

Book club 6: Guilt & criminality

Killing Floor
by Lee Child

Rules

In this book club you will discuss *Killing Floor* by Lee Child in a group of 4-6 readers. You will start a conversation by responding to discussion questions about the text. The book club opens with a brief introduction that one of you reads out loud. The book club then continues in four rounds

- 1 Round 1 consists of 5 quiz questions about the text. One of the group members acts as the quiz master who reads each question out loud, after which everyone (including the quiz master) writes down their answer. The correct answers will appear on the screen after you have turned over the final question card. You may then check your answers and calculate your scores.
- 2 Round 2 consists of genuine questions that you have. Each group member consults the group about a part of the text that they thought was unclear. Together, you try to find answers to the questions that are raised. After everything has been cleared up, your group is ready to proceed to the next round.
- 3 Round 3 consists of questions for discussion. There are two categories to choose from. The person with the most correct answers to the quiz questions gets to be the first to turn over a card and respond to the question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas. Take turns until all cards are flipped.
- 4 Round 4 is when you get to review the text. How many stars would you give the text and why? Discuss this together until you have reached a shared verdict. Use the text box to explain your choice.

This book club was developed by the editors of LitLab, a digital laboratory for high school literature research. For more teaching materials, visit www.litlab.nl. A teachers' manual and a didactic justification of this teaching method are available at www.litlab.nl/docenten.



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Introduction

'I could see Finlay thought this story was thin. He asked me lots more questions, about my bus ticket, the driver, the other people on the bus and about why I wasn't working. Then, he asked, "What did you do in the military police?" "I investigated murders," I told him.' (p. 12)

Killing Floor by Lee Child is set in the small town of Margrave, Georgia. It tells the story of Jack Reacher, a former military police officer. One day, Jack is arrested by the police for a murder he did not commit. After travelling by bus from Tampa, Florida, Reacher stops for breakfast at a diner but gets taken to the police station by four policemen instead. The chief of police, Morrison, says Jack is suspected of killing a man found dead near some warehouses. Even though another man, named Hubble, says he did it, the police still think Jack is guilty. Throughout the book, Jack tries to prove his innocence and find out what really happened. This story is about justice, secrets, and being strong in difficult situations. In this book club you are invited to discuss these topics, and find answers to your own questions about the book.

Round 1: Understanding the plot

Take turns turning over a card and answering the question. After the person whose turn it is has answered, the rest may add to that answer or share their own views.

Round 2: Initial questions

Take turns selecting one of the excerpts (*fragmenten/stukjes*) from the book listed below. Think of a question you would like to ask one of the characters, and work together to find an answer to that question.

1. Reacher and Hubble are put into jail together: 'Then, Baker ... he said.' (p. 17)
2. Roscoe comes to pick up Reacher after he and Hubble are allowed out of jail. "Hello, Roscoe," ... and smiled.' (p. 24)
3. Hubble's wife and children have to leave their house and hide for safety. 'Have you ... you up.' (p. 34)
4. Picard points a gun at Finlay. "You?" Finlay ... ordered me.' (p. 61)

Round 3: Discussion

Take turns turning over a card from a pile of your choice and answer the discussion question. The other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas.

Round 4: Opinion

Review *Killing Floor* by rating the novel on a scale of one to five stars, and then provide an explanation for your choice. Discuss what aspects you enjoyed and what aspects you didn't, and provide reasons for your opinions. Reflect on whether the discussion influenced your individual perspective, and if so, how. Incorporate examples and arguments from your responses to the discussion questions to support your review.



Question 1

How did Jack get from where he got off the bus to where he was having breakfast?

Question 2

What did the police find in the dead man's shoe?

Question 3

How does Hubble know Jack's brother, Joe Reacher?

Question 4

Who is Sherman Stoller and what does he do for a living?

Question 5

Who are being held captive at the warehouse?

Answers

1. He walked along the highway.
2. A piece of paper with the word 'Pluribus' and a telephone number on it.
3. Hubble contacted Joe to investigate the production of false money.
4. Sherman Stoller is a truck driver who secretly transported counterfeit money.
5. Roscoe and Charlie, Hubble's wife, and Hubble's children.



Question

3

Question

2

Question

1

Answers

Question

5

Question

4



Personal connections? 1

Reacher is arrested for murder but in the first chapter we read 'I was under arrest for murder in a town that I didn't know. But I wasn't worried.' Have you ever been wrongly accused (*vals beschuldigd*)? How did it make you feel? How did you deal with it?

Personal connections? 2

In chapter two, Reacher and Hubble are in a cell when a man comes in and breaks Hubble's glasses. Reacher tells the man to leave, and when he doesn't, Reacher hits him hard in the face. Have you ever defended (*verdedigd*) someone else? What do you think is a good way to handle such a situation?

Personal connections? 3

Reacher and Roscoe start a romantic relationship. Do you think this is a good idea, since she is a police officer and he is a murder suspect (*verdachte*) in her case? Why or why not?

Personal connections? 4

Jack Reacher has a brother named Joe Reacher. They don't seem very close. What is your relationship with your family like? Do you think you might not be close to your family in the future? Why or why not?

Personal connections? 5

Reacher finds out that Hubble lost his job and lied to his wife about it, pretending (*doen alsof*) to go to work every day. Can you understand why Hubble lied to his wife about being fired? Have you ever lied to someone close to you? Why?

Personal connections? 6

At the end of the story, Jack Reacher leaves Margrave and Roscoe. Reacher says he can't stay in Margrave, and Roscoe can't leave, so they can't be together. Do you think there are possible alternatives? Do you think long-distance relationships can work, for example?



Personal connections?

3

Personal connections?

2

Personal connections?

1

Personal connections?

6

Personal connections?

5

Personal connections?

4



Food for thought? 1

At the beginning of the story, Chief Morrison says to Reacher: 'You're new in my town. A killer. You're going to confess (*bekennen*). And then you're going to jail for a long time.' What image (*beeld*) does this give you of the police and the justice system (*rechtssysteem*)? Do you think this is how it works in real life?

Food for thought? 2

Reacher doesn't seem worried about being a murder suspect and cooperates (*meewerken*) with the police. What kind of idea do you think this gives the police officers on the case?

Food for thought? 3

After they are attacked in the jail bathroom, Reacher asks Hubble about the man with the shaved head. Hubble starts telling Reacher all about him. Why do you think Hubble trusts Reacher?

Food for thought? 4

First, Reacher is a murder suspect, then there is a plot twist when Roscoe collects him from jail and they have coffee together. Roscoe tells him that she and Finlay checked his story and found it was true, so they got him out of jail. How likely (*waarschijnlijk*) do you think it is that the situation changes like this?

Food for thought? 5

Reacher works together with the police to further investigate (*onderzoeken*) the case. How likely do you think this is? Is his past in the military police relevant in this? Explain your answer.

Food for thought? 6

The truth is discovered at the end of this story, and all ends well, but Reacher leaves Roscoe and Margrave. What do you think is the message of the story?



Food for thought?

3

Food for thought?

2

Food for thought?

1

Food for thought?

6

Food for thought?

5

Food for thought?

4