

A PETTICOAT POLICE MYSTERY

THE DEATH OF DORA BLACK

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

1. Lainie's aim was to write a rollicking murder mystery packed with history. Do you think she succeeded and what did you learn?
2. Would a biography do greater justice to the real Kate Cocks?
3. Of all first children born in early 20th century Australia, around half were conceived out of wedlock. Does this put Miss Cocks' five-foot cane and "three-feet-apart" mantra in a different light?
4. Lainie wanted to paint Miss Cocks in shades of grey, rather than as a saint (as she was portrayed in earlier biographies). Did she succeed? Why or why not?
5. Like Kate Cocks, Thomas Edwards and Cecilia Dixon are inspired by real people (because Lainie believes they were significant South Australians who deserve to be remembered). Is this fair? How would you feel if someone fictionalised your story 100 years from now?
6. There are countries today (including Iran, Saudi Arabia and Indonesia) that still have immorality police. Does this story make you feel any differently about them?
7. Were you moved by any scenes in the book? If so, why?
8. Ethel is incredibly wealthy and entitled. Is she likeable? Why or why not?
9. How successful was the book as a mystery? Did it keep you guessing? Who did you originally think was responsible for the murder?
10. If the book became a movie or TV series, who do you think should play Miss Cocks and Ethel? (Lainie really likes the idea of Kitty Flanagan for Miss Cocks.)

