

BOOK CLUB READING GUIDE for Grave Expectations by Heather Redmond

- a. Charles Dickens's novel *Great Expectations* inspired aspects of this novel. What themes did you recognize from the classic novel? Does reading this book make you want to read or reread Dickens's work?
- b. What did you know about Charles Dickens before reading this novel? How do you think his career as a journalist informed his fiction writing?
- c. Charles Dickens and Kate Hogarth are engaged by this point in my series. What do you think about the limits that are put on them during this period of their romance?
- d. Charles and his parents have a difficult relationship, stemming from when his father was imprisoned due to unpaid debt and Charles had to work in a factory. How would you feel if your parents did so much damage to your education and your prospects?
- e. The Dickenses are considered of a lower class than the Hogarths. What evidence did you see of this in the book?
- f. Did you feel that any of the characters are stereotypical?
- g. It was illegal to be homosexual during this era in England. Can you put yourself in Breese Gadfly's shoes and imagine what his life is like?
- h. What do you think of the Miss Jagers character? Do you think she'll return to plague Charles down the road?

- i. Would you have bet on Charles Dickens as a romantic partner? Some reviewers have been disturbed upon learning the real-life story of the Charles and Kate relationship. Does that color how you read this series?
- j. Some of the characters in this novel are real, like the Dickenses and the Hogarths. Are you content to leave them on the page, or do certain aspects of them fascinate you?
- k. Readers may be horrified to learn that at least sometimes, according to records, bodies were left in place before inquests were completed, and were even temporary tourist attractions during this era. How does this contrast with the way murder and human bodies are treated nowadays?
- l. Policing was very different in 1835. The Metropolitan Police Service didn't have detectives yet, and there were conflicts between the coroners and the police. How would you have protected yourself and your family in the pre-Victorian era?