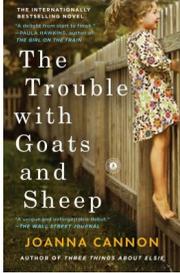


# Books by the Stack



## *The Trouble with Goats and Sheep* by Joanna Cannon

In 1976 England, ten-year-olds Grace and Tilly, after their neighbor Mrs. Casey goes missing, decide to take matters into their own hands to find her and bring her home, going door to door in search of clues and soon discovering that everyone on the Avenue has something to hide.

**Why you'll like it:** *Offbeat. Multiple perspectives. Upbeat. Whimsical.*

**About the Author:** Joanna Cannon is best known for her debut novel, *The Trouble with Goats and Sheep*, published in 2016, which was shortlisted for the British Book Industry Awards. She attended Denstone College, Uttoxeter, and the University of Leicester Medical School, from which she graduated in 2010, and worked as a junior doctor, before specializing in psychiatry. She lives in the Peak District with her family and her dog. (Wikipedia)

### Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Joanna Cannon set the novel during England's heat wave of 1976, and what effect does the weather have on her characters?
2. What do you think of Walter Bishop when he is first introduced? How accurate or extreme are his neighbors' views of him? Did reading *The Trouble with Goats and Sheep* make you think about how you judge others?
3. Is a small community like the avenue more a force for evil or for good?
4. How do the different characters in the novel carry their secrets? How does this reflect your experiences among your friends and family?
5. Who do you think is the better detective, Grace or Tilly? How do their distinct personalities impact their sleuthing?
6. Do you think Dorothy Forbes really has difficulty with her memory? How does her relationship with her husband Harold affect that?
7. The avenue inhabitants have many different versions of the same story. What motivates each of them?
8. Consider the image on the drainpipe. Was it a divine message, or somehow spiritual? Why or why not?
9. The events of the summer of 1976 are formative for Grace and Tilly. Can you think of a particular summer memory from your childhood that left a lasting impression on you?
10. "The world is full of goats and sheep. You just have to try and work out which is which" (page 195). Who are the goats and who are the sheep at the end of the novel?
11. Imagine what happened when Mrs. Creasy returned to the avenue, and discuss your ideas with the group.

**12.** Grace and Tilly's summer days can be measured out in television programs and spoonfuls of Angel Delight. Get nostalgic and think back to your own childhood summer vacations: what were the cultural moments, treats, or experiences that define those memories for you?

*(Questions provided by the publisher)*



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