



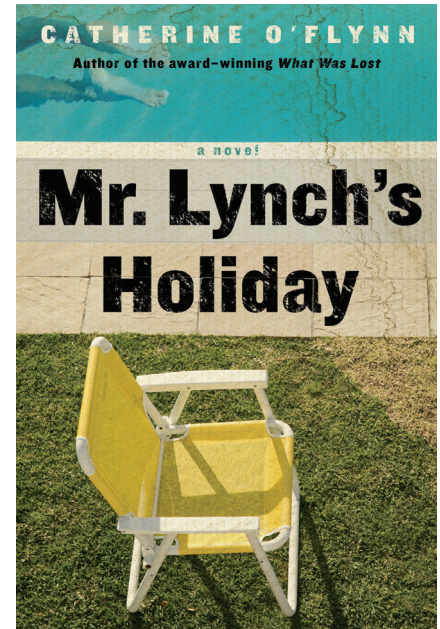
Reading Group Gold

Mr. Lynch's Holiday

Catherine O'Flynn

Discussion Questions

1. Describe the relationship between Dermot and Eamonn. What do you think accounts for the vast differences between father and son? As much as they are different, how are they also similar? What is the connection that Eamon had with his mother that is absent from his relationship with his father? Are the two men able to achieve the same level of understanding in the end?
2. Lomaverde advertises itself as a place where residents can make a new life, but its promises go unfulfilled. Are there residents who are getting what they bargained for out of life in Lomaverde? How and why does Eamonn's attitude about Lomaverde change?
3. Eamonn comes to Spain to become his "true self." What does he hope to find in himself that he could not find in Birmingham? How is Eamonn finally able to let go of the things that hold him back? Do you think that he finds what he is looking for?
4. Immigration and emigration are huge themes in *Mr. Lynch's Holiday* and in Catherine O'Flynn's work. How does O'Flynn use the history of the Lynch family's immigration from Ireland to complicate Dermot's decision to leave England for Spain? What do you think O'Flynn wants us to see about the different reasons—cultural, political, and socioeconomic—that people might leave a place where they are born and raised?
5. Dermot is haunted by the memory of his brother and is filled with regret for leaving him at a young age. Do you think that he ever comes to terms with the way in which life took its course for both of them? In what ways does Eamonn seem to be a reincarnation of his brother, and how does this shed light on the dynamic of their father-son relationship?
6. Dermot confesses to Eamonn that he is less lonely now that his wife has passed. What do you think was the extent of the relationship between Kathleen and Father Walsh? Do you believe that you could be "kindred spirits" with someone other than your spouse or partner?
7. Do the residents of Lomaverde make any efforts to preserve their individual identities, or does Lomaverde become a new form of community for them? As dysfunctional as they seem, what knits their motley crew together as a community?



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8. What is the significance of the Eamonn's almost drowning? What are some of the revelations that he has prior that can be related to his emotionally drowned state? Does being rescued by Dermot change the way Eamonn views his father?
9. A ghostly presence in the neighborhood unnerves the residents, but there are also unseen things that haunt each member of the community. What ghosts haunt each member of Lomaverde? What ghosts haunt Dermot?
10. The novel wrestles with the issue of class, from the arrival of immigrants in Lomaverde to the memories of Eamonn's humble upbringing. What are some of the attitudes towards the social disparities that exist between characters in the novel? Does Eamonn ever resolve his insecurities with his family's background? How has this been an impediment to his own success? What do you think will happen to the immigrants that are found living as shadows in the town?
11. Dermot says, "Sometimes you lose people and you barely know it at the time. It starts as a small crack." In what ways does this resonate with many of the relationships in the novel? Do you think that anything could be done to salvage these relationships? Do you think it is possible to reclaim the connections with the people you have lost? Do you recognize some of the small cracks that are present in your own life? How does Dermot heal them? How can you?