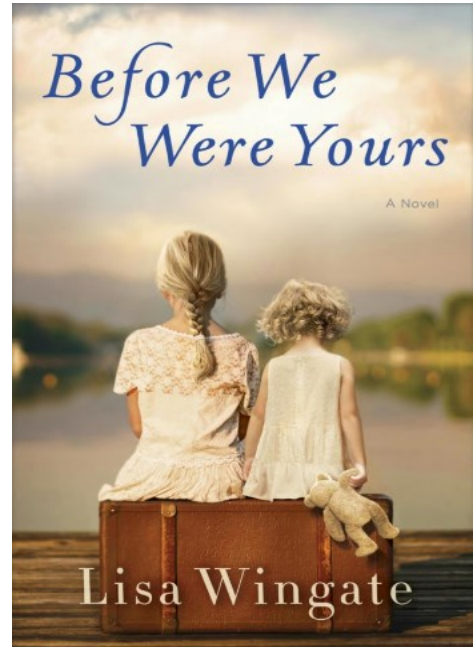


Carey Page Turner's July 17th Discussion

Before We Were Yours

By Lisa Wingate

Characters:



- BEFORE WE WERE YOURS alternates between the historical story of the Foss children and the modern-day story of Avery Stafford. Did you have a favorite between these story lines? Which one and why?
- Many families have been touched in some way by adoption and foster care. Is adoption or foster care in your family history? If so, how did that affect your thoughts about the journey of the Foss children and about Avery's excavation of her family history?
- When the sisters were originally reunited, they decided to keep their history to themselves rather than telling their families. Do you agree or disagree with this decision? What do you think the implications would have been if they had gone public? Do you think family secrets should remain secret, particularly after the people who kept those secrets have passed away? Or do family secrets belong to the next generation as well? Have you ever discovered a secret in our family history? If so, what was it (if you care to share, that is)?
- While Rill sees her life on the Arcadia through the idyllic eyes of childhood, May in her old age seems to acknowledge that she wouldn't have traded the life she lived for a different one. Do you think she wonders whether Queenie and Briny's unconventional existence on the Arcadia would have been sustainable as times changed or more children were added to the family? Were Queenie and Briny responsible or careless in their choices?
- Did you search for more information about Georgia Tann and the Tennessee Children's Home Society after reading BEFORE WE WERE YOURS? What did you learn? Based on what you learned, what do you think motivated Georgia Tann? Why were so many people willing to be complicit in her schemes when they knew children were suffering? Was Georgia's network a creature of the political corruption and societal attitudes of its time or could something like this happen today?
- When fear of being caught threatens to prevent her from escaping Miss Murphy's house, Rill tells herself, "I shush my mind because your mind can ruin you if you let it." Do you ever feel like your mind can ruin you? In what way? On what issues? May comments, "We're always trying to persuade ourselves of things." Are women particularly guilty of this? What do we tell ourselves that we shouldn't?

- Avery feels the pressure of being in a high-profile political family. Do you think famous families are held to a higher standard than others? Should they be? Has this changed in recent years or it is just harder to keep secrets in today's media-crazed world?
- How did Avery grow as a result of her discoveries about the family's past? How did it change her view of herself and her family's expectations for her? Did you family have expectations for you that you didn't agree with? Who in Avery's family might struggle most to accept her decision to change her life plans?
- How would you describe Rill as she struggles through the abduction, the orphanage, and her decision to return to her adoptive family? Did you admire her? What changes did you see in her as a result of the experience? How is she different when she gets tot the Sevier's house?
- The Seviers seem to have adopted the Foss girls with good inventions. Do you think they were aware of or at all suspicious of Georgia Tann's methods? Should they have been?
- Do you wish all seven of the Foss siblings could have found one another in the end? In your opinion, would that have been realistic or unrealistic? Why do you think the author chose not to bring all of the siblings back together?

Rating: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10