Book Club Questions Luiz Velez

1. In the beginning, Raymond uses his small resources and time to help feed and then rescue a cat. In doing so, what is revealed about his character?

2. While Raymond is searching for Luis, many of the people he encounters say, “I wish I had more time to help others.” Did the book motivate you to question the time you spend helping others in your own life? What other things do you wish you had time for?

3. Despite the ugliness and unfairness of what is going on in the story, many people still step up and show kindness. Do you believe that the difficult situations bring out the best or worst in humanity?

4. Mrs. G. tells Raymond that the world is “a tough place sometimes…yet we’re called upon to be grateful that we’re in it.” Do you agree with her? How does this present a challenge in today’s world?

5. How do you think it’s possible that, after Mrs. G has suffered so much loss in her life, Luis can still say she does not have ‘one bone of prejudice in her body’?

6. In one of Mrs. G’s conversations, she says that ‘life only lends things to us. Nothing is ours to keep.’ What is she referring to? Do you agree or disagree? If that is true, how does that shape the way you look at your life?

7. From the time Luis is killed, through the trial and the verdict, did you ever feel empathy for the woman who shot him? If so, why? Either way, did you feel the verdict was fair?

8. A reoccurring theme the author examines throughout the book is what constitutes a life of value. In what ways did this book illuminate or redefine this concept for you?

9. The book examines the concept of privilege and how it can affect the outcome of a person’s life. How does privilege play a role in the final verdict of the trial?

10. Before he met Mrs. G., Raymond felt like he didn’t fit in and was alone and directionless. In what ways does his relationship with Mrs. G change not only his current life, but shape his future as well?

11. When Mrs. G. is the most despondent, Raymond takes her to hear a celloist play. Mrs. G says that the instrument had the same sad to beautiful ratio as life. What do you think she meant by that?