



The White Lake Beacon Book Club

June 2021 Pick:

Meet Isabelle Puddles

by M.V. Byrne

The White Lake Beacon's community "Beacon Book Club", is a monthly collaboration with The Book Nook & Java Shop and the White Lake Community Library. The first weekend of the month, The Beacon announces the book selection along with a summary and questions posed for readers. Replies to the questions and commentary can be sent to the editor at: editor@whitelakebeacon.com.

Chosen replies will be published in The Beacon on the last weekend of the month. The monthly book is available to borrow from the White Lake Community Library and for sale at The Book Nook for 20% off. Additionally, readers are invited to discuss the book safely in person at the Book Nook the 1st Wednesday of the following month at 6pm. More information about the meeting, including the zoom link, is available on the Book Nook website www.thebooknookjavashop.com.

This month's selection is *Meet Isabel Puddles* by M.V. Byrne. M.V. Byrne is one of the Michigan s to participate in the Virtual Summer Book Talks presented by the Friends of the Montague Library. His talk will be at 7:00pm on Wednesday, August 11.

From the publisher:

Veteran television writer M.V. Byrne debuts with the first Mitten State Mystery featuring Jill-of-all-trades Isabel Puddles, a widowed mother of two grown children who lives in the tiny hamlet along Lake Michigan where she grew up. The only thing she loves as much as her quirky hometown is reading a good murder mystery, but until she takes a side job styling hair at the local funeral home, she never thought she'd be living in one!

The only thing widow Isabel Puddles loves as much as her hometown of Gull Harbor on the shores of Lake Michigan is cozying up to a good mystery—but she never expected to be caught in the middle of one...

To the tourists and summer residents, Kentwater County is a picturesque community of small-town charm, fruitful farmland, and gorgeous freshwater beaches. To middle-aged widow Isabel Puddles, it's where she enjoys breakfast every morning at a local café with her childhood best friend and spends her evenings cozying up with a good book and her devoted Jack Terrier, Jackpot. In between, Isabel makes ends meet through a variety of trades—preserving pickles, baking pies, working the counter at her cousin's hardware shop, and occasionally helping "fix-up" the hair of corpses at the local funeral parlor.

When Isabel discovers a two-inch nail embedded in the skull of Earl Jonasson, it seems the octogenarian may not have died of a stroke. His son is quickly arrested when his alibi doesn't check out. But Isabel has known Earl Jr. since they were kids and can't believe he'd murder his own father, regardless of his financial difficulties. As gossip about Earl Sr.'s land and insurance policy money starts to spread around the county, Isabel finds herself conducting her own investigation to clear her friend's name. But real detective work isn't like Jessica Fletcher's *Murder She Wrote* mysteries, and she's meeting dangerous suspects who don't like Isabel poking around in their business...

Discussion Questions

- Although Isabel Puddles isn't the typical amateur detective, what characteristics make her particularly suited to solve the mystery of Earl's death?
- Meet Isabel Puddles is set along Lake Michigan. How does this setting contribute to the plot?
- How do Isabel's relationships and connections with members of her community both help and hinder as she works to solve Earl's murder?
- What role do animals play in this book, including Isabel's dog Jackpot, Earl's dog Corky, and the Chihuahua puppy in the closing chapters?
- How does the Wind-X deal end up being central to the mystery? How plausible did you find this as a motive for the crimes that occurred?
- Why does Isabel forgive Jason even after his many crimes?



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