



Book club 26: Crime & guilt

We Solve Murders
by Richard Osman

Rules

In this book club you will discuss *We Solve Murders* by Richard Osman in a group of 4-6 readers. 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 questions about the plot. 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 asking and answering questions each of you have about the book/story: in turn, the players say what they did not understand about the book and try to find an answer together. When the biggest confusions are solved, round 3 starts.
- 3 Round 3 consists of discussion questions. The person with the most correct answers to the quiz questions from round 1 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 teacher's guide and a didactic justification of this teaching method are available at www.litlab.nl/docenten.



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Introduction

"There are murders to be solved, and I can't do it by myself. It's you and me." 'But we don't solve murders,' says Steve. He can hear Amy smiling down the phone. 'Then we're going to have to start.' (p. 123)

Private security officer Amy Wheeler is protecting bestseller author Rosie D'Antonio when several former clients are killed in ways that implicate her. Amy enlists the help of her father-in-law, Steve Wheeler, who would rather stay at home with his cat Trouble and take part in the weekly pub quiz in his local pub. Together with Rosie they travel around the world chasing clues and confronting suspects in order to clear Amy's name.

In his detective novel *We Solve Murders*, Richard Osman combines this thrilling murder mystery with a good dose of dry wit to create a story that does not just deal with the dangers of crime and murder, but also highlights the importance of friendship. In this book club you are invited to discuss the central ideas in the novel and find an answer to the mysteries presented in the story.

Round 1: Quiz

Turn over the 5 cards with quiz questions one by one. Write down the answer on a piece of paper.

Round 2: Initial questions

What questions popped into your head while reading *We Solve Murders*? Were there any parts that left you confused or wondering? Take turns sharing your questions about the story and try to come up with answers together. Use evidence from the text to support your ideas.

Round 3: Discussion

The player with the most correct answers to the quiz questions gets to turn over a card first from one of the two piles of discussion questions. Once they have answered the question, the other members of the group may then add to the discussion by responding and sharing their ideas.

Round 4: Review

Review *We Solve Murders* 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

What's the name of Steve's own detective agency?

Question 2

What is the connection between the three clients of Maximum Impact Solutions who were all killed under mysterious circumstances?

Question 3

What is the name of Jeff Nolan's former Dutch business partner?

Question 4

Why does Eddie Flood want to meet Rosie?

Question 5

Joe Blow' was the secret identity of which character in the novel?

Answers

- 1 Steve Investigates
- 2 They were all killed when Amy was nearby. OR They were all influencers.
- 3 Henk van Veen
- 4 He wants her to read his manuscript.
- 5 Susan Knox



Question

3

Question

2

Question

1

Answers

Question

5

Question

4



Personal connections? 1

In the prologue of the novel an unknown character states that 'ChatGPT has been such a godsend' (p.1). Have you considered how AI could help criminals, like the example in the novel, or do the benefits of AI outweigh the risks? Explain your answer.

Personal connections? 2

Steve has withdrawn from the world to deal with his loss: 'You can't have the thrills of life without the pain of life, so Steve has decided to go without the thrills' (p. 25). Is this something you recognise? What advice would you give Steve or someone dealing with loss?

Personal connections? 3

Online fame and popularity play an important role in the novel. What do you think is the novel's message on internet fame? How do the characters in the novel experience social media, and do you recognise any of these feelings?

Personal connections? 4

Many unlikely friendships are formed in the novel, think about Amy and Rosie or Steve and Carlos. What factors have sparked these friendships? In your opinion, which friendships seem most likely to last?

Personal connections? 5

Several characters are driven by money. In the novel, Rob and Mick discuss what they would do with a lot of money. What motivates their different opinions? Which character do you agree with, and why?

Personal connections? 6

Adam describes his relationship with Amy as taking a 'call option' on each other (p. 265). What do you think he means by this? What is your opinion of their relationship? Do you think a relationship like this could work?

Personal connections? 7

'Money does unusual things to people' (p. 410). Money is an important motive in the novel. Do you understand why some characters get involved in this murder mystery? Do you think money is also a major motive in real-life crimes?

Personal connections? 8

Was the final resolution of the novel surprising? Did you already solve the crime? Which clues helped you to uncover the mystery?



Personal connections?

3

Personal connections?

2

Personal connections?

1

Personal connections?

6

Personal connections?

5

Personal connections?

4

Personal connections?

8

Personal connections?

7



Food for thought? 1

Steve and Amy are the detectives in the story. How do their methods differ, and how are they similar? Why do they complement each other so well in solving the murder mystery?

Food for thought? 2

The novel is set in different places in the world. What is the function of these different settings in the plot? How do they contribute to the story's suspense?

Food for thought? 3

The author uses humour throughout the novel, even when dealing with serious topics such as crime, danger and death. What kinds of humour does Osman use, and how do these strengthen or weaken the narrative? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

Food for thought? 4

The novel explores contrasts between younger and older characters. Which topics are viewed differently by different generations? What does this reveal about the characters?

Food for thought? 5

Each chapter in the novel is narrated by a different character. What is the effect of having multiple perspectives on what happens in the story? How does this influence the reader's understanding?

Food for thought? 6

'It's funny, across a lifetime, the people you pick up. It's often the most unexpected ones who stick around.' (p. 328-329). How does this statement by Rosie reflect the theme of friendship in the novel? What message about friendship does the author convey? Use examples from the text to support your answer.

Food for thought? 7

At the end of the novel, Amy and Steve decide to call their detective agency *We Solve Murders*, and Rosie says it would make a great name for a book. Do you agree? Is the title suitable for the novel? Explain your answer.

Food for thought? 8

Detective novels often include clues, a clever detective, suspense, and multiple suspects. Research the detective genre in more detail. In what ways does *We Solve Murders* follow the characteristics of the genre, and how does it deviate from them?



Food for thought?

3

Food for thought?

2

Food for thought?

1

Food for thought?

6

Food for thought?

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Food for thought?

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Food for thought?

8

Food for thought?

7