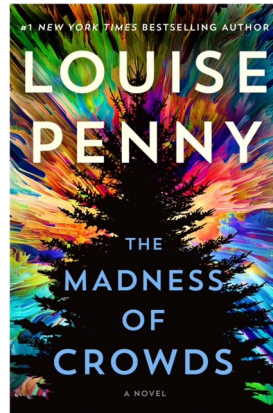


THE MADNESS OF CROWDS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. During the shooting at the lecture in Three Pines, Gamache uses his body to shield Abigail Robinson from danger. Gamache makes his feelings about Professor Robinson's message clear from the beginning of the novel -- so why does he save her life? If you were in his position, what would you have done?
2. How we care for those who cannot take care of themselves is an important theme in this novel, and many of the characters are themselves in caretaker roles. For some of these characters -- Jean-Guy, Colette Roberge, Paul Robinson -- how do their desires to protect the ones they love influence the decisions they make?
3. How do you feel about the relationship between Abigail Robinson and Debbie Schneider? As we learned more about their shared past, did your feelings about their friendship change?
4. One important setting in *The Madness of Crowds* is the Auberge. Formerly the haunted Old Hadley House, the Auberge has been lovingly renovated by the villagers into the luxury inn and spa it is today. What are some other examples of reinventions and second chances in this novel?
5. For the first time in the entire series, we find the full Gamache family together in Three Pines. What did you observe about the family members' interactions with each other? Why do you think Louise chose this book to bring everyone together?
6. Chancellor Roberge introduces the concept of spurious correlations: connecting things that don't actually go together. What are some examples of spurious correlations in *The Madness of Crowds*?
7. Haniya Daoud and Armand Gamache, though from two very different parts of the world, agree that it's the little things, the scents, sights, and sounds of a place, that "add up to home." In your opinion, what are some of those little things that together form Three Pines? What about your own home?
8. Gamache and Vincent Gilbert talk about a story involving Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson: After Thoreau is arrested for protesting an injustice, Emerson visits him in prison and says, 'Henry, what are you doing in there?' And Thoreau replies, 'Ralph, what are you doing out there?' Why does Louise include this story in the novel? How does it relate to the events in *The Madness of Crowds*?
9. Throughout the novel, villagers refer to both Haniya Daoud and Vincent Gilbert as "Asshole Saints." What does this label mean? Do you think either of them deserve it?
10. In Reine-Marie's work helping the Horton family catalogue their late mother's belongings, she discovers hidden monkey symbolism everywhere. What begins as a quirky puzzle turns into a much darker discovery, and Reine-Marie must decide whether or not to share what she's found with the family. Do you think she made the right decision? Why or why not?
11. In her acknowledgements, Louise talks about setting this novel in a post-pandemic world, and how the theme of contagion reverberates throughout the book. With this in mind, discuss Abigail Robinson's theory. Why do you think her ideas began to grow and spread in the novel? Could you see her message taking hold in our world today?
12. *Ça va bien aller*. All will be well. After the events of this novel, what do you think this phrase means to Gamache? To Jean-Guy? To Haniya? What does it mean to you?