



# Book Club in a Bag

## Discussion Questions

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### *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

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# Book Club in a Bag

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