# *Mirror Girls* by Kelly McWilliams

## Reading Guide

1. The novel is titled Mirror Girls—what is the importance of mirror images in the story? In what ways are the two sisters, Charlie and Magnolia, mirror images of each other? In what way are they not?
2. Magnolia’s world changes when she hears the truth about her family heritage. If her grandmother had never told her about her mother, do you think she would have remained a southern belle, or would she have found another way to escape the path laid out for her as Heathwood’s heiress?
3. How did Charlie’s childhood in Harlem influence her character, and the way she responds to rural Georgia in 1953?
4. Charlie and Darius quickly hit it off. What connects the two of them when they meet? What vision of the future do they share?
5. Magnolia has internalized many racist ideas in the Heathwood household. How and when does her perspective begin to change?
6. Why did Magnolia’s reflection disappear? What do you make of her journey to get it back?
7. What did Aunt Hilda mean when she told Magnolia, “None of us can ever really leave. … Heathwood’ll call us back.”? What do Aunt Hilda’s and Magnolia’s struggles tell us about the role of women at the time?
8. What did you make of the motif of trains—and especially the ghost train?
9. The fates and actions of the twins’ parents, grandparents, and even earlier generations play a role in the girls’ separation. What does the novel have to say about inter-generational trauma and troubled pasts?
10. This book is set in the Jim Crow Era, and ends with the characters optimistic about the future. What kind of destiny do you imagine Charlie and Magnolia carving out for themselves?