

**Reading Group Guide for
Murder at the Courthouse
by A. H. Gabhart**

1. Michael Keane worked as a policeman in a big city for a while but came back to his very small hometown of Hidden Springs to take a job as deputy sheriff. Why do you think he is so attached to his hometown? Do you live in that kind of place or have you ever lived in that kind of place—one where nowhere else feels as much like home?
2. Miss Willadean Dearmon discovered the body on the courthouse steps. Once she knew the man was dead, she was eager to tell the news. A bit of a busybody, she felt it her duty to inform everybody she knew about the murder. Do you know anybody like that? Do you ever feel as though people are more eager to share bad news about others rather than good news?
3. At first the people in Hidden Springs seem more curious than upset about the murder. Why do you think that was?
4. Michael's father was a preacher. His grandfather was a preacher. His aunt Lindy doesn't think being a law enforcement officer can be Michael's true calling. Do you think being a policeman can be a calling? A job of service to a community?
5. Michael is trying to help a hard-luck kid, Anthony Blake, but Anthony resists his help at every turn. What do you think Michael saw in Anthony that made him keep trying and not give up on the kid?
6. Michael and Alexandria have been friends since they were kids. Michael has been in love with her ever since he can remember, but the two have completely different goals in life. Do you think they have any chance at a continuing relationship?
7. In the climactic scene, Michael thinks he's acting like a television show detective and not a very good one at that. In your opinion, do television police and detective shows present a realistic or an unrealistic picture of law enforcement or crime investigation?
8. Many mysteries, especially those considered cozy mysteries, feature some sort of animal such as a cat or dog that makes a difference in the storyline. Does that add to a mystery story for you? Why or why not?
9. What clues did you see to who the murderer was, either while you were reading or after you had finished reading the story? Did you have an "aha" moment when you knew how the story was going to end up, or were you surprised by the ending?

10. Mystery stories have been around forever, with many different types of mysteries making up the genre. Cozy mysteries, like *Murder at the Courthouse*. Suspense-driven stories. Detective stories. Historical mysteries. Espionage stories, and more. Why do you think mysteries are so popular with readers? Do you like reading mysteries? What makes a mystery a good read for you?

