



# READING GUIDE

## THE GODDAUGHTER MELODIE CAMPBELL

Reading level: 2.8  
Interest level: Adult  
Themes: humor, crime  
978-1-4598-0125-7 PB



### Summary

A trained gemologist who's previously tried to escape the clutches of her mob family, Gina Gallo has agreed to come back to Hamilton and work as an appraiser in the family jewelry store—which is handy, since her family is in the business of smuggling jewels.

When a distant relative of Gina's is killed by a rival family mere moments after she connects with handsome reporter Pete Malone at a party, she never expects that her life will do an about-face within the next two days. Gina is informed by her uncle's cousin, Sammy, that the jewels in the dead guy's shoes actually *weren't* intended for her family, but have ended up in their hands due to a bungled drop-off. It's up to Gina to take them back to Buffalo and ensure they get to the right people.

Gina's not happy about this state of affairs. She had made it clear that she wasn't going to "run errands" for the family anymore. But Sammy assures her that this will be the last favor they ask of her. She accepts a new pair of shoes from the family cobbler, jewels safely stashed in the heels in order to streamline the transfer. Her task? Drop the shoes back to the Battalia family, and return home to Hamilton.

So, rather than going out for dinner as planned, Gina and Pete Malone spend their first date crossing the border into Buffalo. When Gina removes the uncomfortable shoes for a moment in a mall, a buxom woman slips away with them, launching a high-stakes chase. Malone and Gina tail the woman to Phoenix, suffering setback after setback while trying to assure the family back in Hamilton that all is going exactly as planned. They finally catch up with the woman—and her john—in a posh hotel.

By this time, Gina's family has sent out reinforcements. During a humorous showdown involving naked bodies and various "wobbly bits" in a hotel room, the goons from Gina's family make off with a pair of shoes—but they're the wrong ones. High heels back in hand, Gina and Malone leave the fancy hotel and flee to an old run-down motel. Unbeknownst to Malone, Gina has the shoes mailed to his parents' home in Amherst, near Buffalo.

Back in Toronto, Gina learns there's one more task before she can return to normal life: she must return the dead guy's body to the Battalia family. Another comic series of events leads her and



RAVEN BOOKS *an imprint of*  
ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS  
www.rapid-reads.com • 1-800-210-5277



Malone back to his parents' house in Buffalo to pick up the jewels for another attempt at delivering them. But they're relieved of that as another contingent of Gina's family shows up to collect the jewels.

As Gina's relationship with Malone intensifies throughout the book, she's pleased to feel a spark. When Malone finally confirms his desire to marry her, Gina feels a thrill—and a certain sense of relief: at least now the poor guy won't get whacked.

### Questions for Discussion

1. Before you begin reading *The Goddaughter*, brainstorm what you already know about the mob from movies and other forms of media. As you read the book, consider how this background knowledge helps you to understand the story.
2. The author drops readers quickly into the action in chapter 1 of *The Goddaughter*. Explain why this is an effective way to engage the reader's attention.
3. Following the explosion on the terrace in chapter 1, the partygoers want to see what happened: *Crowds of haughty people in swank evening garb tried to find a way through the glass doors to peek at the carnage*. In English slang, this is known as "rubbernecking." What is it about scenes of death and destruction that draws us so?
4. While Gina waits in the boardroom to speak with the police in chapter 2, she reflects that *the black leather chair swallowed [her] up*. This is a metaphor—where the author describes a scene or subject by using a non-literal comparison. How is this metaphor effective for adding descriptive detail? See how many other metaphors you can find as you read *The Goddaughter*.
5. Gem smuggling comes in many forms. What do you know about it? Discuss the black market for precious stones—and its effects on the people whose lives are touched by this kind of activity.
6. With her wry sense of humor and unflappable manner, what other book or movie character does Gina remind you of? If you were to meet her in person, what questions would you ask?
7. At the end of chapter 6, Gina confides that she's starting to fall in love with Pete Malone. How do tense and dangerous situations sometimes bring these feelings to the surface faster than would otherwise be the case? Think of other books or movies where you have witnessed the same pattern.
8. In chapter 8, when Gina says she hates her life, Pete Malone says, "Why don't you change it, then?" What prevents us from actually making the changes we so desperately want? Why do we so often have to "live life by their terms"? Discuss.
9. How do the humorous events of the story help to develop Gina's and Pete's characters in the reader's mind?
10. Gina needs to pull on a variety of skills and character traits in order to complete her mission. Discuss or list a minimum of ten of these skills and traits. Examples would include: an ability to plan ahead; a sense of humor, etc.





11. In chapter 13, Gina reflects that she's no "slag," despite having had a number of boyfriends: *Even the blessed Virgin Mary would need only one hand to count the guys I'd been with.* As you see it, does our society still view women as "sluts" if they've had numerous sexual partners? Discuss the double standard between the sexes in this regard.
12. As the story progresses, Gina's feelings for Pete Malone deepen. Find several instances in *The Goddaughter* where this is evident. Compare her criteria for what makes an ideal partner with yours.
13. Keeping the tension high makes for a good story. Tension escalates when the author raises the stakes for his or her characters. This can be done by throwing characters against unforeseen problems. Find places and events in *The Goddaughter* where Melodie Campbell raises the stakes in this way.
14. The direction of both Gina's and Pete's lives change completely over a short span of time in this book. They go from being acquaintances to being engaged. Write about a time when your own life underwent a quick and significant change. As you see it, are events random? Or is there some sort of universal energy that directs our lives?
15. Develop a different title for the book.

