

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



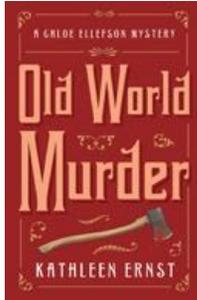
## Discussion Guide for *Old World Murder*

Chloe Ellefson Historic Sites Mystery #1

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

AS CHLOE ELLEFSON WALKED from 1982 into 1870s Wisconsin, a white frame church emerged from the trees, prettily framed against a cloud-studded blue sky.

Thus begins the first 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.



Chloe Ellefson's new job as Collections Curator at a famous open-air historic site brings her face to face with a murder, a stolen artifact, a boss who seems to know little about running a living history museum, and an intriguing new relationship that just might help her banish the difficult memories she's running from.

And that's only her first day.

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. Compelling characters need to be both vulnerable and strong. How did Chloe exhibit both of those traits?
2. Chloe has slightly heightened powers of perception, which occasionally enable her to experience strong emotions resonating in old buildings. Have you ever experienced anything similar, experienced some moment of intuition, or picked up on some unexpected vibe?
3. When *Old World Murder* opens, Chloe Ellefson is recovering from a bout of clinical depression. Some readers have been glad to see this illness represented in a novel; others have been uncomfortable with the topic. What was your reaction?
4. Roelke McKenna exhibits a strong tendency to protect those he cares about—from wanting to fix his cousin Libby’s faucet to wanting to shield Chloe from trouble by not telling her that he was called out to the Kvaale House one evening to investigate signs of an intruder. How do you feel about his choices, and the way the women react?
5. Chloe often clashes with site director Ralph Petty. Who is at fault for their difficult relationship—Chloe, Ralph, or both? Is Chloe making a principled stand when disobeying him, or taking a foolish risk? What motivated her to risk her job by speaking truth at the staff meeting?
6. In *Old World Murder*, cultural identity manifests itself differently in several characters: Chloe, her mom, Berget Lundquist. Do those differences reflect personal choices? The era and manner in which a person was raised? Some of both, or something else?
7. Roelke violated proper police procedures several times: disobeying his chief’s instructions, parking in the Old World Wisconsin lot when he should have been patrolling Eagle, not letting dispatch know his location, lying to other officers, handling Joel with more roughness than required. Were those actions justified by circumstances? Do they make him a better or lesser cop? Was the chief’s response—giving him both a letter of discipline and a citation—appropriate?

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8. Joel Carlisle commits suicide rather than face the consequences of his actions. In Roelke's opinion, that made Joel "a weak bully who took the coward's way out." Chloe believes that people who commit suicide aren't necessarily cowards, and that Joel might have done what he did to spare Nika and his parents the public ordeal of a trial. What do you think?
9. Roelke took a risk by more-or-less compelling Chloe to go sky-diving. Would you have taken the same action? What else might he have done?
10. The question raised in the final lines of this book – when Chloe receives an unexpected phone call from Markus – is resolved in the next book in the series, *The Heirloom Murders*. If you were Chloe, how would you respond to unexpectedly hearing from Markus?

Hosting a discussion? Consider serving Chloe's Maple Blueberry Cake. Download the recipe from this book's page on Kathleen's website. Or, invite your guests to bring a classic Norwegian-American dessert.

Kathleen did extensive research when writing this book. Some of her discoveries ended up influencing the story; others appear in the book. A rich mix of these 'behind the scene' details about the people, places, and the past that went into the creating this story 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, a video introduction to the Old World Wisconsin outdoor historic museum, plus book reviews, an author interview, and many book-related blog posts.

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