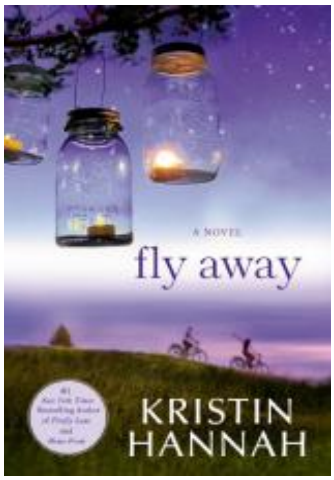
Fly Away

by Kristin Hannah



About the Book

*Once, a long time ago, I walked down a night-darkened road called **Firefly Lane**, all alone, on the worst night of my life, and I found a kindred spirit. That was our beginning. More than thirty years ago. TullyandKate. You and me against the world. Best friends forever. But stories end, don?t they? You lose the people you love and you have to find a way to go on...*

Tully Hart has always been larger than life, a woman fueled by big dreams and driven by memories of a painful past. She thinks she can overcome anything until her best friend, Kate Ryan, dies. Tully tries to fulfill her deathbed promise to Kate --- to be there for Kate?s children --- but Tully knows nothing about family or motherhood or taking care of people.

Sixteen-year-old Marah Ryan is devastated by her mother?s death. Her father, Johnny, strives to hold the family together, but even with his best efforts, Marah becomes unreachable in her grief. Nothing and no one seems to matter to her . . . until she falls in love with a young man who makes her smile again and leads her into his dangerous, shadowy world.

Dorothy Hart---the woman who once called herself Cloud---is at the center of Tully?s tragic past. She repeatedly abandoned her daughter, Tully, as a child, but now she comes back, drawn to her daughter?s side at a time when Tully is most alone. At long last, Dorothy must face her darkest fear: Only by revealing the ugly secrets of her past can she hope to become the mother her daughter needs.

A single, tragic choice and a middle-of-the-night phone call will bring these women together and set them on a poignant, powerful journey of redemption. Each has lost her way, and they will need each one another --- and maybe a miracle --- to transform their lives.

An emotionally complex, heart-wrenching novel about love, motherhood, loss, and new beginnings, **Fly Away** reminds us that where there is life, there is hope, and where there is love, there is forgiveness. Told with her trademark powerful storytelling and illuminating prose, Kristin Hannah reveals why she is one of the most beloved writers of our day.

Discussion Guide

1. First, a show of hands: Who among you has read **Firefly Lane**? For those who have not: Do you wish you had read it before this follow-up novel? Or does **Fly Away** stand on its own? Discuss your reasons. This might be a good time to fill the haven?t-reads in on some plot points?no spoilers!?from **Firefly Lane** as well.

2. When we first see Tully in **Fly Away**, she is a wreck. Why do you think she?s still so destroyed by her best friend?s death? How did losing Kate contribute to Tully?s loss of her own sense of self? And do you believe that one person can really be the glue that holds a whole life together?

3. In **Firefly Lane**, a dying Kate said these words to Tully: ?You?re afraid of love, but you?ve got so much of it to give.? Is that true of the Tully we see in **Fly Away**? Is giving?or finding or receiving?love a choice that Tully can just make or break? Why can?t Tully believe in love?

4. Kate was deeply loved by her family. How do Johnny, Marah, the twins, and Margie cope with her loss? How does each character find a way to heal? Do they help or hinder each other? Do their struggles feel real to you as a reader? You may choose to share your own personal experiences if doing so seems relevant or even helpful.

5. At Kate?s funeral, Johnny had ?pushed through the crowd [and] passed several people, all of whom murmured some variation of the same useless words?sorry, suffering over, better place.? What is the language of loss? How do we talk about death in everyday life? How do the characters do so in **Fly Away**?

6. A better place. Where is Kate in the world of this novel? How do her loved ones look for signs of her?and how does she find a way to reach them? Again, talk about what feels real to you as a reader. What narrative devices did the author use to bring the more mystical elements of life, death, and life-after-death to the novel? Did **Fly Away** succeed in making you ...believe?

7. In **Fly Away**, the dark truth about Dorothy?s past comes to light. ?How could she explain to her daughter what she?d never been able to understand for herself? All her life she had tried to protect Tully from the truth ...It was too late to undo all that damage now.? Do you believe that?s true? Is it ever too late to tell the people you love about your past? Do you forgive Dorothy for Tully?s abandonment? Do you understand why it happened?

8. ?I wanted to become a woman the whole world admired,? says Tully. ?Without [fame] who would I be? Just a girl with no family who was easy to leave behind and put aside.? Even though Tully enjoyed great success as a celebrity journalist, she had to pay a price: Her downfall unfolded on a national stage. Take a moment to talk about Tully?s public persona versus her private one. How did being famous help Tully during her times of need? How did it hurt her? Do you believe that being a celebrity and being loved by strangers can truly make you happy?

9. Take the question above to another level: Why do we invest so much interest in celebrity culture? What passes for entertainment in the age of reality television? How do you think Tully, and Tully?s celebrity, fits into the world as you see it now? Did Tully?s fame and fortune contribute to her fall?

10. Fly Away is a novel about love and loss, family and friendship, and everything in between. It?s also about the pursuit of the American Dream, offering glimpses into key events, trends, and cultural mores in our country?s history. What did being?and becoming?American mean to Dorothy?s Ukrainian parents? To Rafe Montoya? Talk about some of the cultural highlights (and lowlights) that are woven into **Fly Away**?from the freewheeling sixties and the Vietnam War to the material-girl eighties up to the present day. How does each character embrace or reject the so-called values of his or her era? What risks and benefits are involved?

11. Paxton and Marah. Rafe and Dorothy. Romeo and Juliet. ?It seemed so romantic at first,? Marah thinks. ?All that ?us against them.?? What is it about love that?s forbidden that is so attractive to the characters in **Fly Away** ? Why is the theme of ill-fated love so well represented in literature in general? Why do we love stories about love?s triumph over?everything?

12. If you could ask the author anything about **Fly Away**?clarification on a plot point, a detail about a particular character, scenes from the cutting-room floor?what would it be?

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.

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