A Deadly Paczek

Marta Kowal • Book club discussion guide

An inherited bakery. Missing recipe pages. A death in the cellar. Lena Mazur returns to Miłosław hoping to begin again - and discovers that a fresh start can come with unfinished history.

For discussion after reading. These questions do not name the culprit; your group's answers may reveal plot details.

Eight ways into the conversation

1. Starting over. What does Lena think she needs when she leaves New York? How does her idea of a fresh start change in Miłosław?

2. An inheritance with questions. What does Babcia Zosia leave Lena besides a building? How do the notebook and its missing pages shape Lena's understanding of her grandmother?

3. Watching the neighbors. When is Hania's curiosity a form of care, and when does it cross a boundary? Would you welcome a neighbor like her?

4. Food and belonging. Choose a scene in which food does more than feed someone. What does it communicate that the characters struggle to say?

5. Following the clues. Which detail first made you suspicious? Looking back, which clue seems clearest, and which assumption led you astray?

6. Understanding and excusing. By the end, did understanding a character's motives change your judgment of their actions? Where would you draw the line?

7. A place to call home. Which relationship most helps Lena become part of the town? What does belonging ask her to give as well as receive?

8. Pyza's verdict. What changes when the epilogue lets us see the bakery through Pyza's eyes? Why end with the cat?

A simple 45-minute meeting

5 minutes: first impressions. 25 minutes: choose four questions. 10 minutes: compare clues and the ending. 5 minutes: name the scene you would most like to revisit.

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