



Think About It — Talk About It

Reading/Discussion Guide for *Friends in Strange Places* by Nell Branum

Heroes on the Home Front Mysteries #2
Moody Publishing

Discussion Questions:

1. Riley is concerned when she hears that former German prisoners and former Army guards are getting together for a reunion. Why do you think she is nervous? What do you think about their reunion?
2. Hannah is not excited to be at the reunion either, but for different reasons. What are Hannah's reasons? Do Hannah and Riley ever change their minds about whether the reunion is a good idea?
3. Several people tell Riley and Noah about the day the first train carrying the first German prisoners arrived in Longfield—Mrs. Renfro (who lives in the town), Fritz (one of the former German prisoners), and Richard (one of the former Army guards). What was each person thinking as the prisoners stepped off the train and marched toward the camp? How do you imagine you would have felt if you had been there?
4. Riley is sure that Ben Henderson (Coffee Guy) is the crook behind the sabotage. What makes her so sure? Why is she so determined to prove that it is Ben?
5. Riley and others are surprised to discover all the many activities that went on at Camp Longfield. Why do you think the prisoners were allowed to have sports teams, music groups, and classes on lots of subjects?
6. Ben Henderson tells the Mayor that the museum about the POW camp would “honor hate and war and enemies.” Why do you think he feels that way? In response, Mayor Robertson challenges Ben to stay and attend the reunion. Why do you think the Mayor wants Ben to stay? Do you think the museum is a good idea?
7. Riley keeps remembering Ephesians 4:32 from the Bible: “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other.” Would you say that any of the people in the story are willing to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving?
8. Why do you think the book is titled *Friends in Strange Places*? Which friendships in the book seem surprising or unlikely to you?

Extension Activities:

1. Noah is always ready to make a video for Video Club. Pick a subject that interests you and make a short video about it. Some ideas for videos might be Alien Visitors from Planet Kottron, How to Make Friends in Strange Places, or Ten Things You Never Knew about World War II.
2. The town of Longview and its POW camp are inspired by a real town called Aliceville, Alabama, as well as the POW camp that was located there during the war and the many reunions that the town has hosted through the years. There were lots of POW camps in America in the 1940s. In fact, more than 400,000 prisoners from the Germany Army were spread throughout the country, and POW camps were located in almost every state. See if you can find out whether a POW camp was located in your state or near your town. Make a scrapbook of all the information you can find.