

Before We Were Yours by Lisa Wingate

Discussion Questions:

1. Adoption and foster care are important topics to many families. Did your experience with or knowledge of adoption and foster care impact your thoughts and feelings about the story? How so?
2. The Foss sisters choose to keep their traumatic history a secret from their families. What do you think of their decision? Do you think a secret like that was theirs to keep, or was it important for the next generation to know? Have you ever found a family secret, and if so, what was it?
3. *Before We Were Yours* alternates between Rill Foss in the early twentieth century and Avery Stafford in the present day. Was there a perspective you enjoyed more? If so, which one and why?
4. In *Before We Were Yours*, the Foss sisters wear dragonfly bracelets to remember their lost siblings. Is there something—a trinket, a quote, or song—that is important to you or makes you think of someone special? What comes to mind when you see or hear it?
5. Rill and Avery live in different times and struggle with different circumstances, but did you notice any parallels between their lives?
6. Avery Stafford leads a busy life as a lawyer and wants to uphold her father's political legacy, but she reflects on the way she schedules her time. Are we too busy, especially since social media has become part of our daily lives? If you could change anything about your schedule, what would it be? Why would you change it and what might happen if you did?
7. Rill Foss grows from an impoverished life on the Arcadia into comfortable circumstances as May Weathers. She realizes she would not change the course of her life and the trials she faced did not have to influence her future. What do you think Rill/May thought of her early lifestyle as she grew older and wiser? Do you think she viewed her unconventional upbringing differently over time? What choices do we have as we navigate difficult circumstances and reflect on our pasts?
8. How do Avery and Rill change throughout the book? Did your feelings about them change by the time you finished the story?
9. As a lawyer and the daughter of a politician, Avery Stafford feels the pressure of being in the spotlight. Do you think prominent and celebrity families are held to higher standards than ordinary people? Do you think they should be? How, if at all, have constant media and technology impacted privacy? Is it harder for people to hide their flaws or easier to create idyllic personas with the help of social media?
10. Avery struggles to accept her grandmother's memory loss and the Stafford family is forced to make difficult decisions about Judy's care. Have decisions about elder care affected your family, and if so, how? What were the complications and how did you cope with them? Has dementia affected your family, or have you wondered what it would be like to lose your memory?
11. Rill felt a lot of guilt for not keeping her family together, but in a sense, did she end up keeping them together? What do you think happened to the other Foss Child?
12. Rill and Fern are adopted together by the Seviars, who seem to want to give the girls a good home. At one point Georgia Tann revisits to steal more money from the family, claiming the girls' grandmother is fighting for custody. Do you think the Seviars are ever suspicious of Georgia Tann? What do you think the adults in this story should have or could have noticed?
13. Was there a character you found most relatable or likeable in the story? If so, who and why?