

# Friday's Harbor

by Diane Hammond

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## About the Book

It's been three years since Hannah, the elephant, departed the Max L. Biedelman Zoo, in Bladenham, Washington, and much has changed, including the appointment of new executive director Truman Levy, and the arrival of a failing killer whale named Friday.

With the help of marine mammal rehabilitator Gabriel Jump, and a team of dedicated though inexperienced keepers, Friday begins to recover. But not everyone believes he should be in captivity --- a debate that explodes onto a national stage. Now, Friday's fate may no longer rest in the hands of Truman and the caring staff at the Max L. Biedelman Zoo.

Like *THE ART OF RACING IN THE RAIN* and *LIKE WATER FOR ELEPHANTS*, *FRIDAY'S HARBOR* beautifully illuminates the special bond between animals and humans.

## Discussion Guide

1. As the story goes, nobody in Bogotá knows or remembers how Friday got his name?Viernes. According to the oft-quoted nursery rhyme, "Friday's child is loving and giving." What does Friday end up giving to the other characters in the novel?
2. Can Libertine really exchange thoughts with animals? It's been said that animals can sense storms and other natural disasters before they happen, and can even tell when we humans are sick. Do you think humans and animals can communicate? On what level?

3. What do you think is the difference between the sixth sense Gabriel has for animals, the psychic bond that Libertine shares with animals, and the deep friendship that Sam develops with animals? With whom do you relate most closely?
4. Neva says it best: Gabriel is an enigma. To some he may even seem to be a contradiction. He has such a deep, abiding love for marine mammals, and yet he has captured more than forty whales, including calves. How do you think he reconciles his love of animals with his aiding in their captivity?
5. When Neva asks Libertine if she ever wishes she couldn't sense animals, Libertine replies, "All the time." Why do you think this is? What would cause her to want to give up her gift?
6. Libertine and Ivy could not be more different in their temperaments, backgrounds, and beliefs. And yet they form a very important friendship. How is it that they can find common ground?
7. Friday has a happy life in Bladenham—much better than it was before—but he is alone in the sense that there are no other killer whales around him. How does the theme of loneliness pervade the other characters' personal narratives?
8. Neva is known as the easygoing free spirit, and Truman is the sensible (sometimes uptight) one in their relationship. In what ways do you think having Friday around—and eventually swimming with him—has been good for Truman? Taking Friday in was a big risk. Was it the right choice?
9. One of the VIPs who visit Friday is an aging musician who is well past his prime. Could this be a metaphor? Why is this moment so emotional for all of those who bear witness?
10. Juan's rescue was a total surprise that brought many unexpected lessons. What did each of the characters learn from Juan's plight and eventual adoption?

## Author Bio

Diane Hammond has worked as a writer and an editor. She was awarded a literary fellowship by the Oregon Arts Commission, and her writing has appeared in such magazines as *Yankee*, *Mademoiselle*, and *Washington Review*. She served as a spokesperson for the Oregon Coast Aquarium and the Free Willy Keiko Foundation and currently lives with her husband, Nolan, and daughter, Kerry.

## Critical Praise

"Uplifting."

— St. Paul Pioneer Press

"Hammond's sublime sensitivity and infectious empathy make these remarkable giants of the sea lovable."

? *Booklist*

"Diane Hammond writes with heart, compassion, and humor,"

? Terry Gamble, author of **Good Family** and **The Water Dancers**

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