

THE BLACK WOLF

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. We now know that *The Grey Wolf* and *The Black Wolf* are two parts of a whole. The last line of *The Grey Wolf* and the first line of *The Black Wolf* are the same: “We have a problem.” Throughout *The Black Wolf*, the nature of that problem is revealed. By the end of the novel, is it finally resolved? Why or why not?
2. Louise leans into the feeling of anticipation in this novel. Clara Morrow works on a series titled *Just* before something happens. We learn about Snowflake Bentley, a photographer who captured snowflakes on film in the split second before something happened: they melted. What are some other examples of how Louise conveyed suspense—that feeling of being in the moment before something happens—in *The Black Wolf*?
3. When we first find Armand Gamache in *The Black Wolf*, he’s dealing with the hearing loss he sustained in *The Grey Wolf*, the “scream of the millions of cicadas nesting in his head.” Although his hearing gradually returns throughout this novel, there are moments when he plays up his injuries, hoping to be underestimated. Why does he do this? Do you agree with his methods? Have you ever done anything similar?
4. On the village green, Ruth says to Reine-Marie: “Remember, Napoleon is always right,” a quote from the novella *Animal Farm* by George Orwell (or *Animal House*, if you ask Reine-Marie). What does Ruth mean by this quote? Have you read *Animal Farm*? Are there any parallels between the two stories?
5. .onion, .family—secret communication via private domains on the dark web is integral to the plot of the novel. If you had to create a web domain for private communication between the members of your book group, what word would you choose? Why?
6. “What could be worse, Armand, than a person not getting what they most want?” former Deputy Prime Minister Marcus Lauzon asks Armand over lunch at the Gamache home. The answer, as we find out, is a person losing what they already have. Why is that worse? What did each character in *The Black Wolf* want the most? Who got what they wanted? Who lost what they had? Have you?
7. “You remember Yvette Nichol. Agent Nichol is here to help,” Armand Gamache says to Jean-Guy Beauvoir early in the novel. “That’ll be a first,” mutters Beauvoir. What did you remember of Agent Nichol from previous books? What did you think of her actions in the story? Did your opinion of her change?
8. Some important scenes in the novel take place at the Haskell Free Library and Opera House—a venue located in both the US and Canada simultaneously—where a production of the Canadian musical *Billy Bishop Goes to War* is playing. Have you heard of the Haskell Free Library? What about the musical? Did you find any parallels between the lyrics of the show and the events of the book?

9. "But where else would you hide a truth except among a bunch of lies?" Paul Workman says to the head of Reuters North America at the Queen Mother Café in Toronto. What does he mean by this? How does the reporting done by Workman and his protégée, Shona Dorion, contribute to the events that unfold in *The Black Wolf*?

10. In her acknowledgments, Louise notes that the plot of *The Black Wolf* is "hauntingly similar to real life." Discuss some of the similarities between the events of *The Black Wolf* and today's news stories. What about the plot did you find plausible? What didn't you? What happens when the water runs out?

