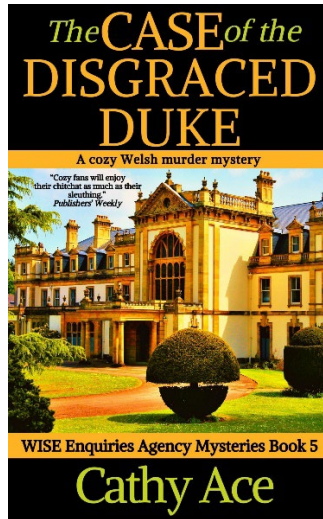


BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

The Case of the Disgraced Duke

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 Disgraced Duke”

- 1) Do you think that the sins or transgressions of previous generations really do impact the lives of those living today? If so, how? Should they? If so, why – or why not? This might be one of those topics that brings a very different response from those who live in an environment where everyone knows everyone else’s past, as opposed to an issue that’s more regional, national...or even international – why do you think that is?
- 2) The case Annie is working on is both tragic, and worrying: the potential vulnerability of the elderly is something we face as individuals, as family members, or on behalf of neighbors. Sometimes people just choose to isolate themselves, sometimes others break them apart from those who care about them – it’s something we even see happening to the once-famous and well-known. Keeping an eye on folks vs being too nosy...it’s a fine line. Where and how do you draw that line?
- 3) Althea’s interested in keeping traditions alive. What traditions do you observe around Halloween? Are there specifically local traditions being kept alive? What’s not done now that used to be? Do you miss Halloween observations from years past...your youth? What would you like to see being revitalized – and what would you be happy to see being set aside?
- 4) Alexander has a shady past, and Christine knows about it...but do past lives cast a shadow on future happiness? Can a person ever escape their past? What about “second chances”? Or even “third chances”? Is a “fresh start” ever possible?

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Thank you for choosing to read this book!