

**Reading Group Guide for
Starfish Pier
by Irene Hannon**

(Spoiler alert—these questions assume you’ve already read the book)

1. On p. 26, Steven has this realization about his brother Patrick: “Living in the shadow of a brother who seemed larger-than-life couldn’t have been easy for a kid who was more inclined to bury his nose in a history book . . . than work out at the gym.” Have you ever experienced similar tension between you and your sibling(s)? How did you handle it?
2. What do you learn early on in the book about the relationship between Holly and her parents, given her condition? She also struggles with her decision to move away from them. In your opinion, was her decision selfish or necessary? Do you think she handled it well?
3. Holly and Patrick both bristle at being looked after by their well-intentioned relatives. What parallels do you see between these two? How are their situations different?
4. In chapter 3, we first meet Holly’s reclusive—and sometimes abrupt—neighbor, Pete Wallace. What was your first impression of this character? Did your opinion change as the book went on?
5. Holly is very conscious of being treated with “kid gloves” by those around her, especially her parents. How does Holly’s condition affect how she relates to people? Where specifically do you see her independent streak come out?
6. How did temporarily losing his job in chapter 9 impact Patrick? Why do you think it took something this big for him to see how alcohol was impacting his life when there had been previous incidents? Did you think his employer handled the issue fairly?
7. When Holly finds Pete’s medical paperwork on the counter, she’s thrown off balance. What do you think of Pete’s decision?
8. Holly carefully thought out her approach toward Pete given the new information she found. What do you think might’ve happened if she had been more confrontational?
9. The topic of what to do with the recovered cannon is contentious among Hope Harbor residents. Would you have sided with Holly or Steven on the matter? What did you think of Holly’s changed perspective on the cannon? Do you think it’s possible to accommodate differing viewpoints on moral issues without compromising your own values?
10. On p. 311, Pete rethinks his decision while remembering one of his wife’s favorite sayings: “We’re all like stones tossed in the water creating a ripple effect with outer limits too far away for us to see. But God sees them.” What “ripple effect” or positive impact did Pete have on the other characters?