

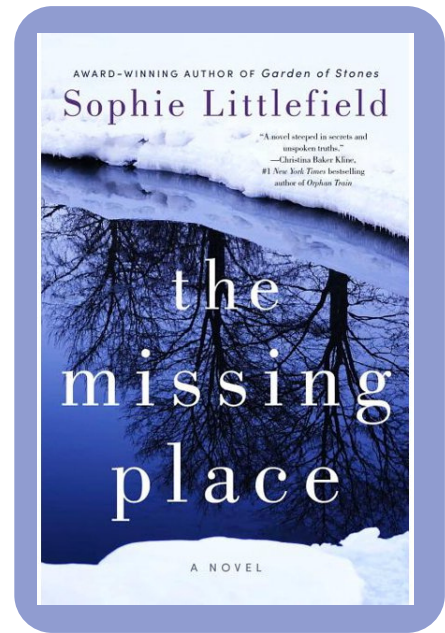
The Missing Place

by Sophie Littlefield

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Taken from:

<https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/The-Missing-Place/Sophie-Littlefield/>



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1. Describe and discuss how the setting of Lawton, North Dakota, evokes the major themes in Littlefield's *The Missing Place*.
 2. Compare and contrast the two main characters, Colleen and Shay. Why might the author have created characters who differ from each other in so many ways?
 3. Which mother handles the news of her son's disappearance better at the beginning of the book? What about as events progress? How do their backgrounds help or hinder them in their efforts?
 4. Shay criticizes Colleen's parenting throughout the book, challenging her on her "helicopter parenting." Do you think these criticisms are valid? How could Colleen have been a more effective parent given the challenges her family faced?
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5. There is a shortage of housing in Lawton, North Dakota, and Colleen and Shay have great difficulty finding a place to stay. In what other ways does the oil boom affect the community? How does the oil boom affect the mothers' search?
6. T.L. is introduced in the third chapter with little explanation. On first meeting him, how did you imagine he might fit into the story? How did your evaluation change throughout the book?
7. Many theories about the boys' disappearance are advanced by people Colleen and Shay meet, as well as by their own sleuthing. Which theory did you find most convincing?
8. The North Dakota oil boom has been in the news for quite some time. How did media coverage affect your perception of the fictional town of Lawton?
9. Shay and Colleen are not the only two driven to Lawton by desperation. As in real life, many rig workers seek work after losing jobs to the economic downturn, in other fields, leaving behind loved ones. What difficult decisions have people in your own life made in similar circumstances?
10. As Shay learns about Paul's troubled history, she questions her son's choice of friends. Colleen has agonized over her son's social life for many years. Did each mother do right by her son? Have you faced similar challenges?