# Long Bright River by Liz Moore

## Synopsis

In a Philadelphia neighborhood rocked by the opioid crisis, two once-inseparable sisters find themselves at odds. One, Kacey, lives on the streets in the vise of addiction. The other, Mickey, walks those same blocks on her police beat. They don't speak anymore, but Mickey never stops worrying about her sibling.

Then Kacey disappears, suddenly, at the same time that a mysterious string of murders begins in Mickey's district, and Mickey becomes dangerously obsessed with finding the culprit --- and her sister --- before it's too late.

## Discussion questions

1. In this novel, the author combines a crime story with a family drama, as she moves back and forth between present and past, and sets it all against a real and researched city and culture. Which elements moved or compelled you most? Did knowing it was influenced by real life make it more or less powerful for you?
2. While Kacey and Mickey grew up in the same house, they followed vastly diverging paths in adolescence. In what ways were the girls different by nature? Or was it a matter of nurture? Which differences do you think most influenced their fates, and why?
3. The author explores the pressures that are put on single parents, juggling child care and an unpredictable work schedule. Did Mickey’s life make you see this in a new way? How did you feel about the ways she manages this juggling?
4. The author explores the concept of addiction in multiple ways in this story. Beyond the obvious heroin addiction, what other kinds of compulsion do you see? For instance, addiction to work, to the chase, to power, to a certain kind of sex or love or support? What role do these other forms of compulsion play in the story?
5. Do you think Mickey’s life and profession would have turned out differently if she had been able to go to college as she initially hoped? Would such an education have changed her fate? Why or why not?
6. After their mother, Lisa, dies, Mickey and Kacey are left to live with their grandmother Gee, but Mickey begins to play the role of a pseudo-mother to Kacey. Analyze the mother-daughter relationships presented in the novel: Gee to Lisa; Lisa to Mickey; Gee to Mickey and Kacey; Mickey to Kacey; Mickey to Thomas. How are these parenting styles different, and in what ways are they similar?
7. The author launches several mysteries in the course of the story. The biggest and most obvious are established early on: Who is killing young women in the neighborhood, and what has happened to Kacey? Were you surprised by the resolutions of these questions in the end? Were you more surprised by the information that is revealed, or by the way in which it emerged. Did you have competing suspicions or theories?

*Synopsis/Discussion questions from https://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/long-bright-river/guide*