



The Deception of Livvy Higgs by Donna Morrissey

About the author:

Donna Morrissey is the award-winning author of *Kit's Law*, *Downhill Chance*, *What They Wanted*, and *Sylvanus Now*, which was shortlisted for the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. She recently wrote a children's book, *Cross Katie Kross*, illustrated by her daughter, Bridget. Morrissey grew up in The Beaches, a small fishing outpost in Newfoundland and now lives in Halifax.

Source: Author's website (<http://donnamorrissey.com>)

About this book:

For two traumatic days, Livvy Higgs is besieged by a series of small heart attacks while the ghost of her younger self leads her back through a past devastated by lies and secrets.

The story opens in Halifax in 2009, travels back to the French Shore of Newfoundland during the mid-thirties and the heyday of the Maritime shipping industry, makes its way to wartorn Halifax during the battle of the Atlantic in World War II, then leaps ahead to the bedside of the elder Livvy.

Caught between a troubled past, and her present and worsening living conditions, Livvy is forced to pick apart the lies and secrets told by her greedy, prideful father, Durwin Higgs, who judges her a failure, and her formidable Grandmother Creed, who has mysteriously aligned herself with Livvy's father, despite their mutual hatred.

Source: Author's website (<http://donnamorrissey.com>)



Discussion Questions:

1. Though the title of the novel is *The Deception of Livvy Higgs*, who would you say experiences the ultimate deception in the novel, Livvy or her mother?
2. The death of Livvy's mother is left rather ambiguous. What do you think really happened to this character?
3. What did you make of the character Gen? Did you have any sympathy for her and the situation that she finds herself in?
4. At what point did you realize that Livvy was dying?
5. The author tells the story from the perspective of a young Livvy and an eighty-year-old Livvy. Which story were you most drawn to, and what are your reasons for feeling that way?
6. Do you think Grandmother Creed truly felt love for Cecile or Livvy? Was she capable of love, or was she too caught up in her own lies and pride?
7. Both Livvy and her mother were drawn to the shore and the sand dunes. What did you think it was about this setting that was so magnetic for them?
8. Given that the novel is about uncovering secrets and lies, did you ever think that perhaps Livvy's recollections of the past were untruthful? Is she a reliable narrator?
9. Some people believe that when they die they are greeted by people they love who have passed over before them. Do you think that in some way this



is what Livvy is experiencing over the two days of her repeated heart attack?

10. This novel is cinematic, and the characters seem to jump off the page. If you were to turn this novel into a film, who would you cast as the lead characters?

Source: Penguin Random House Canada (<http://penguinrandomhouse.ca/>)

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