



Moonlight Mile

By Dennis Lehane
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Introduction

New York Times bestselling author Dennis Lehane delivers an explosive tale of vengeance and redemption in this brilliant sequel to *Gone, Baby, Gone* heralding the long-awaited return of beloved private investigators Patrick Kenzie and Angela Gennaro.

Amanda McCready was four years old when she vanished from a Boston apartment in 1997. Desperate pleas for help from the child's aunt led savvy, tough-nosed investigators Kenzie and Gennaro to take on the case. The pair risked everything to find the young girl only to have Patrick orchestrate her return to a neglectful mother and a broken home.

Now Amanda is sixteen and gone again. A stellar student, brilliant but aloof, she seemed destined to escape her upbringing. Yet Amanda's aunt is once more knocking at Patrick Kenzie's door, fearing the worst for the little girl who has blossomed into a striking, bright young woman who hasn't been seen in two weeks.

Haunted by the past, Kenzie and Gennaro revisit the case that troubled them the most, following a twelve-year trail of secrets and lies down the darkest alleys of Boston's gritty, blue-collar streets. Assuring themselves that this time will be different, they vow to make good on their promise to find Amanda and see that she is safe. But their determination to do the right thing holds dark implications Kenzie and Gennaro aren't prepared for . . . consequences that could cost them not only Amanda's life, but their own.

Questions for Discussion

1. Talk about Angie and Patrick. What are they like? How do their personalities work together? How have they changed over the years? How has becoming parents altered their lives and their outlook? How do they sustain each other and their marriage?
2. At the beginning of the novel, Patrick admits that he feels like a sell out. "What I was selling out was less clear to me, but I felt it all the same." Why does he feel this way? Does he have a better understanding by the novel's end? How do the events that unfold help him find clarity? Do you share his opinion of himself? What about his choices at the novel's end?
3. To support his family, Patrick freelances at a private security and investigation firm where he hopes to be officially hired. But his supervisor at the firm tells him that they won't make him a permanent employee because, "you think you're wearing that nice suit but all I see you wearing is class rage." What does he mean by this? Does Patrick "wear class rage"? Why? Is he right to do so?
4. Think about the cases Patrick has handled for this private security and investigation firm. How far should we must we compromise our beliefs for the sake of security employment and health insurance? How does compromising our values affect us? Would you compromise your values for a job?
5. Would you say Patrick has integrity? How does this affect the man he is and the choices he makes? How does this quality elevate him, and how does it get him into trouble?
6. When Beatrice McCready calls Patrick she tells him, "You owe me." What, exactly, does he owe her? Should Patrick feel guilty for returning Amanda to her birth mother all those years ago?
7. After talking to Bea, Patrick thinks about the past and his role in shaping the circumstances of Amanda's life. "Twelve years ago, I'd been wrong. Every day that had passed since, roughly 4,440 of them, I was sure of that. But twelve years ago, I'd been right. Leaving Amanda with kidnappers, no matter how vested they were in her welfare, was leaving her with kidnappers. In the 4,400 days since I'd taken her back, I was sure this was true. So where did it leave me?" How would you answer him? Was his choice correct back then or was it wrong? Develop arguments to support both viewpoints.
8. As Patrick discovered all those years ago, doing what is legal isn't always doing what is right. How do we reconcile the occasional divergence between "situational ethics" and "societal ethics"?
9. Imagine if the law could be revised so that mothers like Helene wouldn't be allowed to raise their children. How do we ultimately write such a law and who gets to decide who is a good parent and who is not?
10. By agreeing to search for the teenage Amanda, is Patrick attempting to atone for the sins of the past? "I don't believe in redemption," he tells Angie. Is this true? Can we make up for our mistakes? By the novel's end, do you think Patrick is redeemed?
11. Angie argues that by trying to help Amanda McCready, Patrick would be doing good. What entails "doing good?" Do you think people want to do good? What other characters do good in the story? Why do so many people refrain from doing good when the opportunity arises?
12. Angie also uses their daughter to challenge Patrick. "When your daughter asks what you stand for, don't you want to be able to

answer her?" What does Patrick stand for? What do you stand for? What might it be like if there were more people like Patrick and Angie in our society?

13. In *Moonlight Mile*, Dennis Lehane uses Patrick's character to comment on contemporary American society. Choose a few of Patrick's observations and discuss on them.

14. Parenting and its impact on a child's life are undercurrents that run through the novel. Compare and contrast the novel's various parental figures—from Patrick to the Russian mobster Kirill Borzkov to Helene and even Amanda. Just because someone can have a baby should he/she?

15. Amanda's social worker, Dre, and Patrick have a charged discussion about Dre's choice to sell babies. "You think the state knows any better about placing kids? You think anyone does?" Dre challenges Patrick. "We don't know shit. And by we, I mean all of us. We all showed up at the same semi-formal and we hope that somehow everyone will buy that we are what we dressed up as. A few decades of this, and what happens? Nothing happens. We learn nothing, we don't change, and then we die. And the next generation of fakers takes our place." Do you share Dre's bleak assessment? Can we, as a society, change? Have we over the years?

16. What are your impressions of Amanda? Do you agree with her choices? What kind of life do you think she will have?

17. By the novel's end, do you think Patrick would make the same choices about Amanda if he were able to undo time?

18. If you've read the previous books in the series, how does *Moonlight Mile* compare? What about the author's other works, including *Mystic River*, *Shutter Island*, and *The Given Day*? How does this book differ from those? Are there themes they share that offer insight into the author's values?

About the Author

Dennis Lehane's novels include the *New York Times* bestsellers *The Given Day*; *Gone, Baby, Gone*; *Mystic River*; *Shutter Island*; and *Prayers for Rain*; as well as *Coronado*, a collection of short stories and a play. He and his wife, Angie, divide their time between Boston and the Gulf Coast of Florida.