

Lamb to the Slaughter

Study Guide

1. Give your first impression of Mary Maloney.
2. How do you know that Mary Maloney is happiest when in her husband's presence?
3. List the things Mary Maloney loves about her husband. Do they seem very substantial?
4. What do we learn about Patrick Maloney as he sips his drink?
5. What do the Maloney's generally do on Thursday night?
6. Why do you think Mary makes so many attempts to fix food for Patrick when she becomes aware that he is very upset?
7. What do you think Patrick tells Mary that drives him "further and further away from her with each word"?

8. How does Mary murder her husband?

9. How does Mary react to what she has done?

10. Give two possible reasons why Mary goes to the grocery store.

11. Why does Mary pretend that her husband will be waiting at home, tired and hungry?

12. Do you think this sort of pretense is new to Mary?

13. After Mary phones the police station, a total of seven people arrive to investigate Patrick's death. Who are they?

14. What does Jack Noonan believe is the key to finding the murderer?

15. Why does Mary appear to be in a safe position for a murderer?

16. By nine o'clock the men are tired and exasperated. What does Mary do to keep them from asking her any difficult questions and to remind them of their close association with her?

17. Why does Mary Maloney begin to giggle?

18. Do you think Mary Maloney will get away with her crime? Explain.

19. What type of irony is represented in this story? Explain your answer.