



Lost Lake

Sarah Addison Allen

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READING GROUP GUIDE

About the book:

From the author of *New York Times* bestseller *Garden Spells* comes a beautiful, haunting story of old loves and new, and the power of the connections that bind us forever...

The first time Eby Pim saw *Lost Lake*, it was on a picture postcard. Just an old photo and a few words on a small square of heavy stock, but when she saw it, she knew she was seeing her future.

That was half a life ago. Now *Lost Lake* is about to slip into Eby's past. Her husband George is long passed. Most of her demanding extended family are gone. All that's left is a once-charming collection of lakeside cabins succumbing to the Southern Georgia heat and damp, and an assortment of faithful misfits drawn back to *Lost Lake* year after year by their own unspoken dreams and desires.

It's a lot, but not enough to keep Eby from relinquishing *Lost Lake* to a developer with cash in hand, and calling this her final summer at the lake. Until one last chance at family knocks on her door.

Lost Lake is where Kate Pheris spent her last best summer at the age of twelve, before she learned of loneliness, and heartbreak, and loss. Now she's all too familiar with those things, but she knows about hope too, thanks to her resilient daughter Devin, and her own willingness to start moving forward. Perhaps at *Lost Lake* her little girl can cling to her own childhood for just a little longer... and maybe Kate herself can rediscover something that slipped through her fingers so long ago.

One after another, people find their way to *Lost Lake*, looking for something that they weren't sure they needed in the first place: love, closure, a second chance, peace, a mystery solved, a heart mended. Can they find what they need before it's too late?

At once atmospheric and enchanting, *Lost Lake* shows Sarah Addison Allen at her finest, illuminating the secret longings and the everyday magic that wait to be discovered in the unlikeliest of places.



Discussion Questions

1. The title of this book is *Lost Lake*, and the theme of loss runs throughout the entire narrative. What did you think the titular lake's name meant when you started reading the book, and did that idea change for you over the course of the book?
2. Storytelling plays a large role in the lives of many of the characters in this story—and Kate, a born storyteller, has the power to alter Wes's perspective about his sad and troubled past just through one powerful retelling. Who else tells themselves stories about their history, and do you think all their stories are true?
3. Eby's falling-down resort attracts misfits of all kinds, some more likable than others. Which characters did you find the most endearing? And which, inversely, alienated you? Were there others who won you over by the novel's end?
4. Sarah Addison Allen writes a sort of everyday magic into her stories that sets her apart, and it seems to touch every character in a different way. Lisette experiences a heartbreaking sort of magic, in the haunting companion who shares her kitchen and her silence. Devin, meanwhile, experiences a haunting of sorts too—but one that feels far more innocent and hopeful. Why do you think these two characters are the ones to experience ghosts firsthand? What sets them apart from their compatriots at the lake?
5. Other characters, like Kate and Eby, experience their life's magic as a sort of enchantment, unpredictable and yet not unpleasant. Did that carry over to you as you were reading it? Did the characters' easy acceptance of day-to-day magical happenings make it easier for you to believe in them too?
6. The art from the postcards of Lost Lake hold great meaning to those who see them. Would any of them make you want to visit Eby's home? What did you think of the last one that shows a young and in love Eby and George? Were they pictured the way you'd visualized them?
7. What was your view of Wes before you read the letter he finally shared with Kate? How did that change when you learned what he had done all those years ago?
8. The women in Kate's extended family are all too experienced with widowhood. Eby calls it the "Morris curse." But all of the widows react very differently to their tragedies. What is it about some of the Morris women that makes them especially vulnerable to losing themselves in grief? What, do you think, would have happened to Kate and Devin had Kate never 'woken up' from her own sorrow?
9. Eby says that if "we measured life in the things that almost happened, we wouldn't get anywhere." Do you agree? You may wish to talk about your own fateful "almosts" as well.



10. At the end of the book, Eby is bound for Europe again, traveling for the first time since her honeymoon. What do you think draws her back there, and what do you imagine she might send or bring home from her travels?

About the author:

SARAH ADDISON ALLEN is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Garden Spells*, *The Sugar Queen*, *The Girl Who Chased the Moon*, and *The Peach Keeper*. She was born and raised in Asheville, North Carolina.

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