

(SPOILER ALERT)

1. Christmas can feel like a magical time for children. There are often beautiful decorations, tasty treats, and presents under the tree. Family traditions may include a vast range of religious observations, festive gatherings, and countless other activities. But adults often lose their sense of wonder under the burden of time constraints, costs, and unrealistic expectations. Recapturing the magic of the season for all ages was the inspiration behind this story. Do you think Nathan, Virginia, and Frank were successful in helping their customers and community recapture some of that joy? Did they find it for themselves?
2. Many people fall victim to the pitfalls and stereotypes that come with aging. Virginia wasn’t immune to this. When she realizes she’s allowed herself to “act old”, what steps does she take to reinvigorate herself? Do you feel she was successful in recapturing some of the vitality of her younger days? If so, what made the difference?
3. This story encompasses two very different love stories. Frank and Virginia married decades ago. Nathan and Grace have a new, budding relationship. Most books with elements of romance focus on the new. In *Capturing Wishes*, the author wanted to make the revival of the older couple’s marriage just as important to the depth of the story as the flashier new romance. Did this come through as you read the story? Were you rooting for Frank and Virginia?
4. Virginia once dreamed of being an author. She even wrote a story; however, she was easily dissuaded from pursuing her dream. The faded, forgotten manuscript Nathan finds tucked away in a drawer is symbolic of that abandoned dream. Did Virginia’s initial hesitation to dust off that dream, despite Nathan’s excitement to help her turn it into a proper book, resonate with you? Even once she agreed to go ahead with the project, life kept getting in the way. Her fear remained. Could you relate to Virginia’s struggle? Do you think it would be fun to help someone realize a long-forgotten dream, like Nathan and his extended circle did for Virginia?
5. Long-term relationships require compromise. Virginia wasn’t ready to give up her bookstore. Frank had dreams of his own. Do you think Virginia did enough to help her husband find happiness, too? Did you enjoy the dynamics of their relationship?
6. Our world is changing faster than ever. Technology is an integral part of the pace of change. In what ways did Nathan use technology and social media to help Virginia and Frank keep their beloved bookstore going? Do you think traditional bookstores can survive online competition? What do we give up in the interest of convenience and nearly unlimited selection? If you agree that independent, physical bookstores need to continue to be an option for readers, what are some ways you support these businesses?
7. Do you believe in karma? Even though Virginia gave up on her own dream of writing books, she loved to support little known and new authors through her bookstore. She had a basement full of unsold books that proved she’d tried to help them get their stories out into the world. As her life unfolded, relationships she’d built over the years eventually brought Nathan to her. He helped make her dream a reality. Do you think her consistent support of others with similar dreams benefitted her in the long run?

8. Virginia is a kind person. She's a faithful friend and committed wife. But she has a flashback to a point in her life when she found herself in a desperate position. She did something completely out of character. She stole a pocketbook from an unsuspecting woman. Did that lapse in judgement change your perception of Virginia? Do you think everyone has a breaking point that could push them to do something they know is wrong?
9. Nathan is just as important to this story as Virginia. He is also at a crossroads, having to make decisions that will impact his career and life. He has a strained relationship with his father. How do you think those struggles impact the choices he is making?
10. Were you able to feel some of the magic and nostalgia of the Christmas season come through in this story? Could you hear the toy train weaving around the Christmas tree in the front window display, or see the tinsel swaying in the air current produced by the old heaters? Could you imagine the feel of the supple fabric used in the vintage Santa suit that Nathan and Grace found in the hidden basement room? Or almost taste the cookies Jess brought for the party?
11. The author's favorite scene was when Nathan and Grace gazed up from the floor at the reflection of pink Christmas lights on the old tin ceiling of the bookstore. The twinkling lights reminded them of when they used to wish upon a star in a night sky. What was your favorite scene from the book?
12. While you can read this book as a stand-alone, there are countless tie-ins to the other books in the Celia's Gifts series. The timeline runs simultaneously with *Rebuilding Home* (Book 3). Nathan and his mother get to know the Fisks in *Tangled Beginnings* (Book 2). Nathan first visits Whispering Pines, the beautiful resort where he celebrates Thanksgiving weekend with extended family, in Book 1. Virginia's relationship with Celia is explored in depth in *Celia's Legacy* (Book 6). Even the antique mercury glass ornaments Virginia uses to decorate the tree in the bookstore's front window pop up in other books. If you've read other books in this series, what other things did you pick up on?