Her debut novel *The Scarlet Cross* won the 2019 Arthur Ellis Unhanged award for best unpublished manuscript.



Praise for *The Scarlet Cross*:

'A tightly-woven plot, complex and intriguing characters and suspense that builds to fever pitch before delivering one last sucker punch. An original and compelling journey into self harm, mental illness, the role of carers and how power corrupts. Even those who swore to do no harm can become monsters.' Loraine Peck, author of *The Second Son*

'Steeped in suspense, The Scarlet Cross is a cracking, gothic-tinged crime novel that explores the connection between those who wield the power, and the vulnerable who feel their wrath ... this is a novel you won't forget in a hurry. A great read.' D.L. Hicks, author of *The Devil Inside*

1. What was the motivation of the killer? What made them choose their victims?
2. How has the influence of the Catholic church affected the patients – and employees – at St Jude Hospital?
3. How does Meredith's addiction affect her behaviour and judgement?
4. Discuss Meredith's relationship with Bella.
5. How did Meredith's childhood affect her adult life?
6. What kind of relationship do Evelyn and Charlie have with Meredith and Bella?
7. What type of person is Camilla?
8. Was Meredith right to investigate the deaths herself, or should she have left the investigation to Leo? How would the story be different if she had?
9. Why don't Meredith's colleagues notice the suspicious deaths? Why doesn't Meredith confide in them?
10. What kind of workplace is St Jude's? What challenges do the staff face from external and internal threats?
11. Discuss the men of St Jude Hospital. How do they influence people around them?
12. Discuss the different balances of power in the story.
13. Did you suspect the killer? What were the signs?
14. What does *The Scarlet Cross* have to say about the management of mental health issues?