

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



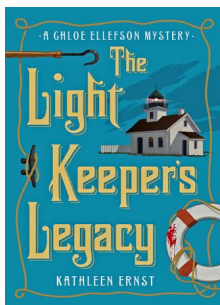
Discussion Guide for *The Light Keeper's Legacy*

Chloe Ellefson Historic Sites Mystery #3

Written by Kathleen Ernst
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"This trip of yours is a very bad idea," Roelke said soberly. Chloe Ellefson sighed. "You sound as if I'm disappearing into some trackless wilderness."

Thus begins the third 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.



An island's history holds clues to a modern mystery.

Solitude at last! Museum curator Chloe Ellefson jumps at the chance to spend time on Wisconsin's Rock Island, a state park with no electricity or roads. On temporary assignment from Old World Wisconsin to consult on restoring the island's historic lighthouse, her research turns up fascinating tough-as-nails women from the past.

Chloe's tranquility is spoiled when a dead woman washes ashore. Is it an accidental drowning, or has tension over tighter fishing regulations reached a dangerous boiling point? When a second body is found, Chloe finds herself trapped with a killer on remote Rock Island.

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. Chloe, despite Roelke's dire predictions, initially felt no unease about the prospect of spending a week on a largely-deserted island. Is that something you'd want to do? Similarly, Ragna lived alone on Rock Island for many years. How did her situation compare with Chloe's?
2. Chloe began the assignment craving solitude. How had her perspective changed by the end of the book?
3. *The Light Keeper's Legacy* includes an historical plotline braided with the contemporary one. This provided readers with more knowledge of past events than Chloe was able to piece together from fragments of historical evidence. Was that plot structure satisfying?
4. Roelke and Chloe certainly have had their fair share of differences. What do they have in common?
5. Where do you see Chloe and Roelke's relationship going? Are they unlikely to be happy as a couple? Is Roelke's protective instinct warranted, or all wrong for an independent woman like Chloe? Should he have shut down Stig Fjelstul's interest in Chloe, or not?
6. Chloe's heightened perception to strong emotions lingering in historic places had a new development in this third book in the series—her first auditory experience. According to an exhibit at the Door County Maritime Museum, the sound of children's laughter has been heard at Pottawatomie Lighthouse. How would you react to such an unexpected experience? How would you explain it?
7. Sylvie Torgrimson was a woman who spoke her mind. Would you find her refreshing, or abrasive? Was she a good person to have in a leadership position in the Rock Island Support Circle (RISC)?
8. *The Light Keeper's Legacy* explored the theme of environmental protection and Lake Michigan ecology. Everyone had their own perspective: environmentalists, sport fishermen, commercial fishermen, game wardens. Stig found himself in the center of confrontations that caused community rifts, and might have turned violent. Similar battles are taking place today. How might such complex issues be addressed?



9. Emily Betts was so shocked by Ragna Anderson's reaction to her husband's disappearance that the close friendship between the two women faded. What role did each woman play in that change?
10. The historical plotline includes characters like Ragna, who are completely fictional, and the Betts family, who were real people. The known and basic facts of Emily's time at Pottawatomie were depicted as carefully as possible, but obviously dialogue and some elements were created to suit the story. The author chose to fictionalize Emily as a way to honor an extraordinary woman. What do you think about my decision to fictionalize real people? Is it an honor, or a disservice?
11. What role did the setting play in your experience of the book? Was the setting depicted vividly?
12. Many people find lighthouses evocative and compelling. What is the allure of lighthouses? Have you ever visited a lighthouse? Would you like to visit Pottawatomie Lighthouse on Rock Island?

Hosting a discussion? Consider serving Ragna's Danish Apple Cake. Download the recipe from this book's page on Kathleen's website. Or invite your guests to bring a dish that evokes island memories.

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, book reviews, author interviews, book-related blog posts, and the recipe.

You can discover all this and more at www.kathleernerst.com/lighthouse.