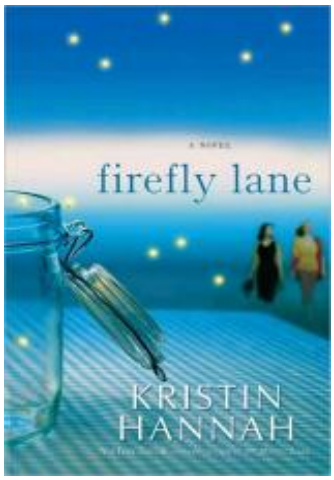
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

# Firefly Lane

by Kristin Hannah




## About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of ON MYSTIC LAKE comes a powerful novel of love, loss, and the magic of friendship...

In the turbulent summer of 1974, Kate Mularkey has accepted her place at the bottom of the eighth-grade social food chain. Then, to her amazement, the ?coolest girl in the world? moves in across the street and wants to be her friend. Tully Hart seems to have it all --- beauty, brains, ambition. On the surface they are as opposite as two people can be: Kate, doomed to be forever uncool, with a loving family who mortifies her at every turn. Tully, steeped in glamour and mystery, but with a secret that is destroying her. They make a pact to be best friends forever; by summer?s end they?ve become *TullyandKate*. Inseparable.

So begins Kristin Hannah?s magnificent new novel. Spanning more than three decades and playing out across the ever-changing face of the Pacific Northwest, FIREFLY LANE is the poignant, powerful story of two women and the friendship that becomes the bulkhead of their lives.

From the beginning, Tully is desperate to prove her worth to the world. Abandoned by her mother at an early age, she longs to be loved unconditionally. In the glittering, big-hair era of the '80s, she looks to men to fill the void in her soul. But in the buttoned-down '90s, it is television news that captivates her. She will follow her own blind ambition to New York and around the globe, finding fame and success...and loneliness.

Kate knows early on that her life will be nothing special. Throughout college, she pretends to be driven by a need for success, but all she really wants is to fall in love and have children and live an ordinary life. In her own quiet way, Kate is as driven as Tully. What she doesn?t know is how being a wife and mother will change her...how she?ll lose sight of who she once was, and what she once wanted. And how much she?ll envy her famous best friend...

For 30 years, Tully and Kate buoy each other through life, weathering the storms of friendship --- jealousy, anger, hurt and resentment. They think they?ve survived it all until a single act of betrayal tears them apart...and puts their courage and friendship to the ultimate test.

FIREFLY LANE is for anyone who ever drank Boone?s Farm apple wine while listening to Abba or Fleetwood Mac. More than a coming-of-age novel, it?s the story of a generation of women who were both blessed and cursed by choices. It?s about promises and secrets and betrayals. And ultimately, about the one person who really, truly knows you --- and knows what has the power to hurt you...and heal you. FIREFLY LANE is a story you?ll never forget...one you?ll want to pass on to your best friend.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** One of the first things Tully says to Kate is a lie. Indeed, Tully isquick to lie throughout her life. Do you think this trait is her way ofhiding the shames in her past or is it a willful reinterpretation of self? Dothese lies and manipulations, big and small, help her ultimately to be morehonest about whom she is or do they undermine her ability to face her ownshortcomings?

**2.** From her earliest memory, Tully feels abandoned by her mother and father. How does this sense of being unwanted influence her life? How does her troubled relationship with her mother lead to the decisions she makes in her life? Do children have an obligation of some kind to forgive their parents, even inthe face of repeated disappointment? How much do you think childhood heartaches make us who we are?

**3.** The Kate-Johnny-Tully triangle is one of the fundamental underpinnings of the novel. How does Johnny really feel about Tully? How does Tully feel about him?

**4.** Kate believes she is Johnny's second choice for love. How does Johnny contribute to her insecurities? How did Tully? How much of a relationshipis set in the beginning and how are changes made as we grow?

**5.** When Chad leaves Tully, she rationalizes away her broken heart by saying,"if really loved me, he would wait for me." What does this reveal about Tully's perception of romantic love? How do these perceptions setthe stage for the rest of her life? Do you believe that Tully will ever fall in love?

**6.** Near the end of the novel, when their friend is on the rocks, both women feel wronged. Certainly Kate has ample reason to feel betrayed, but what about Tully's similar belief? Do you understand why Tully was upset, too? Do you believe that a friend should always reach out, even when great pain has been caused? Or do you believe that true friends would never hurt each other?

**7.** If you could think of one word that personified the seventies, the eighties,the nineties, and the new millennium (so far), what would those words be?

**8.** At which moment in the novel did you first notice a hint of tension between Tully and Kate? Who do you feel was to blame for this turning point?

**9.** Music plays an important role in this novel. What musical memories do you have of your teen years, your twenties, and today? Do you feel, as we get older, that music plays less of a role in our lives? Why do you feel that music so profoundly impacts us when we're "coming of age?"

**10.** What do you feel Kate was most jealous about with regards to Tully? And what was Tully the most envious of in Kate's life? Jealousy is often wanting what we cannot have. Do you feel that these characters truly could not have the things they wanted? If not, why not?

**11.** Under what circumstances do you feel a betrayal is unforgivable? Do you feel that any of these characters crossed that line?

**12.** What role do you see Tully playing in Mara's life, after the pages of the novel are closed?

## Author Bio

Kristin Hannah is the award-winning and bestselling author of more than 20 novels, including the international blockbuster, THE NIGHTINGALE, which was named Goodreads Best Historical Fiction novel for 2015 and won the coveted People?s Choice award for best fiction in the same year. Additionally, it was a selection of the Reese Witherspoon Book Club in 2023. It was named a Best Book of the Year by Amazon, iTunes, Buzzfeed, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Paste* and *The Week*. In 2018, THE GREAT ALONE became an instant *New York Times* #1 bestseller and was named the Best Historical Novel of the Year by Goodreads.

THE FOUR WINDS was published in February 2021 and immediately hit #1 on the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and Indie bookstores? bestseller lists. Additionally, it was selected as a book club pick by the both "Today" and the Book of the Month club, which named it the best book of 2021.

THE NIGHTINGALE is currently in production at Tri Star, with Dakota and Elle Fanning set to star. Tri Star has also optioned THE GREAT ALONE, and it is in development. FIREFLY LANE, her beloved novel about two best friends, was the #1 Netflix series around the world, in the week it came out. The popular TV show starred Katherine Heigl and Sarah Chalke, and season two concluded the series in April 2023.

A former attorney, Kristin lives in the Pacific Northwest.

## Critical Praise

"A lovely, touching read which examines one of the most important things in our lives: enduring friendship."

# Firefly Lane

by Kristin Hannah

**Publication Date:** February 5, 2008
**Genres:** Fiction
**Hardcover:** 496 pages
**Publisher:** St. Martin's Press
**ISBN-10:** 0312364083
**ISBN-13:** 9780312364083