

STEALING LUMBY

Reading Group Guide

About this Guide

The synopsis, proposed topics for discussion and author biography that follow are designed to support and enhance your group's discussion of Gail Fraser's *Stealing Lumby*, the second novel in the acclaimed Lumby series. Comments and suggestions are invited by the author at www.lumbybooks.com.

About this Book

The small town of Lumby town is jolted from its comfortable obscurity when a world-famous painting of its two barns disappears and the national media comes calling in an effort to solve the mystery. Things go from bad to worse when one of the barns itself goes missing, and the town's residents set about trying to decide what to make of it all. Some see dollar signs in all the attention, but others just want to get things back to the way they've always been; there is, after all, the Summer Solstice Moo Doo Iditarod to plan for. Faithful readers will recognize old friends, enjoy meeting new ones, and relish all the antics as the story unfolds—as pieces of the stolen barn show up in the strangest of places, a schooner goes sailing down Main Street, and the famous artist recreates his masterpiece in a way that surprises all.

For Discussion

1. In *Stealing Lumby*, Sheriff Simon Dixon repeatedly finds himself balancing friendship and his responsibility to uphold the law. How is he perceived by the townsfolk and do those perceptions change as he begins to question Lumby residents? Is this a common conflict in any job or is it unique to small town living?
2. How does the cover painting enhance your vision of Lumby?
3. Charlotte Ross plays a key role in recovering what was stolen and repairing what was damaged. Why is she so unwavering about rebuilding the barn, repainting *The Barns* and restoring her beloved library?
4. During the Moo Doo Iditarod, Pam has a major epiphany about her life. What does she realize and why does she begin to laugh? Does such an awareness last and become integrated into life going forward or is such a realization just a passing ideal?

5. Adam is repeatedly put in the position of having to bend his integrity and intentions because of his boss. Why does he continue his employment with the paper and how does he maintain his personal integrity? What can one do when put in a compromising position at work? And, at what point does Adam forgo being a journalist and honestly try to protect Katie?

6. Hank was certain to be at the barns when the artist first arrived, but is he actually interested in art or was he simply interested in being at the right place at the right time? And if he does appreciate great paintings, which Porter style would he like more? Which would you like more? And finally, who's managing Hank's wardrobe?

7. Emma Porter shows a complexity of emotion when Dana tells her about his relationship with 'Charlie.' Is her response expected? And, what could she have said when she was alone in the cemetery?

8. Brooke was the only character who heard Charlotte reminisce about her younger years. Although, at the time, Brooke probably didn't realize the significance of the tales she was being told, they tightened the bond between the two friends. Why was it important for Charlotte to tell Brooke the stories, and what did Brooke learn from them?

9. What are the similarities between Dana Porter and Katie Banks. Also, did Dana Porter remind you of William Beezer from The Lumby Lines? How were they different and how were they the same?

10. Jonathan clearly states that he his brother's keeper. What are our own obligations to be our "brothers keeper?"

11. The barn raising was a wonderful experience for Charlotte, but when she first sees the barn partially rebuilt, she asks rhetorically, "Beginnings always follow an end, don't they?" Is she saddened by this, or does this notion give her, and you, a positive and optimistic belief that there is always something that follows 'an end?'

12. The day after Norris Fiddler is arrested, he holds a press conference and claims to have been framed. How believable is he, and if someone else did steal *The Barns of Lumby*, who might that person be?

13. How does Katie Banks overcome her past hurt and learn to trust again?

14. For many years, Dana Porter refused to show the world his newest paintings. Were his assumptions and concerns legitimate, and was he correct in telling Adam that the world wants to see what they have become accustomed to? Also, does an artist (or writer or musician) have a responsible to the public beyond producing what he or she wants?

The Lumby Lines
The first novel in the acclaimed Lumby series

When Pam and Mark Walker, a couple of “East Coasters,” purchase the fire-ravaged Montis Abbey with the intent to convert the historic landmark into a country inn, the residents of Lumby, a quirky one-moose town in the Northwest, look on with suspicion. As work begins, the Walkers face the open hostility of the cranky old newspaper publisher with a dark secret, and the sometimes helpful, often humorously hapless assistance of the local tradespeople. The monks of Saint Cross Abbey return to their former monastery to lend a gentle hand, a pink flamingo shows his flare for fashion, and a mysterious benefactor leaves unsolicited checks in a century-old journal. The benign mayhem and full array of personalities come to life through snippets from the local paper, *The Lumby Lines* which offers an endearing glimpse into small town living and the extraordinary moments of ordinary life.

The Bounty of Lumby
Coming Spring 2007

There’s even more to enjoy in the next humor-packed installment of the Lumby series. The growing numbers of readers taking the not-so-sleepy little town to their hearts won’t be disappointed with the new stories author Gail Fraser has to tell about its colorful characters and their escapades.

It all started out as a silly scheme by Lumby’s two troublemaking teens, but now the town is committed to hosting a national hot air balloon festival in twelve short weeks. And then they discover that the hosting community is also expected to make and pilot the lead balloon. Lumby’s worthies take up the challenge, wreaking a little havoc along the way as test models suffer various unfortunate fates. Two strangers come to the rescue but one brings his own brand of charismatic mischief to the scene, involving several locals in a wildly romantic real estate venture. As the festival approaches, the monks of Saint Cross Abbey, now nationally known for their good works, struggle to deal with the masses of devotees—and more than a few nutcases—flocking to take up residence on the monastery grounds, and the Walkers make a fascinating and puzzling discovery while digging an ornamental fish pond to help spruce up Montis Inn for the coming visitors.

These and other entertaining developments — and some deeper insights into familiar characters — lead the way to the very day of the festival as Lumby’s amazing entry, *The Bounty*, joins the gorgeously colored throng of participants. The delightfully unexpected conclusion is just one of the store of riches *The Bounty of Lumby* offers the growing number of readers who have taken the little not-so-sleepy town to their hearts.

As she has proved in the first two Lumby books, Gail Fraser knows how to take endearing characters and set them in motion with a plot that keeps the pages turning. She reveals new depths in old personalities and continues to fill the Lumby universe with funny, quirky, moving and just plain lovable folk whose stories are just waiting to be told.

About the Author

Gail R. Fraser, author of *The Lumby Lines* (Aug 2005) and *Stealing Lumby* (May 2006), continues to work full time on her six-book series about the extraordinary small town of Lumby and the humorous, benign mayhem surrounding it. Prior to changing her life and becoming a novelist, Gail had a successful career in “corporate America” holding senior executive and upper management positions in several Fortune 500 and start-up corporations, and traveling extensively throughout the world. She studied at the University of London, earned her BA at Skidmore College and completed her MBA at the University of Connecticut, with graduate work done at Harvard University. Married to artist, Art Poulin, Gail is also an avid potter, gardener and cook. Art and Gail live with their dogs, Emma and Yoda, in the rural landscape of upstate New York. You can visit Gail at www.lumbybooks.com.