

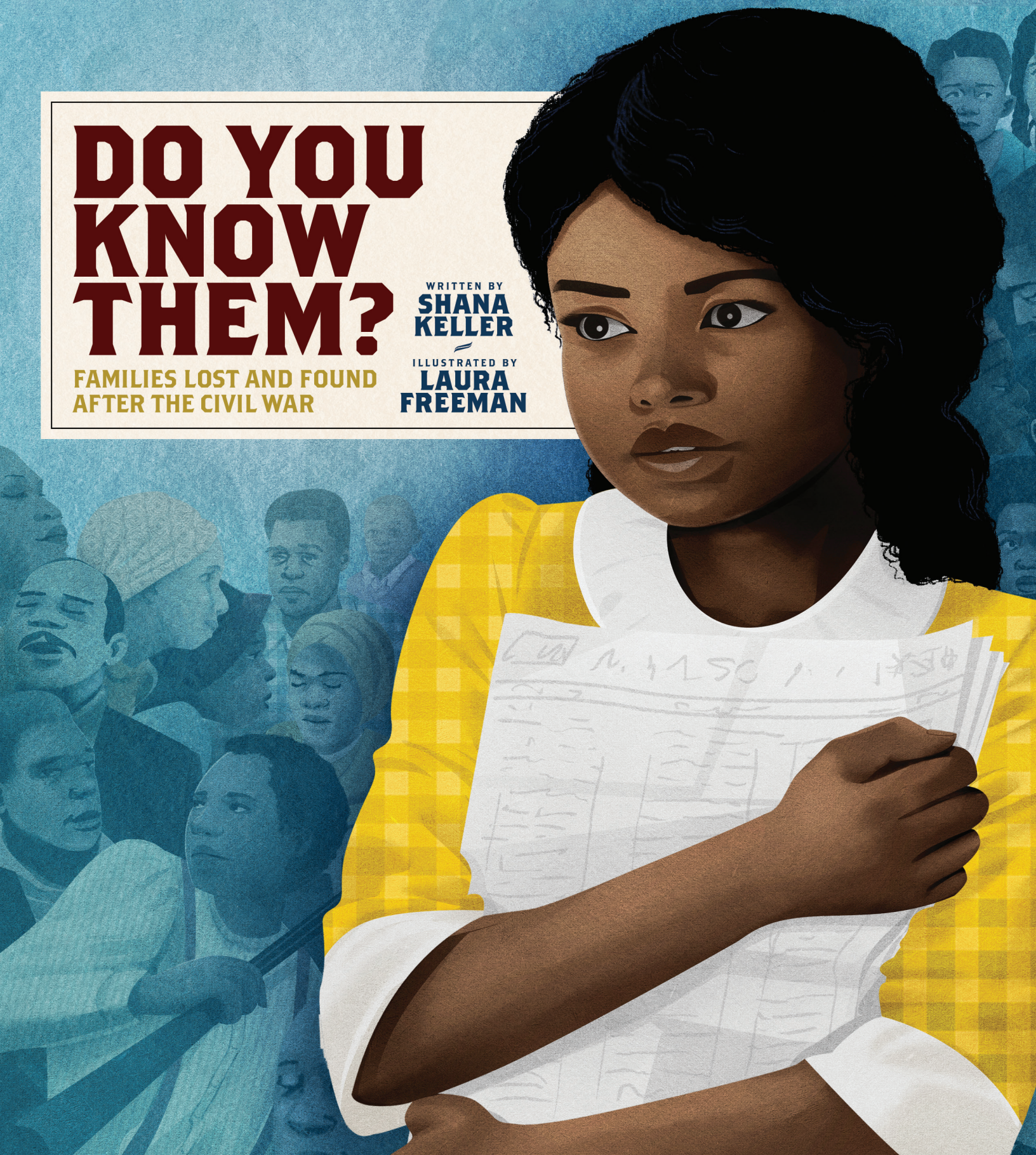
A DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR

DO YOU KNOW THEM?

FAMILIES LOST AND FOUND
AFTER THE CIVIL WAR

WRITTEN BY
**SHANA
KELLER**

ILLUSTRATED BY
**LAURA
FREEMAN**



ABOUT THE BOOK

Lettie is yearning for her missing family. She wants to find her mother, father, sisters, and brothers who were enslaved and separated from one another. Now that the Civil War has ended, Lettie is one of many people trying to find their missing family members. Her uncle Charlie is also trying to locate his family.

Author Shana Keller tells this history-based story with vivid, descriptive details. Illustrations by Laura Freeman highlight the strong feelings of everyone involved. Together, the words and illustrations bring to life a difficult time for families that sometimes ended in great joy. While Lettie is a fictional character, the book brings a part of our historical past accurately to life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What happened to Lettie's family? How does this make her feel?
2. How did Lettie plan to find her family? What did she do to get the money she needed? How long did it take to save? What does this tell you about Lettie?
3. Why do you think it was important for S. G. Wilson to place an ad in the newspaper about how he found his father? Was it a good idea? Why?
4. When Lettie went to the office of the *Richmond Planet* to place her ad, what did Mr. Jones, the man at the desk, think about her chances of finding her family? How do you know? Why did Mr. Jones say, "You give us hope, Lettie"?
5. Why was Lettie shouting and crying, "She knows them!" If the story continued, what might happen next?
6. In the author's note of *Do You Know Them?* Shana Keller gives us more information to think about. Discuss what she tells us about each item listed below:
 - The kind of information people included in their advertisements
 - The cost of placing advertisements
 - How many ads were placed after the Civil War
 - Why families valued these ads even if they were unanswered
 - How the author got the idea for this book
7. Discuss what the underlined words below mean, then answer each of the questions below. First, decide on whether the answer is yes or no. Then explain why. Some vocabulary words from the book are underlined in each sentence.
 - a) Do you think Lettie's family members were once enslaved?
 - Yes/No?
 - Why?
 - b) Did Lettie read to the congregation at church as a way of helping them?
 - Yes/No?
 - Why?
 - c) Did Miss Ida and Uncle Charlie think that Reason was right to want to leave this country after his brothers died in an uprising, fighting for their freedom?
 - Yes/No?
 - Why?
 - d) When Mr. Jones looked into Lettie's eyes and saw her determination, did he try to discourage her?
 - Yes/No?
 - Why?
 - e) Did ads that were unanswered sometimes become a part of a family's legacy?
 - Yes/No?
 - Why?
8. Describe Lettie's feelings at the beginning and the end of the book. What do you think Lettie and Uncle Charlie will do next to find their family? If they write an ad like S. G. Wilson did about finding his father, what would their ad say?
9. What good qualities does Lettie have that help her achieve her goal? Give examples of how she helps herself and others.
10. Why is *Do You Know Them?* a good title for this book? What else would be a good title? Why?

EXAMINING THE CRAFT OF THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

1. **Examining How the Author Describes Lettie's Feelings.** What makes readers pay attention to an author's writing? It could be the descriptive words and phrases the author uses, the rhythm or sound of the sentences when read aloud, or the new information presented. (See the reproducible activity *How the Author Describes Lettie's Feelings at the end of this guide.*)
2. **Examining How the Illustrator Uses Color to Show People's Feelings and Emotions.** Illustrator Laura Freeman uses color to show the feelings and emotions of the people she is illustrating. In this way she emphasizes what the author is writing about and helps us understand and feel these emotions. Explain how she does this in each of the illustrations below:



- How does the dark and barely visible illustration of Lettie's family show how she feels about her family?
- How does the troubled illustration of Lettie make you feel?



- How do the light-blue, yellow, and orange in the illustrations show that this was a happy event?
- How do the expressions of the people and the way they behave show their feelings?

EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

1. **Creating an Open Mind Portrait.** An open mind portrait lets you share what you know about a character's thoughts and actions. On one of the heads, draw a portrait of Lettie. On the other head, draw and write about what she thought about finding her family and what she did to find them. (See the reproducible activity *Creating an Open Mind Portrait at the end of this guide.*)
2. **Writing from a Character's Point of View.** Pretend that you are Lettie and write her story in the form of a diary entry or a letter to a friend. Tell how she went from missing her family to learning that someone knew them. How did Lettie manage to do this?
3. **Writing poems of address.** A poem of address can be written to a person or to a thing. You could write a poem of address to Lettie, Uncle Charlie, Miss Ida, Mr. Young, the church congregation, or S. G. Wilson. Or you could write to a newspaper ad, the pennies Lettie earned, the purse she carried her money in when she went to the newspaper office, or the ad she spotted in the newspaper telling her that the writer knows her family.

Here is an example:

To the Ad I Am Hoping to See
You have the information I want so badly:
You know about my family—my mother, father, sister, and brother.
You can tell me where they are and how I can find them.

I have longed to know this information for years.
After I find my family, I will never forget you.
I will always keep you as my family's legacy.
Your words will always be precious to me.

EXTENDING THE READING EXPERIENCE

Explore the websites below to find more information about how people located family members after the Civil War.

1. Examine the material on the website Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery at informationwanted.org/ to find over 3,500 ads from 275 newspapers. These ads were placed by people looking for family members enslaved before the Civil War. Among the helpful educator materials also included here are lesson plans (K–12), a selection of primary sources, and a discussion of the historical context.
2. Listen to a five-minute audio entitled “After Slavery: Searching for Loved Ones in Wanted Ads” at www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/02/22/516651689/after-slavery-searching-for-loved-ones-in-wanted-ads for an interview with the two women working on the project mentioned above, Last Seen: Finding Family After Slavery.
3. Find out more about author Shana Keller by visiting her website at shanakeller.com. Here you can learn more about her books and her research materials, and find links to Keller’s Online Storytime readings.
4. Find out more about illustrator Laura Freeman by visiting her website at www.lfreemanart.com/. Here you can see covers of the many children’s books Freeman has illustrated. If you click on a cover, you will find information about the book.

Read Other Books by Shana Keller:

- *The Peach Pit Parade: A World War I Story* illustrated by Margeaux Lucas
- *Bread for Words: A Frederick Douglass Story* illustrated by Kayla Stark
- *Fly, Firefly* illustrated by Ramona Kaulitzki
- *Ticktock Banneker’s Clock* illustrated by David C. Gardner

Read Other Books Illustrated by Laura Freeman:

- *Ketanji: Justice Jackson’s Journey to the U.S. Supreme Court* by Kekla Magoon
- *Stacey Abrams and the Fight to Vote* by Traci N. Todd
- *Kamala Harris: Rooted in Justice* by Nikki Grimes
- *Hidden Figures: The True Story of Four Black Women and the Space Race* by Margot Lee Shetterly
- *Ida B. Wells: Voice of Truth* by Michelle Duster



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How the Author Describes Lettie's Feelings

What makes readers pay attention to an author's writing? It could be the descriptive words and phrases the author uses, the rhythm or sound of the sentences when read aloud, or the new information presented.

Examine each of the sentences below and write down what you notice about how the author describes Lettie's feelings. What makes each sentence interesting to read?

Lettie felt awful. There was so much she wanted to say, but all the words got stuck inside.

What I Notice: _____

She looked at her uncle with a blaze of hope burning in her eyes.

What I Notice: _____

Tears were wiped and smiles lingered as joy soared through the room.

What I Notice: _____

Her steps were light as air even as she clutched the heavy treasure close to her heart.

What I Notice: _____

Lettie's smile was as bright as the sun and her voice sang like the birds. "No, Sir. I'm here to place an ad for Uncle Charlie and me," she said.

What I Notice: _____

It took longer than Lettie could have imagined, but one day as she stood in front of the congregation an ad jumped out at her. Lettie's hands shook.

What I Notice: _____



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By Shana Keller • Illustrated by Laura Freeman

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Creating an Open Mind Portrait

An open mind portrait lets you share what you know about a character's thoughts and actions. On one of the heads, draw a portrait of Lettie.

On the other head, draw and write about what she thought about finding her family and what she did to find them. (For example, it might say "I miss my family so much." It could show examples from ads Lettie read. Or you could draw or list the work she did to earn money for the ad.)



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