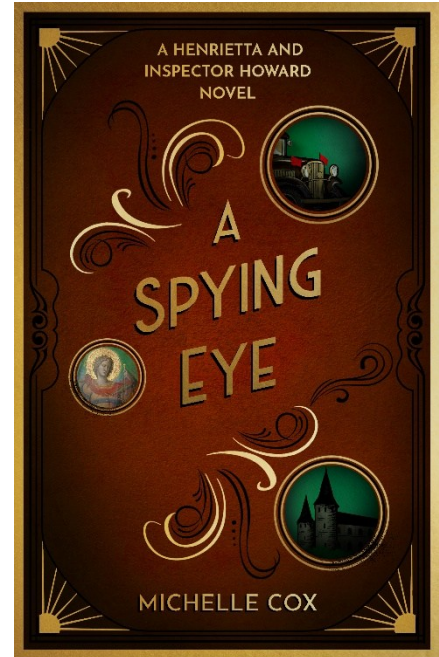


Book Club Discussion Questions for *A Spying Eye*

1. The stolen panel of the Ghent Altarpiece serves as both the central mystery and a symbol of lost heritage. How does the theme of "lost" items—art, family connections, personal freedom—resonate throughout the different storylines?
2. Henrietta discovers her connection to the Von Harmon family, but finds them to be eccentric and morally compromised. How does this experience challenge romantic notions of "finding one's roots"? What does the novel suggest about the weight of family legacy versus chosen family?
3. Henrietta, Elsie, and Julia each navigate societal expectations and personal challenges in *A Spying Eye*. Compare and contrast their experiences as women in the 1930s, considering how their individual choices and relationships reflect the broader limitations and opportunities of the era.
4. Compare Elsie's decision to marry Gunther and live on a farm with Julia's potential choice to leave with Glenn Forbes. What do these parallel situations reveal about women's limited options in 1936, and how do class differences affect their choices?
5. Melody Merriweather evolves from seeming comic relief to a loyal friend who makes real sacrifices for Elsie. How does her decision to impersonate Elsie at the convent demonstrate growth in her character? What does their friendship reveal about the importance of female solidarity during this era?
6. Henrietta and Clive's partnership has evolved significantly since the first book. How do the events in France test and ultimately strengthen their relationship? Does Henrietta's growth as a detective come at any cost to their marriage?
7. The baron's confusion between Henrietta and the "Countess" creates both comedic and poignant moments. What does his mental state reveal about the lingering effects of loss and the power of memory versus reality?
8. Pascal's character arc takes him from suspected accomplice to unlikely hero. How does his relationship with Edna and his ultimate sacrifice complicate initial assumptions about trust and loyalty?



9. Claudette initially appears sympathetic—a woman trapped caring for her deteriorating father. How did your feelings toward her evolve as her true motivations were revealed? Do you find her final actions understandable, even if not justified?
10. Inspector Hartle's betrayal completely reframes the entire mission. Were there clues to his deception that you noticed on first reading? How does this twist change your perception of Clive and Henrietta's detective skills versus their vulnerability to manipulation?
11. The novel depicts the rising Nazi threat as both ideological and personal. How do the characters' various responses to this threat—from Valentin's admiration to Major Wirnhier's pragmatism—reflect different ways people navigate authoritarian movements?
12. By the end, the panel remains lost, Hartle has escaped, and many questions are unanswered. How does this unresolved conclusion affect your satisfaction with the story? What does it suggest about the nature of justice and closure in both detective fiction and real life?