

HOW TO  
CHEAT  
YOUR OWN  
DEATH  
*Book Club Lit*



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

**Note: These discussion questions contain some spoilers! We suggest you finish the book before you read through them.**

**1)** Annie comes face-to-face with a new murder that mirrors one detailed in Frances's journals.

How does the book explore **the idea of family legacies and generational echoes**? Why do you think it's important to Annie to continue picking up the threads Frances left her for solving crimes?

**2)** **The novel begins with an ominous prophecy** that Peony Lane left for Annie, suggesting that her actions could lead to danger and death. Do you think Annie believes in the prophecy? Do you believe? Do you think it affects how Annie acts throughout the novel?

**3)** At the beginning of the novel, our main characters move from the small village of Castle Knoll to London, **a much bigger playing field** for both of them. How does solving murders in such a sprawling, multi-faceted city pose different problems than the ones they've faced before?

**4)** Annie's relationship with her mother, Laura, is a complicated one. **Who is the caretaker in their dynamic**? How do you think that shaped Annie into the person she is now?

**5)** Laura's status as a renowned artist puts her both in the spotlight and, as we come to find out, in danger. What does the novel suggest about **the connections between artistic expression, notoriety, and risk**?

**6)** In both timelines, the victims' hearts were surgically removed from their chests before they were found. What do you think this says

about the killer? **How does the symbol of the heart continue to show up**, and what does it mean to our characters?

**7)** Annie has experience solving murders at this point, but this is the first case that **directly involves her parents**. Do you think exploring the truth about her parents affects her judgment? Her sense of self?

**8)** The relationships with the important men in Frances's and Annie's lives, namely Ford Gravesdown and Rowan Crane, change when they're in London. **How do you see these relationships shifting and why do you think this is**?

**9)** Many of the women uncover crucial information but stay silent for years, including Frances and Vera. Why do they view the gathering of secrets as a form of protection? **Do you think the act of keeping secrets** ultimately helped or harmed our characters?

**10)** The effects of money and power come to a head. **How does power dictate whose stories are believed**, whose crimes are ignored, and whose reputations are protected?

**11)** **Journals, heirlooms, and paintings** play major roles in Annie's deciphering the past and unraveling this mystery. What do you think the novel is saying about how the physical manifestations of a life shape the stories we tell about it?



# HOW TO CHEAT YOUR OWN DEATH

## *Cast List*

**ANNIE ADAMS:** an aspiring writer in her twenties,  
soon to become an amateur sleuth

**LAURA ADAMS:** Annie's mother, who was a famous modern artist  
in the 1990s, but whose career has flagged

**SAM ARLINGTON:** Annie's estranged father

**DETECTIVE ROWAN CRANE:** Castle Knoll's lead detective,  
who grew up in the village

**REGGIE CRANE:** Rowan's father, who drives a taxi in Castle Knoll,  
best friends with Laura Adams

**FELICITY "FLISS" ROWE:** Rowan's ex-girlfriend and Laura's new apprentice

**FRANCES ADAMS:** Annie's wealthy great aunt, who inherited the Chelsea  
townhouse and the Castle Knoll Gravesdown estate and fortune  
when her husband died. She kept meticulous diaries to document her life.

**LORD RUTHERFORD "FORD" GRAVESDOWN:**  
Frances's late husband, heir to the Gravesdown estate

**VERA HUNTINGTON:** a wealthy London socialite

**DR. ALASDAIR HUNTINGTON:** Vera's husband, a renowned heart surgeon

**MAX TORRENCE:** Vera's brother, who is at university with Frances

**ELAINE COOK:** Max's girlfriend, also a student at university with Frances

**PROFESSOR MARCUS DANE:** professor of psychology at University College London

**MARIE CAVANAUGH:** a volunteer at an art gallery in Knightsbridge

**BRIAN FOLKESTONE:** a police officer in Soho

**ARCHIE FOYLE:** Frances's gardener, who lives on the Foyle Farm,  
adjacent to the Gravesdown estate

**BETH TAKAGA-FOYLE:** Archie's granddaughter, who runs a deli in the village  
and did some cooking for Frances

**DR. KABIR BANERJEE:** a pathologist at University College Hospital



# CASTLE KNOLL

## Character Map

