



Discussion Questions

Garnethill by Denise Mina

Source: Madison Public Library

1. Mina seems to set us up to doubt Maureen as a narrator. How does she do this? Did you like having an unreliable narrator or was it difficult for you?
2. Maureen is tough and tender both. Her story is in many ways bleak, but Mina seems to give us hope. What makes you think Maureen may not only survive, but thrive?
3. The setting is Glasgow, and the novel's language is full of slang. Did you feel like Maureen, transported to the hardscrabble streets, immersed in her troubles? Or was it so foreign that you felt more like a tourist?
4. Liam is a help to Maureen, but her attempts to protect him end up causing her a lot of trouble. What was your opinion of Liam, and his relationship to Maureen?
5. Mina sets up a complicated relationship between Maureen and the police. Was it understandable that they had doubts about Maureen? Were the police doing a classic good cop/bad cop routine, or do you think there really was divided opinion amongst the force about Maureen's motivations?
6. Denise Mina is said to be part of a genre of Scottish detective fiction called Tartan Noir. Its books are known for brutal humor; ruminations on guilt and punishment; and a dark world view. Does this novel fit the genre? Other novelists of Tartan Noir are Ian Rankin, Val McDermid, Louise Welch and Christopher Brookmyre. Have you read any of those authors? Is Mina similar? How is she different?