

BOOK CLUB READING GUIDE for *The Pickwick Murders*

1. Charles Dickens's novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* inspired aspects of this novel. What themes did you recognize? Does reading this book make you want to read or reread Dickens's work?
2. How do you like to read classic fiction? In print, audio, ebook—or do you just watch the movie or miniseries? How does the medium affect the work?
3. We spent a lot of time in Newgate Prison in this book. The author stayed close to Dickens's own description of the prison from his 1835 visit there. What surprised you? Did it make you want to learn more? What has changed in prison culture in the many years since?
4. Did you enjoy the glimpses of historical figures? Had you ever heard of Joanna Baillie and Lucy Aikin before?
5. Lord Byron and his daughter, Augusta Ada King, Countess of Lovelace, are popular figures in Western culture even today. Have you ever thought about Lady Byron? Did it surprise you to know she became an education reformer? You can learn more about her and her daughter in both fiction and nonfiction titles.
6. Did you like seeing Kate's point of view in the book, or were you jarred to realize that the book wasn't from Charles Dickens's point of view only?
7. The author veered farther than usual from the true experiences of Charles Dickens's life in this book. Did you like how this made him a stakeholder in the murder, or did the author go too far afield of reality?
8. What do you think about Kate's relationship with her parents in this book?
9. What do you think about Julie Aga's experiences in this book? What are your thoughts about the way actresses have broken or stood beyond the culturally appropriate behaviors of their times? For example, when thinking of Julie, the author's thoughts venture to the seventeenth century actress Margaret Hughes (her supposed ancestress), considered the first professional public actress in London.
10. Dickens's novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* includes a number of short stories within the text. To honor that tradition, the author included a couple of tales in this book as well. Did they add or detract from the main novel for you? Did the stories enhance the overall themes for you?