

## BOOK CLUB READING GUIDE for *A Tale of Two Murders* by Heather Redmond

- a. Charles Dickens's novel *A Tale of Two Cities* inspired aspects of this novel. What similarities are shared between these two books? Does reading this book make you want to read or reread the classic Dickens novel?
- b. What did you know about Charles Dickens before reading this novel? Is it hard to picture him as a young man before he became the international celebrity, and the tired middle-aged man he appears to be in the extant photos? Based on Charles as described in this novel, are you surprised he became such a great and enduring success?
- c. What do you think of 1830s courtship as described in this novel? Is it strange to you that Charles and Kate don't call each other by their first names? That there is almost no physical contact between them? Do you think love and trust can grow when a couple is so rarely alone together? Would you pursue a romantic partner who lived five miles away if you had to walk through winter weather each way to get to them?
- d. What do you think of Kate's challenge to Charles? "Give me a mystery, Mr. Dickens, and a solution, and I will follow you into places I should not." Do you think a woman of Kate's time might really have said something like this?
- e. Do you think Kate and Charles have an equal partnership? In a time when men primarily found friendships with one another, do you think Kate really would have been able to share an interest in mysteries with her significant other?

- f. Given how Christiana Lugoson died, would you have suspected murder from the start?
- g. The author left some aspects of Charles's relationship with Lady Lugoson up to the reader's imagination. What do you think their relationship was?
- h. Julie Saville is a character who complicates Charles's life. What did you think about how he handled her? Did you think Mr. Hogarth's concerns were appropriate?
- i. In the 1830s, there was quite a bit of take-out dining as many Londoners didn't have kitchens as we think of them today. Water was also not available directly into many homes. How would these things affect your daily life?
- j. Some of the characters in this novel are real, like Lady Holland and John Black. What kind of research interests do you have after reading this novel? Will you do further reading to discover who and what was real?
- k. Which of the supporting characters are you hoping to see in the next books in this series?
- l. According to Wikipedia, "A **genius** is a person who displays exceptional intellectual ability, creative productivity, universality in genres or originality, typically to a degree that is associated with the achievement of new advances in a domain of knowledge." Do you think Charles Dickens meets the criteria? Why or why not?