

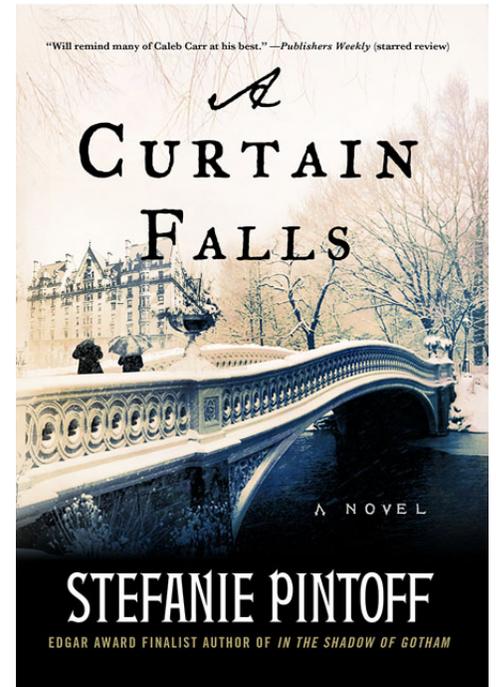


A Curtain Falls

by *Stefanie Pintoff*

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *A Curtain Falls* are intended as resources to aid individual readers and book groups who would like to learn more about the author and this book. We hope that this guide will provide you a starting place for discussion, and suggest a variety of perspectives from which you might approach *A Curtain Falls*.

About the Book

The careers of New York City detective Simon Ziele and his former partner, Captain Declan Mulvaney, went in remarkably different directions after the tragic death of Ziele's fiancée in the 1904 General Slocum ferry disaster. While earmarked for bigger things, Ziele moved north of the city to escape the violence, and Mulvaney dug in deeper, heading up the precinct in the most crime-ridden part of New York.

Yet with all of the resources at Mulvaney's disposal, a puzzling crime compels him to ask his former partner for help. A chorus girl has been found dead on a Broadway stage dressed as the lead. There is no sign of violence. The coroner would call it a suicide, but then she'd be the second actress to die that way in only days.

Following on the heels of Pintoff's Edgar Award-winning debut, *A Curtain Falls* is a moody and evocative tale that follows Ziele as he scours the streets in search of a true fiend.

Praise for *Stefanie Pintoff*

Praise for *A Curtain Falls*

“Mystery lovers might just have found the next Caleb Carr.”—*The Huffington Post*

“In her second novel, Stefanie Pintoff shows how the best in historical fiction not only unveils our past, but shows how our modern concerns evolved.... Her comparison to Caleb Carr is well earned, although Pintoff shows a wider range and deeper affinity for storytelling than the author of *The Alienist*. Pintoff’s meticulous research captures the heart of the era, but her detailed characters and gripping plot about greed, jealousy, and obsession for fame set *A Curtain Falls* on a higher plane.”—Oline Cogdill, *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*

“This worthy sequel to Pintoff’s acclaimed Edgar Award–nominated debut, *In the Shadow of Gotham*, brings to life New York’s theater world at the turn of the twentieth century and the fledgling science of criminology.”—*Library Journal* (starred review) on *A Curtain Falls*

Praise for *In the Shadow of Gotham*

“Superior historical mystery... She does an outstanding job of blending historical detail with engaging characters and a suspenseful plot.”—*The Denver Post*

“Pintoff’s debut...will remind many of Caleb Carr at his best.... The period detail, characterizations, and plotting are all top-notch, and Ziele has enough depth to carry a series.”—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

About the Author

STEFANIE PINTOFF is an Edgar Award winner for Best First Novel as well as a nominee for the Anthony and Sue Feder Historical Mystery Awards. She is also a graduate of Columbia University Law School and has a Ph.D. in literature from New York University. The author of three novels, she lives with her husband and daughter in New York City.

Visit Stefanie online and sign up for her newsletter *Piecework* at <http://www.stefaniepintoff.com/>



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Photo Credit: Alison Sheehy

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the meaning(s) of the title *A Curtain Falls*.
2. Charles Frohman is a real historical figure credited with inventing the “star system” that shaped early Broadway (and was later used in the Hollywood studios of the 1930s and 1940s). What are the rules of his system? How do they infuse an environment already marked by greed, ambition, and jealousy?
3. At the heart of any series is the continual emotional development of the principal characters from book to book. Which character grows the most in this book? How?
4. In addition to serving as a physical location, the Broadway theater is almost a character in its own right. Does this setting add to the novel? What kinds of details bring it alive?
5. The essence of theater is the blurred line between appearance and reality, truth and lies. In what ways does this theme lie at the heart of *A Curtain Falls*?
6. The author depicts many representations of family, relationships, and the nature of grief. How do characters compensate for absence and loss? Which are the most successful? Why do you think that is?
7. Detective Ziele struggles with his newfound knowledge when he discovers Timothy Poe’s true situation. Did you find his struggle true to his character and time period?
8. What is your favorite scene in the book and why?

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or call-in for discussion visit
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