

SIMPATICO'S GIFT

A Kent Stephenson Thriller

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A note of caution to readers: I tried to word the following questions so there would not be any “spoilers”, but I cannot guarantee I was successful. I strongly recommend that you read the book before reading the following questions.

1. Emily's physical infirmity is an essential character trait for her. Yet, it is perceived differently by the different people she encounters throughout the book. Can you think of examples? Contrast them.
2. At first Kent has a hard time disliking Figurante because he has a limp similar to his daughter's. Has your opinion of someone ever been affected by their disability?
3. Hector Figurante's horses are in sad shape compared to the horses at VinChaRo Farm. Have you experienced situations where a person's attitude toward animals affects your feeling toward them?
4. A corollary to question #3: When you compare the temperaments of Lucinda and Ninja, they are quite different. Do you feel that dogs reflect the personalities of their owners? Should some people not be allowed to own dogs?
5. There is inherent danger to the horses when used for racing, or even for breeding. To put them at risk simply for the entertainment of humans creates an ethical dilemma. What is your opinion? Are you in favor of, or against, horse racing and breeding as an industry?
6. In the first part of the book, it's easy to sympathize with Maria Castille. But, does that change for you at the climax when she has her event with Hubris?
7. Chalk-eye, the bum, appears briefly at the beginning and the end of the book. Why? What is your opinion of him? What does he contribute to the story?

