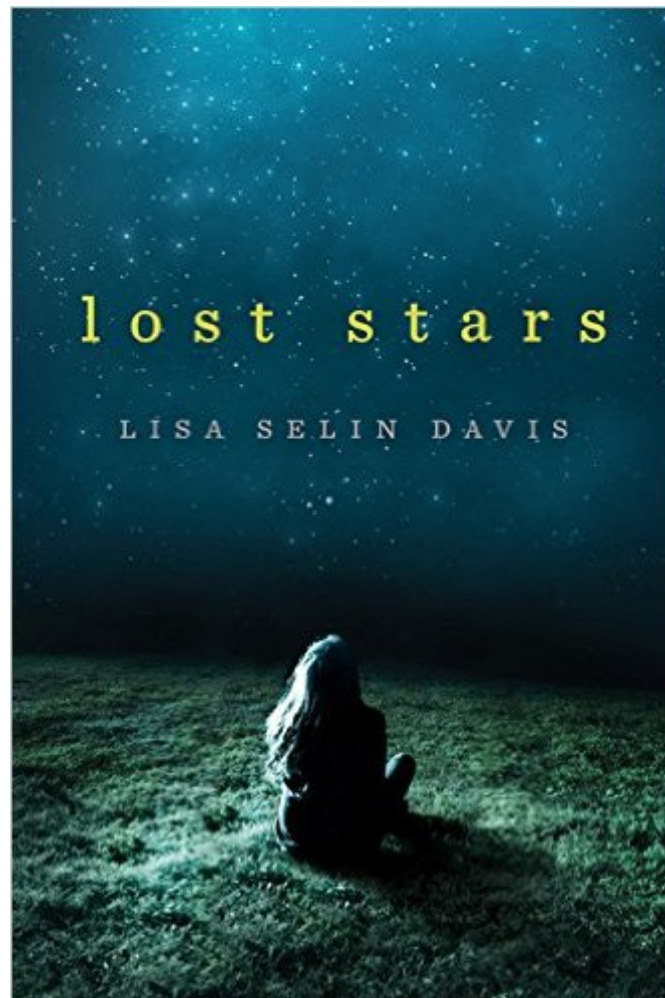


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Lost Stars



Synopsis

Before her older sister, Ginny, died, Carrie was a science nerd, obsessively tracking her beloved Vira comet. But now that Ginny is gone, sixteen-year-old Carrie finds herself within the orbit of Ginny's friends, a close-knit group of seniors who skip school, obsess over bands (not science), and party hard. Fed up with Carrie's behavior, her father enrolls her in a summer work camp at a local state park. Carrie actually likes the days spent in nature. And when she meets Dean, a guy who likes the real Carrie's astrophysics obsessions and all she starts to get to the heart of who she is and who she wants to be.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A Conversation with Lisa Selin Davis Lost Stars is a luminous debut novel that will leave you starry-eyed. Here, the author Lisa Selin Davis talks books, music, astronomy, and first jobs.

Music becomes a form of salvation for Carrie. What songs or bands have had a big impact on you? I was eleven when I met the girls who were my biggest influence in high school, and to whom I remain close today. They were all older (hmm, this may sound familiar if you've read the book), and I was only with them a couple of weekends a month, on holidays, and in the summer; the rest of the time, I lived with my mom. I always say that I lived with my mom in Massachusetts, but my life was with my friends in New York State. My dad is a musician, so our house was always filled with music and with albums that I would stare at, especially Beatles records (as a youngster I

was cuckoo over Paul, but by high school I was favoring John). My friend Amy's parents may have been the least hippie-dippy of everybody's, but they had an amazing record collection, including the original Velvet Underground record with the peeling Andy Warhol banana. A lot of my life and my friends' lives revolved around a band. (That band, the Figgs, is still together!) We were groupies, but the members of the band were also our friends, and sometimes they were my friends' boyfriends. They also introduced me to a lot of great music from that time, the Replacements and Hüsker Dü and X and the Meat Puppets. Writing this list now, I see they're all kind of post-punk, boy-centric bands. I was still listening to Joni Mitchell and crying my eyes out too. I guess that's the thing—"music was a door to all kinds of emotional experiences. With Joni Mitchell, it was all about sadness and loneliness. With the Figgs, it was about being part of some larger musical experience. Also, I also wrote a lot of songs back then. A lot. At least four of them were good. I wasn't a great guitarist or a great singer, but I performed at open mike night at the local club, Caffè Lena, and all my friends would come and cheer me on. None of us knew that I wasn't good. It was a way to be part of something bigger than myself. Carrie is reluctant to start her manual-labor job at the local state park. What was your first job? I'm pretty sure my first job was washing dishes at a restaurant around the corner from my house in Saratoga. I lasted two nights. I just walked out in the middle of a shift. It was so grueling and hot and smelly. I applaud people who do that night after night. The next job I had was at the corner store in Saratoga. I was fourteen. I would ring up cigarettes and soda and containers of potato salad. It was kind of fun, talking to the regulars and the oddballs who existed in Saratoga back then. And then, the summer I was sixteen, wouldn't you know I had a job on a youth construction corps in the state park?

What inspired you to include astronomy in a story about first love? This book is based in part on my own sixteenth summer, when I really fell in love for the first time, and there were meteor showers that summer—it was a few months after Halley's comet had come around after seventy-six years. It was amazing to see them flash across the sky, especially because my heart was so full the whole summer long. I grew up to be absolutely fascinated by the idea that the stars we're looking at might not even be there, that it takes so long for their light to travel that they might have already died. The fact that there are laws guiding the movement of the planets, that the story of the universe has unfolded over millions and millions of years, well, I always found that soothing, that the world is so much bigger than I am. It always made me feel kind of intoxicated, too—"thinking about the light of stars was some small version of a hallucinogenic drug. What

are some of your favorite books? The three pieces of writing that made the biggest impact on me when I was a teenager were a short story by Alice Munro, "How I Met My Husband"; Anne Tyler's Morgan's Passing; and a short story by Deborah Eisenberg called "What It Was Like, Seeing Chris". All very, very different pieces, although maybe Eisenberg was sort of Tyler and Munro mixed together. I read them all when I was in junior high, and my reaction was "Whatever these ladies did, I want to do that too". They had transported me, moved me, in ways I couldn't exactly identify but I knew were real.

What books do you think Carrie, your protagonist, would read and love? Carrie would probably read some of the popular physics books I read in my twenties, when I was trying to fill in some of the holes in my education. Maybe the most accessible one is by a Nobel prize-winning physicist who also did things like consulting for Star Trek—"Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" (Adventures of a Curious Character) by Richard Feynman. And she would love Neal deGrasse Tyson's book on black holes. She'd like Karl Ove Knausgaard's My Struggle series. And Daniel Clowes's Ghost World. As for contemporary YA, I'm sure she would love Jennifer Niven's All the Bright Places and Rainbow Rowell's Eleanor & Park—as I did! Also, I think she'd eat up Patti Smith's Just Kids. Is Lost Stars, your YA debut, inspired by any real-life experiences?

Very much so. ..and then again not. The plot is very much based on my actual sixteenth summer, when my parents made me sign up for a work program much like Carrie's, and when I met the boy of my dreams. I wrote an essay about it for the New York Times's Modern Love column—it was about the salvation of having somebody love you for what shames you most. I really had much older friends who introduced me to things I wasn't ready for. I really had tremendous conflict with my father. I really have a tall, much younger sister who is far more mature than I am. And I really misbehaved as a teenager.

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