



The Book of Lost Friends by Lisa Wingate

Discussion Questions:

1. Wingate incorporates real newspaper clippings about "Lost Friends" in her story. What did you think of these letters? Had you heard of the era of Reconstruction before?
2. The Historic New Orleans Collection has a Lost Friends database that Wingate utilized as she wrote this novel. Visit the database at <https://www.hnoc.org/database/lost-friends/> and browse the ads. Share what you learned.
3. While *The Book of Lost Friends* is fictional, the characters are examples of women whose actions, with or without recognition, have shaped the world we know today. Is there a woman that you think should be well known for her contribution to society?
4. As Hannie, Juneau Jane, and Lavinia journey together, how do they grow and change? What do they learn from each other along the way?
5. Why is history, especially as it's told by those with lived experience, so important?
6. As in real life, there are powerful characters in *The Book of Lost Friends* with family secrets. Have you ever learned the truth about a consequential secret? If so, why was the secret kept and what happened when it was exposed?
7. Do you think that Benny learns anything from her students, and if so, how is she changed?
8. How do you think Nathan and Benny help each other in the story?
9. What part does Elam Salter play in this story and why is it difficult for Hannie to trust him?
10. There is symbolism in *The Book of Lost Friends*, such as Hannie's beads and the lady bug. What do you think these things symbolize? Are there other symbols in the story and what do you think they mean?