



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Still Life by Louise Penny

1. At the beginning of *Still Life*, we are told that “violent death still surprised” Chief Inspector Armand Gamache. Why is that odd for a homicide detective, and how does it influence his work? What are his strengths and his weaknesses?
2. There are three main couples in the book: Clara and Peter, Olivier and Gabri, and Gamache and Reine-Marie. How would you characterize each of these relationships?
3. When the charred arrowhead is found in his home, it is said that Matthew Croft “had finally been hurt beyond poetry.” How does poetry help him and other characters in this novel? Does it ever have the power to hurt?
4. Consider Gamache’s advice to Nichol: “Life is choice. All day, everyday. Who we talk to, where we sit, what we say, how we say it. And our lives become defined by our choices. It’s as simple and as complex as that. And as powerful.” How do choices affect the principal characters in the novel?
5. When Jane gives Ben a meaningful look and then quotes from W. H. Auden: “Evil is unspectacular and always human, and shares our bed and eats at our own table” is a clue to the ending. Why is it so easy to overlook that clue at the time, and what impact does it have when it’s quoted again in the last chapter?
6. Who do you think Gamache has in mind when he tells Gabri and Olivier: “You’re not the types to do murder. I wish I could say the same for everyone here”?
7. Clara has “very specific tastes” in murder mysteries: “Most of them were British and all were of the village cozy variety.” Do you see *Still Life* as a typical cozy mystery? Why or why not?

The above questions were adapted from LitLovers. For supplemental information about this book, in addition to tips and tricks for running a book club, please visit

www.litlovers.com
<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/8675-still-life-penny>

Book Club in a Bag Terms of Use

Simplify your book club selection with Book Club in a Bag! Visit our website at www.cplma.ca/bookclubinabag to see a list of available titles, view the availability calendar, and submit a request.

Booking a Kit

- Booking may be made up to a year in advance.
- Please check the calendar accessible on our website for availability.
- Fill out the form with your information, and a staff member will be in touch to confirm your booking.
- Pick up your hold at the service desk. Your notification may come in a few days early, but it will remain available until your specified pick-up date.

Terms of Loan

- 12 copies are included in each kit.
- 6-week loan period.
- No renewals.
- Kit may be picked up at or returned to any CLMA library location.
- Kit must be returned at the service desk during operating hours, not through an exterior drop box.
- All items are checked out to one person's card.
- The person who borrowed the kit is responsible for:
 - The distribution and return of all items to their group members; and
 - Any damages to the books/bag, or lost items.
 - The cost of a damaged or lost book varies depending on the item.