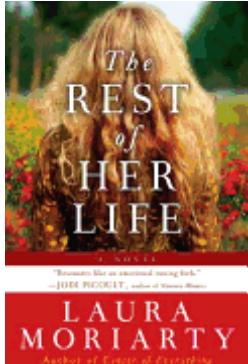


# ELPL Lit Kits



## *The Rest of Her Life* by Laura Moriarty

From the critically acclaimed author of "The Center of Everything" comes this luminous, provocative, and ultimately redemptive look at how even mothers and daughters with the best intentions can be blind to the harm they do to each other.

**LAURA MORIARTY**  
Author of *Center of Everything*

**About the Author:** Laura Moriarty earned a degree in social work before returning for her M.A. in Creative Writing at the University of Kansas. She was the recipient of the George Bennett Fellowship for Creative Writing at Phillips Exeter Academy in New Hampshire. She

currently lives with her daughter in Lawrence, Kansas, and is at work on her next novel

### Discussion Questions:

1. Leigh is certainly a flawed human being. But what are her strengths — as a mother and as a human being? What are her weaknesses? If her weaknesses are a product of her difficult childhood, why is her sister so different?
2. In the course of the novel, the relationship between Leigh and Kara changes. What do you think of as the major turning point in their relationship? What do you think was at the heart of the conflict?
3. How important is the setting to this story? Would the same situation have played out differently in a larger town, a suburb, or a city? What do you think would have been the same?
4. At the beginning of the novel, Leigh believes she likes living in a small town like Danby because she likes the sense of community it offers. Is she really a part of this community? How does Leigh's relationship to the town change over the summer?
5. When Leigh accuses Eva of being a gossip, Eva defends herself by saying she just cares about what's happening in the lives of people in her community. Do you buy this? Leigh spends a lot of time worrying about what people are saying about her family, but is gossip ever a positive force in the story? Do you like Eva? Why or why not?

6. After hearing Eva deny being a gossip, Leigh is stunned: "People didn't see themselves, she considered. It was almost eerie when you saw it face to face." Who else in the novel might not see herself or himself clearly? Does anyone? Do you think of this selective "vision" as a conscious choice or a true inability?
7. Is Gary a better parent than Leigh? In what ways does his relationship with Justin mirror Leigh's relationship with Kara? What is it about each child that brings out such different responses from both Gary and Leigh?
8. The first time the bereaved mother confronts Kara, it is Leigh — not Gary — who steps in to protect her. Leigh believes she recognizes something in Diane Kletchka, something we can assume Gary does not. What do you think it is about Diane that feels familiar to Leigh?
9. In this novel, we see Leigh in several different kinds of relationships: she's a mother, a daughter, a sister, a wife, and a friend. How do all these different roles compete with each other for Leigh's attention/ loyalty? Does she give too much attention to any one role? Not enough to another? In what ways do these different kinds of relationships influence one another?