



## Love, I Found You

by Ann Fisher

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Florence is ninety-one. She is dying. Atlantic City is dying too. But both were once vibrantly alive.

This is a love story between friends who met in a yoga class. “When our *l’affaire du coeur* started Florence was eighty-seven. I was fifty-one. She lived in the city. I lived in the suburbs. She’s a black Hebrew, I’m a WASP. We are completely alike . . . During that first car ride when we started talking about everything—we had hardly scratched the surface of politics, nature, travel, race, spirituality, Atlantic City history, love, sex—we became immediate best friends.”

This is a love story carried on the wings of amazing songs. Atlantic City’s Kentucky Avenue was the music mecca of the 1950s, rivaling Harlem and New Orleans. All the black entertainers—mentioned in this book played in Atlantic City and Florence mingled with many of them. She also knew many celebrities, she even gave birth to one, James Avery. But her story is more interesting than his, and that’s saying something.

### From the author

Florence Avery’s remarkable life journey. The fact that her life was far more interesting than that of her celebrity son. Atlantic City’s remarkable black musical heritage that lives mostly in people’s memories; Kentucky Avenue is now devoid of nearly all musical culture. The eerie similarities between her life and my own, we who were such very different people.

### Discussion Questions

1. Florence and Ann live in very different worlds, separated by age, race, class and environment, yet they still became dear friends. Do you have any friends who are different than you—in age, race, class or environment? Has that created any awkward situations?
2. Florence and Ann met by chance in a yoga class. When was the last time you did something for the first time, like befriend a stranger? How difficult is that to do? Why?
3. Music is the thread that ties this memoir together. Discuss how important music is to you. Florence remembers music constantly playing in her house. Who do you share your musical tastes with? Were your music preferences influenced by anyone else?
4. Atlantic City’s Northside, with its Kentucky Avenue music, is a character in this book. Did you know about this black experience before reading this book? Do you remember the name of the only music club currently left on Kentucky Avenue? What are your thoughts about why the Kentucky Avenue music scene died?
5. Florence calls herself spiritual but not religious. What is the difference between the two? Describe the difference between worship services given by the black Hebrew faith of Florence and the black Baptist services that Ann attended. What type of spiritual and/or religious experiences have you had?



6. The two women share many secrets, as close girlfriends do. They talk about abortions, sex, abuse and lovers. Does it surprise you that older women like to talk about these topics? Who do you share your secrets with? Do you judge other people when they tell you something surprising about themselves?
7. Florence and Ann both have transformative experiences, Florence with her life history and Ann while writing this memoir. The book weaves both tales together. Why do you think the book is structured this way?
8. This memoir is about love. List the many things that the two women fell in love with in this book. (Hint: It's not just men.)
9. Many of the musicians noted in the chapter end notes changed their names. List one man and one woman who did so.
10. Name 10 of the black musicians noted in the chapter end notes. Who is the only white musician listed? Why do you think he was chosen?

### **About the author**

Ann Fisher was born and raised far from the gritty urbanity of Atlantic City which is probably why it continues to fascinate her. A freelance journalist and, now, licensed social worker, she currently works and lives in South Jersey. As a former director of advertising and public relations for NFL Films, she views the world through a camera lens while listening for great stories and unexpected soundtracks. Her interviews with Florence were recorded over a two-year period; she spent the next year reading Florence every last bit of this tale.