

## Readers Guide for *Last Will* by Bryn Greenwood

1. Bernie and his mother both consider him a failure, because he doesn't fit within a narrowly defined notion of success. Do you agree that he's a failure? What would success look like for him at this point in his life?
2. What about Meda? When she first meets Bernie, to what degree is she failing or succeeding in life?
3. Were you surprised to learn that Meda's grandmother was a crypto-Jew (someone who has retained Jewish traditions while outwardly following another religion)? What reasons might have compelled the Amoses to keep their faith secret all these years?
4. Bernie lost his father and his brother in a fatal car accident. Meda lost her brother and never knew her father. How do those parallel absences affect their lives?
5. Usually when we talk about an "inheritance," we mean money or property. What other types of inheritances are at play in the story? How much of who we are is about what we inherit from our ancestors?
6. How does Meda's physical appearance affect the way she interacts with the world? What about Bernie? How does his physical body impact his experience of the world? How much of any person's life is controlled by appearance?
7. What different notions of motherhood and fatherhood are presented in the book? How do the characters feel about the roles of mother and father in their lives?
8. Bernie identifies with Muriel's abduction experience, but to what degree are he and Muriel using the same coping strategies to deal with the aftermath?
9. Loren and Bernie both occupy a similar role in their families as the younger, less valued sibling. What does their animosity toward each other say about how they view themselves?
10. Considering their rocky start, do you think Bernie and Meda will have a successful marriage? Why or why not?