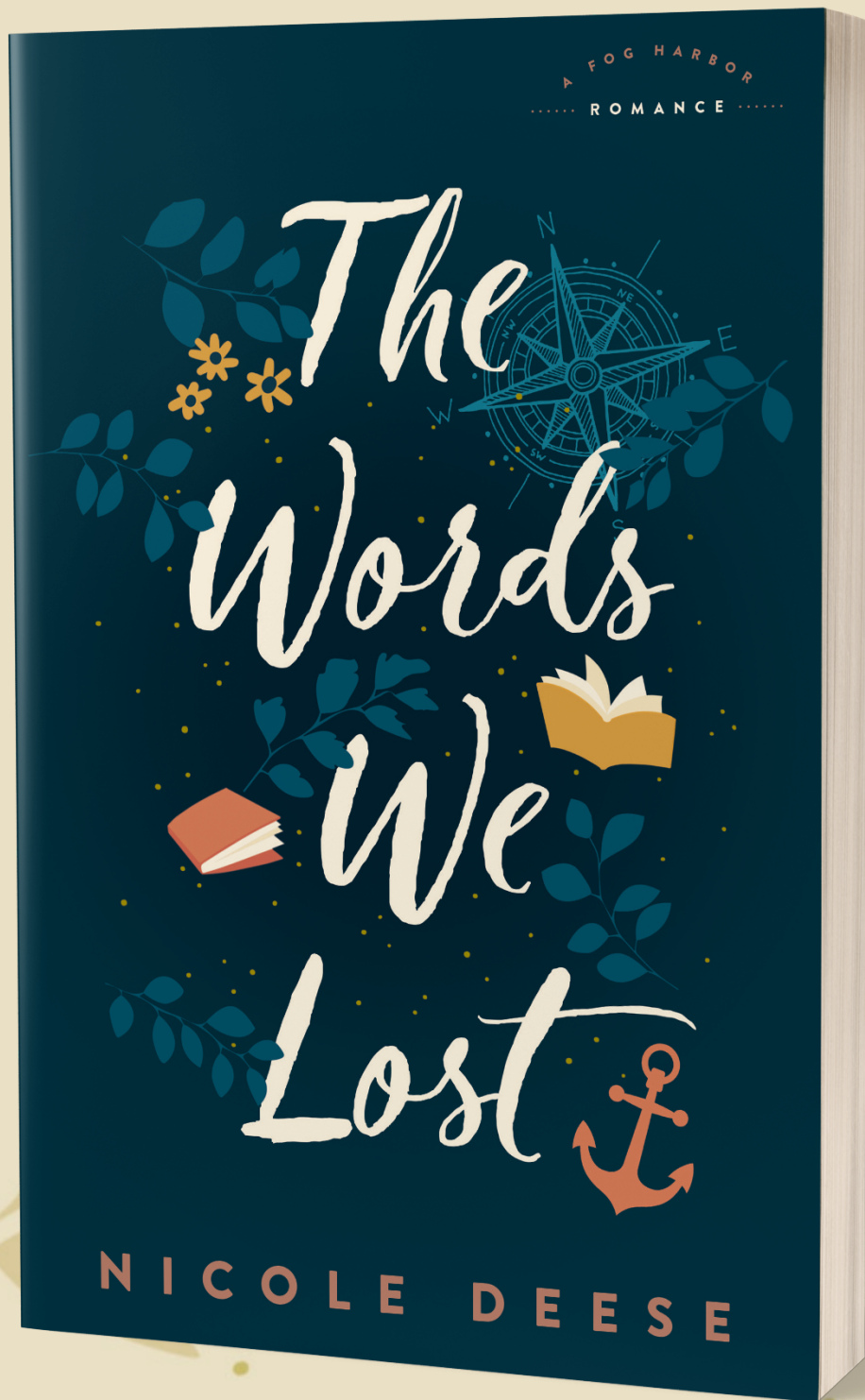


# Book Club Guide

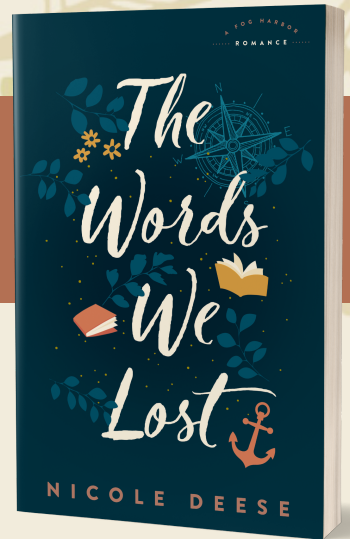


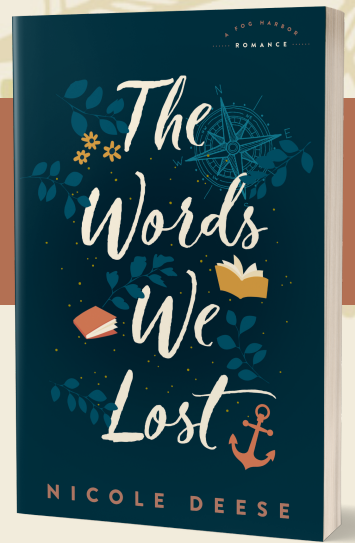
# From the Author

Dear book club coordinator,

As a lifelong lover of fiction, the idea of writing a love story where books and the publishing industry play a key role in the lives of my characters both thrilled and challenged me. Despite being a published author for more than a decade, my research inquiries for *The Words We Lost* extended far beyond my own understanding. One question led to another which led to another, and soon I was asking the question that caught my imagination on fire: What happens when a bestselling author dies before the publication of a highly anticipated novel? The answer not only shaped the fictional publishing house I created in San Francisco, CA, called Fog Harbor Books, but also the three main characters who are each given their own unique perspectives in *The Words We Lost*.

By now you know that *The Words We Lost* includes two of my favorite themes (hint: BOOKS and ROMANCE), but you should also know it takes place in one of my favorite tourist destinations: Port Townsend, Washington. This old Victorian seaport town located on the Olympic Peninsula on Puget Sound turned out to be the perfect setting for this angsty, atmospheric second-chance love story between an editor in search of a missing manuscript and a hotel manager who refuses to let go of his first love and the guilt surrounding their breakup five years prior. Port Townsend holds the allure, mystery, wonder, and palpable nostalgic tension between past and present I hope every reader will experience the moment Ingrid steps off the ferry.





On a personal note, this story within a story is like nothing I've ever penned before. As you will read in my author's letter at the conclusion of this novel, many of my own experiences with grief and loss helped inspire key scenes and insights for each of my characters as they fight for victory. I invite you to take this journey with me as you gather clues from Ingrid and Joel's past and press on toward the light. This healing journey in search of closure is one I pray will resonate with many readers as it's often on the other side of heartache that we find what we've really been after. The most rewarding journeys we take—in books and in life—are the ones that lead us back to Hope.

I love doing book club events, so feel free to invite me to your book club meeting by reaching out via An Open Book:  
<https://www.bethanyhouseopenbook.com/author-teleconference-request>

*Nicole*

Nicole Deese

<https://www.nicoledese.com/>



# Recipe

Recipe from Williams Sonoma  
(williams-sonoma.com).

## Frozen Lemonade with Blackberry Puree

### Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 c. plus 1 tsp.  
fresh lemon juice
- 1/3 c. fresh orange  
juice
- 3/4 c. plus 2 Tbs.  
simple syrup
- 1 pint fresh  
blackberries, juiced  
(about 1/3 c.), plus  
more blackberries  
for garnish
- 4 1/2 c. ice cubes
- 4 fresh mint sprigs

In a small bowl, stir together the 1 1/4 c. lemon juice, orange juice, and 3/4 c. simple syrup. Set aside.

In another small bowl, stir together the blackberry juice, 1 tsp. lemon juice, and 2 Tbs. simple syrup. Set aside.

Put the ice cubes in a blender and add the lemon juice mixture. Using the ice crush feature of the blender or high speed, blend until smooth.

Put 1 Tbs. of the blackberry puree into each of 4 glasses. Pour in the frozen lemonade, dividing evenly. Garnish each with a mint sprig and a few blackberries. Serve immediately. Serves 4.



# Get to know the characters in



## Joel Campbell

Image credit Layro.tumblr.com



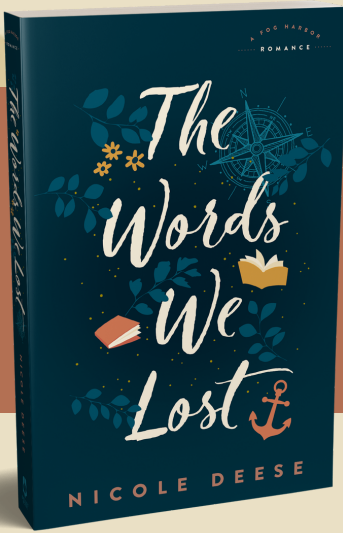
## Cele Campbell

Image credit ae.com



## Ingrid Erickson

Image credit iMbd.com



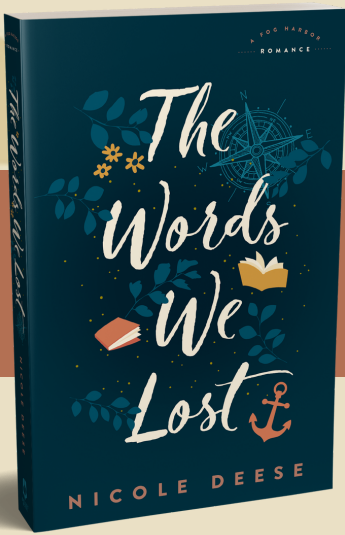
# Quiz

## Explore Puget Sound, Washington!

“Puget Sound” refers to a body of water and the surrounding region—including Port Townsend, the city where much of Nicole Deese’s *The Words We Lost* takes place. Can you pick the right answers to these facts about Puget Sound?

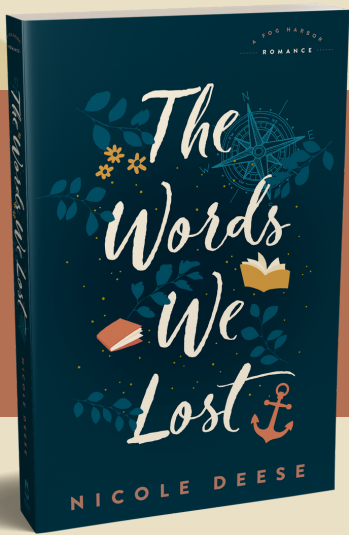
1. How much of Washington’s population lives in the Puget Sound area?
  - a. Two-thirds
  - b. Half
  - c. One-third
  - d. One-fourth
2. Puget Sound got its name from a \_\_\_\_\_.
  - a. Type of fish
  - b. British lieutenant
  - c. Washington state governor
  - d. Sailing ship
3. Port Townsend is known for having more than three hundred \_\_\_\_\_ homes.
  - a. Victorian-style
  - b. Colonial-style
  - c. Craftsman-style
  - d. Tiny
4. Marine life is a great attraction in Puget Sound. It is home to approximately \_\_\_\_\_ types of invertebrates like clams, oysters, sea urchins, and octopi. On the larger end, \_\_\_\_\_ types of sea mammals like orca whales, sea otters, and seals live in the Sound.
  - a. 20 and 10,000
  - b. 3,000 and 13
  - c. 1,000,000 and 80
  - d. 500 and 9





5. Port Townsend in Puget Sound houses one of two \_\_\_\_\_ known to exist in the United States. This one is 125 feet tall.
- Bell towers
  - Clock towers
  - Sequoia trees
  - Lightning rod towers
6. A different term for Puget Sound is its Native American name \_\_\_\_\_.
- Gitchee Gumee
  - Keuka
  - Whulge
  - Erielhonan
7. The largest employer in Port Townsend is \_\_\_\_\_.
- The Port Townsend Paper Mill
  - Copper Canyon Press
  - Palace Hotel Port Townsend
  - William James Bookseller





# Answer Key

## Explore Puget Sound, Washington!

1. b. Two-thirds

2. b. British lieutenant. In the late 1700s, British explorer George Vancouver completed an expedition to the Pacific Northwest. Along his journey, he named 75 islands and water bodies, one of them being Puget Sound. He named this waterway in honor of Peter Puget, a Royal Navy lieutenant who accompanied him on the expedition.

3. a. Victorian-style. Back in the mid-1800s, town planners expected Port Townsend to be the busiest port in the state because of its position on Puget Sound. So they built it up, big-time. Then the railroad ended that dream, pushing its tracks instead to Seattle. But the beautiful Victorian homes remained and residents have lovingly maintained them.

4. b. 3,000 and 13

5. a. Bell towers. These towers were used to summon volunteer firefighters during emergencies. The other bell tower is located in Helena, MT.

6. c. Whulge (or Whulj). This word comes from the Lushootseed name  $x^w\text{ə}l\check{c}$ , meaning "sea, salt water, ocean, or sound."

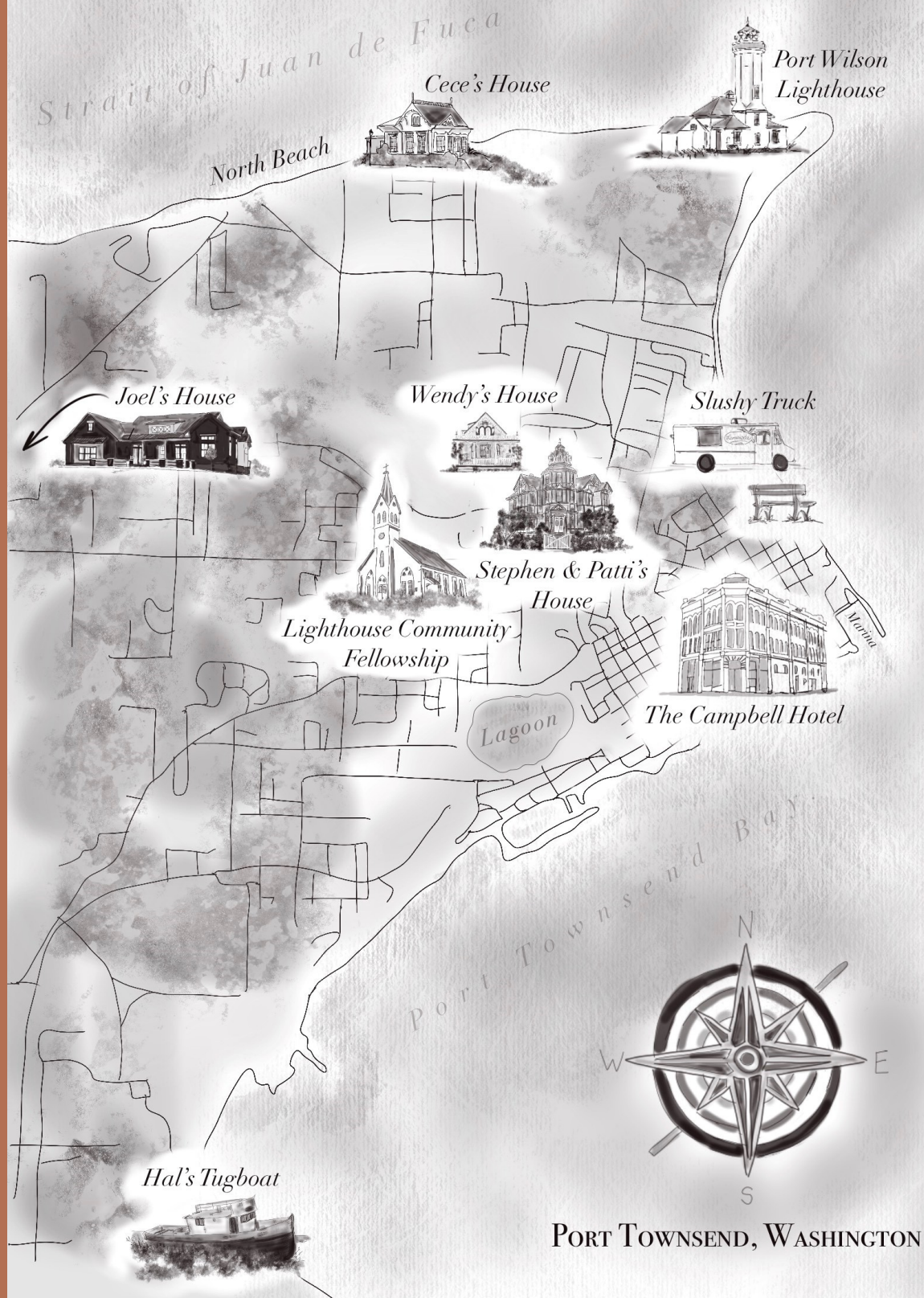
7. a. The Port Townsend Paper Mill

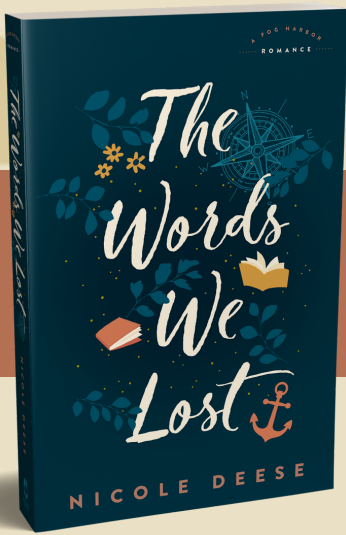




# LANDMARKS IN *"The Words We Lost"*

By Nicole Deese






# Discussion Questions

1. **The Words We Lost** takes place in Port Townsend, Washington; how do you think this ocean setting impacts the feeling of the story?
2. For both Ingrid Erikson and Joel Campbell, discuss what motivates them, how (or whether) they change throughout the story, and what you think causes them to change.
3. **The Words We Lost** is a story within a story; do you like this structure? How did this structure impact your reading of the book?
4. Often, when we hear the word *grief* we think of an emotion tied to the death of a person, but it can encompass so much more. What losses do the characters in **The Words We Lost** face? What are some other types of loss a person might experience throughout life?





**5. Every person has their own way of coping with painful experiences. In what ways—both healthy and unhealthy—do the characters cope with their grief? What are some healthy ways you’ve found to manage your own grief?**

**6. In a letter, CeCe writes “there’s no perfect way to tell a painful truth to someone you love.” Do you agree with her statement? Why or why not?**

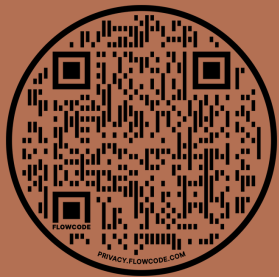
**7. Forgiveness also plays a big role in this story; Ingrid struggles to forgive Joel and her father. Have you ever struggled to forgive someone? How did you overcome that?**

**8. If you could pick one character in *The Words We Lost* to give advice to, who would you pick and what would you say?**



# An Open Book

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