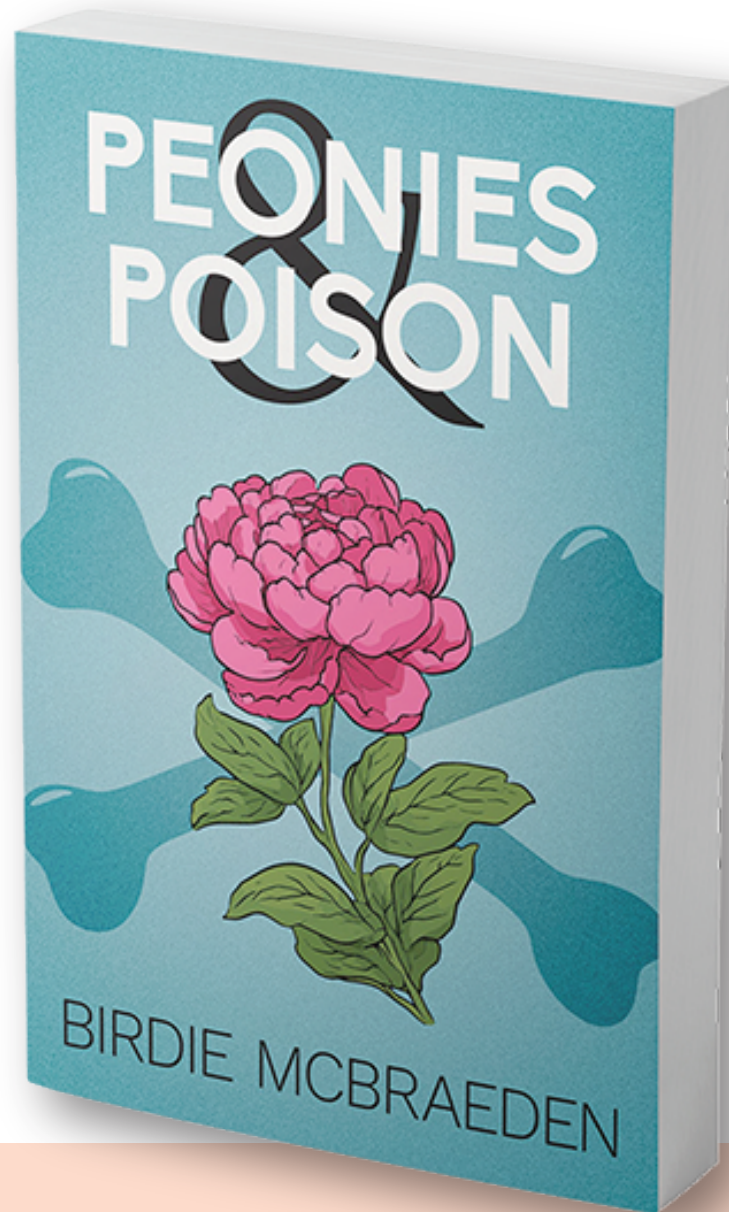


“Flowers are supposed to make people happy. Which is why it’s always unsettling when one of my arrangements shows up at a crime scene.”

from **PEONIES AND POISON**



BOOK CLUB GUIDE & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1. First Impressions:** The story begins with Poppy expecting a simple delivery at the Briarwood Museum gala. How does this ordinary setup help draw readers into the mystery when things quickly go wrong?
- 2. An Amateur Sleuth:** What qualities make Poppy Abbott a believable and engaging amateur detective? Are there moments where her curiosity feels helpful—or dangerously impulsive?
- 3. Setting as a Character:** The Briarwood Museum gala is filled with wealthy donors, collectors, and curators. How does this glamorous setting contribute to the tension and potential motives for the crime?
- 4. The Two Mysteries:** The story involves both a stolen masterpiece and a poisoned patron. Which mystery interested you more, and why? How do the two threads interact throughout the story?
- 5. Suspect Circle:** The guest list includes jealous collectors, feuding donors, and secretive museum staff. Which suspect stood out to you the most, and what clues made you suspicious?
- 6. Poppy and Rowan:** How would you describe the dynamic between Poppy and Detective Rowan Hale? Do their different approaches to solving crimes create conflict, chemistry, or both?
- 7. Reputation and Stakes:** Poppy begins investigating partly to protect her flower shop's reputation. How does this personal motivation shape the choices she makes during the investigation?
- 8. Secrets Beneath the Surface:** The novel suggests that the museum's elite social circle hides rivalries and buried secrets. What does the story say about appearances versus reality in high-society settings?
- 9. Clues and Red Herrings:** Were there any clues or misdirections that surprised you? Looking back, which hints about the culprit were hidden in plain sight?
- 10. The Cozy Mystery Tone:** Cozy mysteries balance danger with charm. How do elements like Poppy's flower shop, the gala atmosphere, and her relationships help maintain that balance?
- 11. Symbolism of Flowers:** Peonies are often associated with beauty, prosperity, and sometimes secrecy. Do you think the choice of peonies adds symbolic meaning to the story?
- 12. Series Potential:** Since this book is part of a series, what aspects of Poppy's life or relationships would you like to see explored further in future installments?

THEMED DRINKS & SNACKS

THE POISONED CHAMPAGNE

Inspired by the fateful drink at the gala—minus the poison, of course.

Ingredients:

Champagne or sparkling cider
½ oz blackberry syrup
Fresh blackberry garnish

The dark berry swirl gives it a dramatic “mystery” look.

POPPY’S GARDEN FIZZ MOCKTAIL

Bright and refreshing—perfect for anyone skipping alcohol.

Ingredients

Sparkling lemonade
½ oz rose syrup or grenadine
Fresh mint
Lemon slice

Instructions

Fill a glass with ice and mint leaves.
Add rose syrup.
Pour sparkling lemonade over the top.
Garnish with a lemon slice.

GALA-INSPIRED SNACKS

Keep it elegant and easy, like a museum event.

Mini Brie & Jam Crostini
Stuffed Mushrooms
Fruit and Cheese Board
Chocolate truffles (art-gallery fancy!)
Flower-decorated cupcakes

You could even decorate the table with peony flowers to match the book’s theme.

CONVO-STARTER QUESTIONS

BOOK ADJACENT

A few questions to ask to get the meet-up started and get to know your book club more.

If you owned a small shop like Poppy's, what kind would it be?
Would you ever investigate a crime yourself, or leave it to the police?
What's the fanciest event you've ever attended?

SPOILER-FRIENDLY QUESTIONS

After everyone's read the book, these questions are great to keep the conversation going.

When did you first suspect the real culprit? What clue tipped you off?
How are the stolen painting and the poisoning ultimately connected?
Which red herring was the most convincing?
Did the culprit's motive make sense to you?
How did the museum setting influence the crime itself?
What moment put Poppy in the greatest danger?
How did Detective Rowan Hale's investigation differ from Poppy's approach?
Did the ending resolution feel satisfying? Why or why not?
Which character surprised you the most by the end of the story?
What lingering secrets or plot threads could carry into the next book?

Thank you so much for reading (and hopefully enjoying) PEONIES & POISON. Writing these books is such a delightful escape for me, and I hope it's the same for you.

BIRDIE MCBRAEDEN