

Kathleen Ernst  
WRITING AT THE INTERSECTION OF PEOPLE, PLACES, AND THE PAST  
cloud-studded blue sky



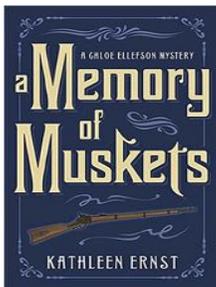
## Discussion Guide for *A Memory of Muskets*

Chloe Ellefson Historic Sites Mystery #7

Written by Kathleen Ernst  
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Thorndike Large Print Edition

"I want a fight," Ralph Petty said. Chloe started to protest, but remembered just in time that this was not her meeting, not her show. She closed her mouth and tried to look thoughtful.

Thus begins the seventh 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.



Curator Chloe Ellefson is happily planning to spotlight German immigrants and home-front challenges at Old World Wisconsin's first Civil War weekend. Her boss is secretly planning to fire her. He scorns her ideas, ordering the staff to stage a mock battle.

In advance of the event an unknown Civil War reenactor dies at one of the historic site's German farms. Chloe's boyfriend, Village of Eagle police officer Roelke McKenna, suspects murder.

The more Roelke learns about reenacting, the more he fears a killer will join the ranks at Old World. Then Chloe uncovers a disturbing secret about his Civil War-era German ancestors. Together they must struggle to solve mysteries past and present, before Chloe loses her job—and another reenactor loses his life.

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. Roelke worries that he and Chloe are so different that they might not be compatible. What do you think the future holds for this couple? Do you think their different temperaments and backgrounds ultimately be their undoing, or will they overcome the challenges?
2. Chloe worries that because her Old World job is not as stable as Roelke's with the Eagle Police, she'll feel like an inadequate financial partner at the farm. How important is it for two people to make roughly equal financial contributions in a relationship?
3. Chloe and her boss Director Ralph Petty are constantly in conflict. Is Ralph's pettiness solely to blame, or does Chloe bear some of the responsibility for their problems working together?
4. Roelke threatens to reveal Ralph Petty's family secret if he doesn't stop badgering Chloe. Is that an appropriate response?
5. Civil War reenacting is not as large a hobby as it once was, but remains popular nonetheless. Have you visited a reenactment, and if so, was it educational? How important is it that reenactors present a highly authentic impression? Would you visit an event that did not include a mock battle, but instead focused on homefront issues?
6. Roelke has complex feelings about the farm. It was a haven for him; it was also the place where he saw his father strike his mother. What does this backstory reveal about the man he has become? Do you think that episode influenced his decision to become a cop?
7. *A Memory of Muskets* spotlights a difficult challenge facing immigrants who arrived in the United States in the Civil War era. Some felt compelled to concentrate on establishing themselves in their new country. Others felt they owed military service to the nation that had given them a new home. Which option would you have chosen?
8. Many immigrants from German states left Europe to avoid conscription into the military. In Wisconsin, some German-Americans engaged in rioting to protest the newly enacted military draft. Do you think their actions were warranted?

KATHLEEN ERNST WAS BORN in 1982 into the 1870s  
of CONNOR, who emerged from  
the trees, pretty, and against a  
cloud-studded blue sky.  
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9. Rosina married Klaus Roelke under false pretenses. This ultimately destroyed their marriage and led—inadvertently—to Klaus’s death. Could she have made a different choice? What would you have done?
10. Rosina also decided not to tell her sons they had different fathers. Was that the right choice to make?

*Hosting a book discussion? Bring some healthy rye bread to snack on!*

Did you know? Kathleen did extensive research when writing this book. Some of it ended up influencing the story; some actually appears in it. 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 interactive custom Google maps showing where key scenes are set, a slide show of story-related artifacts and descriptions, an author’s note, book reviews, author interviews, and book-related blog posts.

You can discover all this and more at [www.kathleenernst.com/muskets](http://www.kathleenernst.com/muskets).