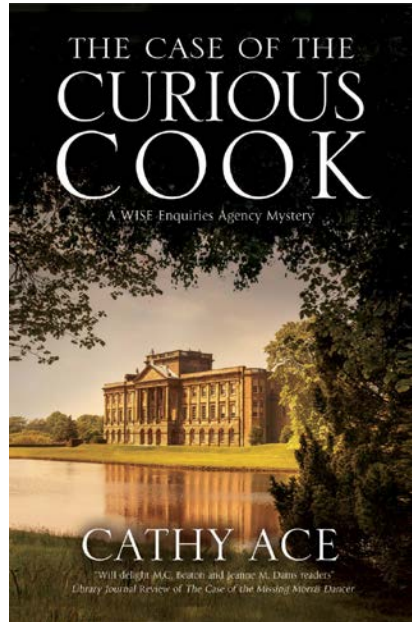


BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

The Case of the Curious Cook

by Cathy Ace



GENERAL:

- 1) In this book you met the four women who staff the WISE Enquiries Agency. With whom did you most readily identify, and why? Do you think the women have a good group skill-set for their chosen occupation? What about their “additional member”?
- 2) These women are at different stages in their lives and come from very different backgrounds. They also have differing family responsibilities and relationships. Do you think that women have to juggle family, life, and a career in a way that differs from men? Why/why not?
- 3) Are any members of your group Welsh, Irish, Scottish or English? Any ancestry from those areas? Each woman has a different sense of her own “national” identity – do you? What influences that for you? Do you think that differs between men and women, or does age and background play a more vital role? (How about having a meeting with distinctly Welsh, Irish, Scottish or English food and drink?)
- 4) There’s an interplay in these books between old traditions and new technology. By their nature traditions tend to remain the same, whereas technology brings new challenges. How do you find that new technology has changed your own life? What traditions do you adhere to?

5) The class structure in Britain is quite unique to that world. If you're a British group, how do you think that affects your lives, if at all? If you're not a British group, what takes its place?

6) These women all display some measure of strength, and some measure of vulnerability or weakness in the books. What were the most noticeable to you?

7) If you were to cast actors (dead or alive) to play these roles, who would you choose, and why?

Questions relating specifically to "The Case of the Curious Cook"

1) In this book, the role of women in society is front and center – and not just because it's women doing the investigating. Do you think – as Althea does – that elderly women are "invisible"? Do you have any experience of it yourself? Is that a good, or bad, thing?

2) Do you think the creations of women are valued less than the creations of men in the society with which you are familiar? Differently? The same? Why do you think that is?

3) What makes art, "Art"? Does it have to be grand, or does it just have to be what the creator calls "Art"? How do you feel about public funds and taxes being spent on public art? Do you have any public art near where you live? What do you think is the value to society of public art?

4) Is there something you wouldn't be able to give up, even if you were in deep hiding and trying to "stay under the radar"? Would doing it/indulging in it/having it force you to break cover and possibly be discovered? How would you react to having to give up something that means a great deal to you in order to "disappear"? Can a hobby, skill or creative urge be an "addiction"?

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Author: Cathy Ace

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Thanks you for choosing to read this book!