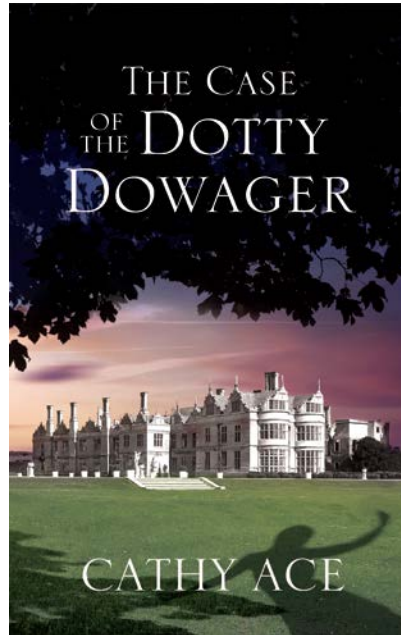


BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

The Case of the Dotty Dowager

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 specifically relating to "The Case of the Dotty Dowager"

1) So...how did you all feel about the antique dentures? The Waterloo Teeth are a REAL THING. Clever, disgusting, or a bit of both?

2) Do you collect something? Do others find that strange, or unsettling? If you don't collect anything, why not? If you do, why do you? Do you think there's a point where a "collection" might become "hoarding"?

3) Hay-on-Wye is real, and has dozens of book shops. It's twinned with Timbuktu, which is known for its libraries. If you were able to visit a town stuffed with specialist book shops, which types of book shops would you put at the top of your list to visit, and which would you avoid?

4) Have any of you ever been to London? When? Over the years it has changed a great deal, and the "gentrification" of the East End is something discussed on a daily basis by Londoners. Has the area where you live seen certain parts "gentrified"? What sort of impact has that had on the area in question, and its surroundings?

5) Alexander has a highly questionable background. Do you think it's possible for a person with a dark past to gain redemption through their current and future acts? Sharing only as much as you feel comfortable with sharing – is there anything in your past you would do differently/undo if you could? How do you think that "baggage" has changed or influenced the way you have lived your life since then?

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Thank you for choosing to read this book!