

## Lotto Trouble

### Book Club Questions

- 1) Because the book took place in New Jersey gas stations, Indian characters were involved. Did their names cause any confusion or create any distraction for the reader or did you feel it added flavor and an added dimension to the book?
- 2) Was anyone in the room rooting for Pankaj to succeed? If not was it because the author didn't make the character sympathetic enough, you didn't find Pankaj to be at all sympathetic, you don't root for someone who perpetrates a crime, he became too violent and greedy for your liking or some other reason.?
- 3) Under the circumstances that took place, if you were the Kaye family do you think you would have given all of the winnings to charity, 80% like the Kayes did, or would you have kept almost all of the winnings. Do you think Kaye would have been as charitable if Shaw and Fuller hadn't strongly suggested that option?
- 4) What feelings would you have if your friends were murdered in your home? Could you continue to live there? Could you possibly enjoy the winnings or would charity become your most viable option?
- 5) How did you feel about the "domestic violence" issues touched on in the book? What did you think about Dale and Rich's relationship and how did you feel about their final encounter when Dale unleashed all of her pent up anger on Rich. Also the battered woman's shelter was called the Dale Kantor Center, with the name Solaway being dropped posthumously. Do you agree with the name's omission?
- 6) As you read the book, who did you think would end up with the lottery ticket?
- 7) Many characters were at a crossroads in their life. The author specifically used the phrase "new beginning" and "fresh start" in many places in the book. Can you think about which characters this pertained to?
- 8) Although Raj was not educated he held his own with Pankaj when he was engaged in verbal sparring that night in their apartment. Raj was a fan of wrestling. The story might have turned out totally different if he hadn't opened the drawer on the evening he was watching wrestling. What symbolism can be found in the wrestling motif?

- 9) The scene where Pankaj decided to kill Kuldeep was filled with tension. Did Pankaj really have a choice? Pankaj had previously been a law abiding student who found himself in an almost unfathomable situation. Was violence his only way out? What would you have done if you were Pankaj and were facing an unreliable, coked-up Kuldeep?
  - 10) Pankaj enlisted Raj's aid because Raj found out about the lottery caper. Do you believe he would have shared the prize with Raj? Do you believe Raj would have gone along if he had more trust in Pankaj? Had they stuck together would they have succeeded and gotten away with the caper?
  - 11) Part of the author's background is that of a professor of taxation. Accordingly, he added a few explanations about taxation in the book. Did you find these passages interesting, enlightening or unnecessary?
  - 12) How did you feel about Luke Randall's quest for revenge? What about Harvey the Heavy's turning on Pankaj after feeling used and betrayed?
  - 13) In many respects this book had an anti-substance abuse theme. What examples were there in the book where drugs and alcohol had a devastating effect on the characters?
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Most of the thirteen questions above were designed to foster discussion and call for opinions. Questions 7, 8, and 13 ask the reader to recall certain instances and characters in the book that the question pertains to:

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Question 7: - “New Beginning”

Gina and Bob

Sandra

Luke,

Pankaj’s school essay was entitled “A New Beginning”

“Fresh Start” was used for:

Dale

Sandra

The Kaye’s move to Florida.

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Question 8: Many characters wrestled with ethical choices

Kaye

Shaw

Fuller

Charney

Raj

Also the wrestling motif drew on phrases such as:

Pankaj telling Raj they would make a great “tag-team”

“good guys turning bad”

Wrestling motifs have been around since the Holy Bible when Jacob wrestled all night with an Angel.

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Question 13: Anti-Drug Theme

D.A.R.E. – Bob Shaw was DARE officer – lost daughter to drugs

Rick’s abuse with alcohol led to his violence.

Gigi’s drug problem – sold herself to Kuldeep for drugs

Kuldeep killing people in a drug crazed frenzy

Luke’s attempt to clean up Perth Amboy and then the Caribbean – after being a drug dealer himself.

Karl Andrews breaking into Sandra’s apartment.

Gina gang raped by her drunk husband and his drunk police buddies.