



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

The Berry Pickers by Amanda Peters

1. *The Berry Pickers* is a story told from two perspectives. Was it easy to move between Norma and Joe's narratives? Was it easy to travel between the memories of the past and present day?
2. After the devastating disappearance of Ruthie, what kept the family bound together? What struggles did they face in the aftermath of this loss?
3. Joe was the last person to see Ruthie before she disappeared, and this haunted him for the rest of his life. How do you think that Joe's guilt affected his life, or changed who he could have become?
4. Two families were forever changed on the day that Ruthie disappeared. As you read about Indigenous children being forcefully taken from their families, has this novel changed you in any way? Do you feel more reflective about your own childhood?
5. Do you have a special place that you visited as a child that evokes strong memories?
6. Joe was portrayed as an angry, violent, heavy drinker even though his parents were hard-working, family-first people. Do you think this was an accurate depiction of Joe, or are there factors to be considered in how you think of him?
7. The family faced two major episodes of racism: when the local sheriff in Maine won't help search for Ruthie, and when they return home, the local Indian Agent wants to take away the remaining children. Discuss the effects of this racism on the family. How do you feel you would have reacted to these situations?

These questions were created by Clarington Library, Museums & Archives staff to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

I am a woman, a daughter, a sister, an Auntie, a cat mom, a dog mom, a friend, a descendent of a revolutionary war sailor, of accused witches and Mi'kmaq ancestors. A Canadian, a traveler, a wine drinker, an admirer of stained glass, a listener of jazz and old country, a reader of books, and a teller of stories.

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