

KATHLEEN ERNST WAS BORN in 1982 into the 1870s  
*Kathleen Ernst* emerged from  
WRITING AT THE INTERSECTION OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THE PAST  
the trees, the sky, and the past against a  
cloud-studded blue sky.



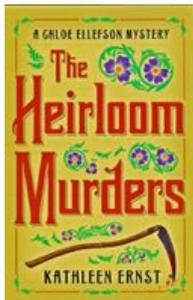
## Discussion Guide for *The Heirloom Murders*

Chloe Ellefson Historic Sites Mystery #2

Written by Kathleen Ernst  
Published by Midnight Ink Books  
Tantor Media Audiobooks

"THE GUY TRIED USING a pistol?" Roelke McKenna asked,  
as he opened his locker door.

Thus begins the second book in the popular, multiple award-winning, Chloe Ellefson Historic Sites mystery series. These stories combine history and mystery with a little romance, and are written for adults and mature teens who enjoy books *without* explicit sex, gratuitous violence, or gore.



As collections curator for Old World Wisconsin, Chloe Ellefson delights in losing herself in antiques and folk traditions—and forgetting about her messy love life.

But Chloe's growing, yet still fragile relationship with officer Roelke McKenna becomes more complicated by the unexpected arrival of her Swiss ex-boyfriend Markus.

Then someone breaks into her friend Dellyn's house, a treasure trove of priceless antiques. Was the intruder seeking clues about the missing Eagle Diamond, unearthed nearby in 1876?

When a murder takes place on museum grounds, Chloe, Markus, and Roelke are reluctantly drawn together into a deadly mystery involving the stolen diamond, Swiss green cheese, endangered heirloom seeds—and old-fashioned greed.

Bestselling author Kathleen Ernst writes mysteries, historical fiction, and non-fiction books for adults and young readers. Her work has earned numerous honors, including an Emmy, a LOVEY, and nominations for an Edgar Allen Poe and multiple Agatha Christie mystery awards.

**SPOILER ALERT!** The following pages reveal key plot points.



1. After the way Markus treated Chloe in Switzerland, do you think she had an obligation to meet him when he came unannounced to Wisconsin? Should she have made a different choice? How would you have handled the situation?
2. Roelke is unable or unwilling to accept the verdict that Bonnie Sabatola killed herself. What motivated him to keep investigating?
3. Two men want Chloe's attention: Markus, who shares many of her interests, and Roelke, who has little in common with Chloe. Who do you think will make the best partner for Chloe? Were you pleased or disappointed when she broke things off with Markus? Why did Roelke's gift of a stone seem to mean so much?
4. Chloe once noted that:

*"She was truly trying to get through probation, and to lock down the job for good. A real job. A permanent job, with health insurance and everything. And sometimes, that made her feel old. Was she losing something special? Would having a stable relationship make her feel better about herself now, or worse?"*

Can you sympathize with her feelings about losing something special, or do you see it as a sign she has some growing up to do?

5. One of Chloe's favorite buildings at Old World is the sauna:

*"She could sense the Finnish women who had once found respite in this tiny room; could feel their calm, their sense of safe respite, the strength they called sisu, emanating from the fibers of wood and stone."*

Have you ever had a similar reaction when entering a building? Do you believe in Chloe's perceptions?



6. Johann and Frieda Freitag became favorite characters for many readers, even though they had a relatively small role in the story. Did you feel the same way? If so, what made them appealing?

7. Markus is intrigued by the celebration of heritage in New Glarus:

*"It's more Swiss than Switzerland," Markus mused, "but I like it here. I've gotten interested by the whole topic of Swiss acculturation—how both the original immigrants and their descendants have chosen to retain or even re-create aspects of their ethnic heritage."*

Does your community have a strong ethnic identity? If so, is it about cherished memories, tourism dollars, or a bit of both?

8. In *The Heirloom Murders* (as well as in Book 1, *Old World Murder*) Roelke sometimes weighs the merits of being a cop in Milwaukee versus the Village of Eagle. Do you think he is a good fit for Eagle? What are the advantages/disadvantages of policing a small town?

9. Roelke threatens Markus with physical harm, kicks Simon Sabatola, and worries about having inherited his father's out-of-control rage. Did you understand Roelke's anger or was his behavior indefensible?

10. What did you think when Roelke learns he got the permanent job? Why might Skeet have protected Roelke by lying in his report? Chief Naborski was faced with a complicated problem—do you agree with the way he handled it?

Hosting a discussion? Consider serving Freida's Swiss Pear Bread. Download the recipe from this book's page on Kathleen's website. Or, invite guests to bring a dish that evokes Swiss culinary heritage.

Kathleen did extensive research when writing this book. Some of her discoveries ended up influencing the story; others appear in the book.

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A rich mix of these 'behind the scene' details about the people, places, and the past that went into the creating this book are available online.

In addition to this guide, Kathleen's website includes a Locations Guide and an interactive custom Google map showing where key scenes are set, a slide show of story-related artifacts and descriptions, an author's note, book reviews, author interviews, book-related blog posts, and the recipe.

You can discover all this and more a [www.kathleernerst.com/heirloom](http://www.kathleernerst.com/heirloom).