

Discussion Questions for This Bright Beauty

1. Did you find the novel to be a believable portrayal of mental illness, specifically bipolar disorder?
2. Though they are twins, Lottie and Franci are very different. Which of the sisters did you connect to more and why?
3. Was Lottie selfish to have Mia on her own?
4. Lottie refuses to marry Whit because she fears that he will then feel bound to her? Was her decision the right one since he ultimately did leave her? Would things between them have gone differently if they'd been married?
5. At one point in the book Whit says to Franci, “‘You’ve always connected sick with weak, Franci. And Charlotte can’t stand that. She has always been stronger without you. Whenever you came back, it was just an excuse for her to fall apart all over again. She knew you would be there to pick up the pieces. It was your job. It’s what you’re good at.’ He shook his head, and I could see the quiet rage smoldering behind his eyes. ‘I swear, sometimes I think she did it to please you.’” Discuss this quote and its implications.
6. Discuss Franci’s relationship with Whit. Has she always been attracted to him or does something between change on this visit? What do you think of her decision not to tell Mark about what almost happened between them?
7. Much of the book focuses on the power dynamic between Franci and Lottie. In what ways does this dynamic shift over the course of the novel?
8. The death of their mother impacts Lottie and Franci in different ways. Discuss the ways that the sisters each deal with this loss.
9. How does Franci’s experience with Caitlin affect her confidence in herself and her career?
10. What was your reaction to the ending of the book? Was it inevitable? Could things have gone differently?
11. The novel shifts between the sisters’ perspective and goes back and forth between past and present. How did this structure work for you as a reader?
12. Franci worries that Lottie is a neglectful mother. Is she? Should Franci and Mark left her to raise Mia on her own? If they had, would this have changed the outcome for Lottie?

13. Both Franci and Lottie recall the dark stories their mother told them when they were children about Louisa and Mirabella Strout. What is the significance of these tales?
14. Why does Lottie hide the reality of their mother's death from Franci? Was this the right choice? If she had told her the truth earlier, would things have gone differently for either of them?