

An Intimate Ghost Readers' Guide

Restaurateur Jane Lawless is thrilled to be catering the wedding of some family friends, Nick and Lauren Clifford, but when Jane arrives at the reception, she's in for a shock of a lifetime—and one that could jeopardize her career. The food has been spiked with hallucinogenic mushrooms and the drug-hazed guests are engaged in dangerously reckless behavior. Events take a turn for the worse when the father of the groom comes up against shocking accusations. Once again, Ellen Hart has woven intriguing characters and surprising twists into a complex and absorbing story.

Starting Points for Discussion

1. What is the most important part of a mystery to each reader? Character, action, dialogue, plot, suspense? How does this book rate in each area?
2. Hart used sections of Jimmy Shore's story throughout the book. Did you find that an effective way to create a backstory?
3. In what ways do Jane and Cordelia's personalities complement each other?
4. What do you think might have happened to Patsy Shore after she was abducted?
5. "Ever since the day Cullen Hegg had died, people had called Alden a hero, said his actions had helped to avert an even greater tragedy." Do you think we use the term "hero" too freely today?
6. Cordelia thinks that she and her sister, Octavia, are polar opposites. Jane once remarked that they were "two peas in a very strange pod." What do you think?
7. What was Burt Hegg's fatal flaw as a father?
8. Do you think Jane should have trusted Kenzie?
9. What was your reaction to Alden? Did you find him sympathetic, manipulative, tortured, evil, a victim, a victimizer?
10. Did you find any clues to Hart's world view within the story? What were the themes Hart was working with?
11. Could you predict who Jimmy Shore was in the main story? How early? Did you know what the ending would be?
12. How important is humor in a mystery novel?
13. Do you prefer happy endings in crime fiction?

14. Is this novel a cozy? (For those who are unsure, agree on a definition of a cozy, and then review some of the scenes.)