

Title: *Carnival Lights*

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### *10 Discussion Questions for Carnival Lights*

1. How does Stark set up the first chapters, so we are convinced Sher and Kris had no choice but to run away? What are several of the convincing reasons provided?

2. Did you expect the girls would get to the fair rather quickly and experience problems there? What surprised you about the book with generational stories interwoven with the experience of the girls' bus trip and arrival in Minneapolis?

3. Why did the girls spend several days in downtown Minneapolis? Who did Sher call, thinking they might find help? How did they get food? The Vietnam war protest added drama as well as helped explain the times. How was Kris always going ahead and doing things while Sher wanted to hold back?

4. How do they meet Tricia? Why does she say the following:

*"Get this," the woman said, "a couple of farm girls showing me the city."*

Stark, Chris. *Carnival Lights* (p. 118). Modern History Press. Kindle Edition.

5. Why do they decide or were told to leave several of the places they briefly stayed? What was the one place they wanted to stay? Why?

6. When in Minneapolis, Stark again sets up reasons why the girls do not try to find help. Why would they not reach out to a social worker? Why do you think the

church where they sat on the steps asked them to leave, probably knowing they were in trouble?

7. How does the author explain most of Sher's family acceptance and knowledge of her as contrasted with what her mother thought:

*"Sher's mother had admonished Sher for her broad shoulders, her narrow hips, and wearing her brother's hand-me-downs, as if these oddities sprang from Sher alone and did not come from the loins of her parents, from her family, from the Creator."*

Stark, Chris. Carnival Lights (p. 195). Modern History Press. Kindle Edition.

8. Were you expecting Sher and Kris would meet different people and find various problems than they did? How were the things that happened to them in Minneapolis worse or better than what you thought?

9. Why do you think they didn't go home but remembered the good people and things that happened? Their memories helped them cope. Could they have gone home?

10. The foreshadowing of the ending strongly suggested something terrible would happen. Did you expect what happened or not? How did close calls to people who seemed to think about helping them add to the plot's tension? How was the ending both happy and sad?

Why do you think Stark wrote this book? What is the overall message?