**The Light We Lost**

**By Jill Santopolo**

**About the Book:**

Lucy is faced with a life-altering choice. But before she can make her decision, she must start her story--their story--at the very beginning.

Lucy and Gabe meet as seniors at Columbia University on a day that changes both of their lives forever. Together, they decide they want their lives to mean something, to matter. When they meet again a year later, it seems fated--perhaps they'll find life's meaning in each other. But then Gabe becomes a photojournalist assigned to the Middle East and Lucy pursues a career in New York. What follows is a thirteen-year journey of dreams, desires, jealousies, betrayals, and, ultimately, of love. Was it fate that brought them together? Is it choice that has kept them away? Their journey takes Lucy and Gabe continents apart, but never out of each other's hearts.

**About the Author**:

Jill Santopolo is the author of the nationally and internationally bestselling novel The Light We Lost, which has been translated into more than 30 languages, as well as the Alec Flint Mysteries, the Sparkle Spa series, and the Follow Your Heart books. She holds a BA in English Literature from Columbia University, an MFA in Writing for Children from the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and a certificate in Intellectual Property Law from NYU. Jill is also the Editorial Director of Philomel Books, an imprint of Penguin Young Readers Group, where she edits many critically-acclaimed, award-winning, and best-selling bookstore kids and teens. When she's not writing or editing, Jill is a thesis advisor at The New School in their MFA program in Writing for Children and Young Adults and has been on the faculty of the Columbia Publishing Course. Jill has traveled all over the U.S.--and to Canada and Europe--to speak about writing and storytelling. She lives in New York City.

**If you enjoyed this book*:***

* This is How It Always Is by Laurie Frankel
* The Last Mrs. Parrish by Liv Constantine
* Happiness by Heather Harpham
* Still Lives by Maria Hummel
* Other Woman by Sandie Jones

**Discussion Questions**

1. The novel begins on September 11, 2001, a day in which history and Lucy’s life both change. Is there a day in your own life that you’ll never forget?

2. The novel explores how the choices we make can lead us to very different lifestyles. Do you think Lucy regrets any of her choices? Have you made a decision that has changed the course of your life drastically? If so, what was it? How do you feel about it now?

3. When talking to Lucy, Jay compares his explosive first relationship to the gummy bear experiment and his marriage to Vanessa to the Old Nassau experiment. He tells Lucy that “there are lots of ways to love people” (p. 80). Do you agree with Jay? Why or why not?

4. Did you have a favorite man in the novel—Gabe or Darren? Who would you pick in the end?

5. Lucy and her friend Kate use the metaphor of fire to discuss the relationships in their lives—some are wildfires and some are hearth fires or bonfires (p. 138). Do you think the metaphor works?

6. Lucy thinks, “There are so many moments that change a person’s world. Some are because of a decision that’s made. Others, I think, might be because of the universe, fate, God, a higher power, whatever you want to call it” (p. 291). How do you feel about Lucy’s approach to fate and free will? Do you believe in fate?

7. How is marriage portrayed in the novel? How did you feel when Gabe and Lucy reconnected? Were you surprised by Lucy’s reaction to Gabe?

8. Lucy is a loving mother, but she also balances a successful career in television, which Darren doesn’t always support. Were you frustrated with Darren’s priorities for Lucy, or were there times you agreed? How did you feel about Darren’s “paper doll” philosophy for finding a wife? How do you think this philosophy affected Lucy?

9. How did you feel about Gabe’s photography exhibit Light? Were you surprised? How does Gabe’s art shape the way he lives? How does it shape the way Lucy lives?

10. What do you think about the way the novel ends?