

Book Club Questions – *The Clincher*

1. Rainy is twenty-three years old, a “new adult” making a fresh start, who is just becoming able to pay her own way and truly make her own choices. What has she done to improve her odds of success? Has she also done things that might sabotage her ability to succeed?
2. In addition to the murder mystery, *The Clincher* contains a significant sub-plot regarding Rainy’s past. Did you find red herrings regarding the nature of her secret? What clues did you find that pointed to the part of her past she refused to reveal for so long?
3. Would you consider Patsy-Lynn a trophy wife? What does the term imply? How do labels help and hinder perceptions? What other labels could be applied or mis-applied to other characters in the novel?
4. How does the landscape and community of the town of Cowdry in the fictional Butte County, Oregon enhance the reader’s experience and affect the characters’ lives? Have you lived in an area with poor cell phone reception? What other differences exist in rural areas as opposed to urban locations?
5. Discuss the animal characters in *The Clincher*, including those with only minor roles. Which do you find most notable? What do the horses, dogs and other animals add to the story?
6. If you could meet one of the characters in real life, who would you choose and what would you talk about? Would you be more likely to counsel, congratulate, or commiserate with your chosen character?
7. Which characters might have been responsible for Patsy-Lynn’s death? What evidence points to each person? Did your guess about the suspect change as the story progressed?
8. Consider the formative experiences in different characters’ lives, and in your own or those of your friends and family. Can you imagine the impact of living through another person’s significant life events? Can we ever fully understand another person’s experience?
9. What was it like for *you* to read *The Clincher*? What senses were activated? Did you learn anything? Did the more evocative moments provoke any memories or questions?
10. The author planted seeds that hint at more to be revealed about Rainy in the future, for example, some readers might deduce where Rainy went to horse shoeing school, or the nature of coming mysteries. Read the first chapter of *Dead Blow* (included at the back of *The Clincher*) and discuss hints about that story that are laced into *The Clincher*.