

Stiffs and Swine Discussion Questions

1. In Chapter One, James reflects on his Virginia Beach vacation. What happens when Murphy joins him? Do you think this scene foreshadows genuine trouble for their relationship?
2. How does the physical description of Jimmy Lang (the Pitmaster) create a sense of his character?
3. The food for sale at Hudsonville Hog Fest is anything but healthy. Still, if you had to choose between some of the selections mentioned in the Chapter Five, what fair food would you find hard to resist?
4. What sow/human team were you cheering for during the Queen of Hog Fest Beauty Contest? Why?
5. Eleanor Fiennes, the proprietor of the Inn at Fox Hall, has a full plate. What is she doing right as a single parent? What mistakes do you see her making with her daughter Francesca during the first half of the book?
6. Why is Gillian a suspect in Jimmy's murder? Which supper club member seems the most passionate about believing in and proving her innocence?
7. How does Gillian's narrative regarding the death of Walden explain some of her unique character traits (i.e., her love of animals)?
8. Which BBQ team did you root for? Why were they your favorite?
9. How do things change when Murphy shows up in Hudsonville?
10. While James is away, the Fitzgerald twins have been busy in Quincy's Gap. What mystery are they working on? What was *your* theory about the questionable activities of Martin Trotman and the other teens?
11. The resolution of the murder mystery in *Stiffs and Swine* is fast-paced. How did the isolated, forest setting increase the tension of the "stand-off" scene?
12. James lamented the decline of the bookmobile in the beginning of *Stiffs and Swine*. How are his worries over the vehicle's demise eased?
13. What do you see in store for James' romantic future? What about the other supper club members or secondary characters?
14. There is a clear "food contest" theme to *Stiffs and Swine*. Have you ever witnessed an eating contest or entered an item to be judged? If not, what can you cook that might be a contender for a food contest blue ribbon?

15. As *Stiffs and Swine* is set in a different location, many of the minor characters from Quincy's Gap are left out of this narrative. Who did you miss the most? (And don't worry – they're certain to reappear in *The Battered Body*).