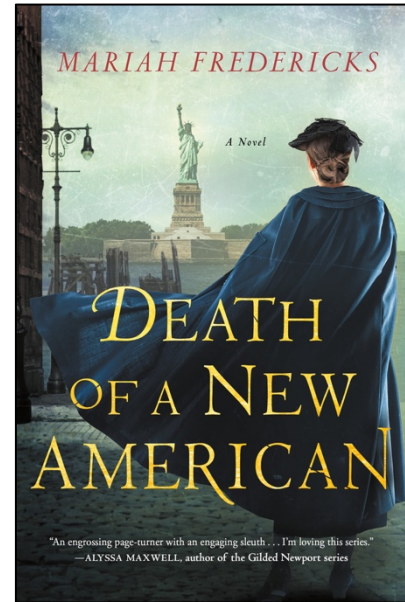


DEATH OF A NEW AMERICAN

By Mariah Fredericks

ABOUT THIS GUIDE:

Death of a New American by Mariah Fredericks is the atmospheric, compelling mystery featuring ladies' maid, Jane Prescott, as she investigates a murder and the tensions simmering below the surface of a wealthy, secretive Gilded Age household. The questions below are designed to enhance your reading group's conversation about *Death of a New American*.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. The novel is bookended by two historical events: the sinking of the *Titanic* and the women's suffrage parade in New York City. How do these events reflect the themes of the novel, including those like racism, poverty, and feminism?
2. There is a juxtaposition between the planned wedding of Louise and William and the death of a young immigrant, Sofia. Why do you suppose the author chose a wedding as a setting for a murder? How does this setting impact the reactions of those around Sofia?
3. "I fight the Black Hand not out of animosity or prejudice, but from an unwavering commitment to fairness and the rule of law," says Charles Tyler in chapter 6. Do you believe him? Do you think other characters in the book believe him?
4. Racism plays a large role throughout the novel. How do Jane's own views affect her investigations? What about Michael Behan's?
5. Jane has grown up knowing and spending time with Italians more than the average New Yorker in 1912, through her friend Anna. How has Anna reacted



differently to her upbringing, and the city's prejudice against Italians, than Jane has? Whose path do you relate to more?

6. When discussing a painting with Jane and Louise, Alva Tyler says in chapter 4, "It's painted by a woman. Critics complain that she shows women separate from men, but I think it's marvelous." Having read the final pages of *Death of a New American*, is it possible to read anything more into this statement? What might Alva—given what you know about her character—have meant by it?
7. How did the characters—especially the female characters—change throughout the novel? Did you relate to any of them more or less by the end than you had at the beginning?
8. *Death of a New American* is framed by an older Jane, looking back on her memories. How does this knowledge—that the main action of the story comes from Jane's memory—affect the way you read it?

