

## Book Club Questions for *Drop Dead Ornaments*

1. Many series separate each book by months or even a year or more. How do you feel about the time frame of *Drop Dead Ornaments*, Book 7 of the Anastasia Pollack Crafting Mysteries, opening later the same day that *Scrapbook of Murder*, Book 6, ended?
2. Sometimes life imitates art; other times art imitates life. Little did the author realize when writing *Drop Dead Ornaments* that the book would debut during the nationwide frenzy of a real-life event that mirrors what happened to Shane and Sophie Lambert. Have you ever wondered how you'd respond in similar circumstances?
3. Did you find Sophie's reactions to learning the truth about her mother realistic for someone her age or did you find her too mercurial? Were her anger and outbursts justified, given her back-story?
4. The plot of *Drop Dead Ornaments* features more of Anastasia's sons, especially Alex. Anastasia's coworkers don't play a significant role in this story. Her mother, mother-in-law, and Ira have lesser roles than in many of the past books. Did you miss any of these characters, or did you enjoy the emphasis placed on the teenagers this time?
5. Parents are often pulled in diametrically opposing directions when it comes to the needs of their children. Such is the case with Anastasia and her sons in *Drop Dead Ornaments*. She's torn between a promise she made to Nick and Alex's plea to help prove his girlfriend's father's innocence. Do you feel she should have ignored her promise to Nick, or should she have left the investigation up to the police?
6. Like the other books in the series, *Drop Dead Ornaments* features craft projects, this time directions for some of the ornaments Anastasia teaches Alex's classmates for their community service project. Do you enjoy when authors include craft projects or recipes in their books? Do you ever make the projects or recipes?
7. Some readers don't believe that murder mysteries should include humor. After all, there's nothing funny about murder. Others are able to suspend their disbelief and laugh at the humorous amateur sleuth series that is The Anastasia Pollack Crafting Mysteries. How do you feel about mixing murder and mirth?
8. The seven books and three novellas that comprise the series to date take place over the course of nearly a year in Anastasia's life. In that time she's gone from recently widowed to a new relationship with photojournalist and possible spy, Zachary Barnes. Agatha Christie didn't believe that murder and romance should converge in a book. Some mystery readers agree with her. Others enjoy

that Anastasia is a fully rounded character (no pun intended!) and love the budding romance between her and Zack. Where do you stand on romantic relationships in mysteries?

9. Some of the characters in the series are quite polarizing. Lucille, for example, is the character many readers love to hate. However, some readers have suggested killing her off. Where do you stand when it comes to Lucille? Would it surprise you to learn that she's based on the author's own communist mother-in-law?

10. Although Lucille's antics are mostly "off-camera" in *Drop Dead Ornaments*, they do form the basis for a subplot. Subplots can relate to or be offshoots of the primary mystery, or they can be used to flesh out characters, create red herrings, lay the groundwork for future books in the series, or simply be used for comic relief. Where do you feel this subplot fits? Did you find it added to the book, or was it a distraction from the main mystery? Did you find the resolution of this subplot satisfying or would you have preferred a different outcome?

11. The author sprinkled several plot twists and red herrings throughout the book. Did you find she kept you guessing whodunit, or did you figure out who the killer was at some point before the murderer was revealed?

12. Was the book's conclusion satisfying? Did it make you want to read the next book in the series?