

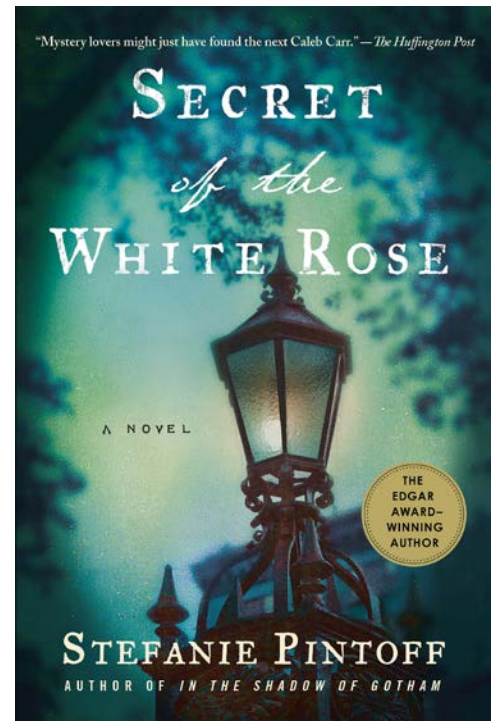


The Secret of the White Rose

by *Stefanie Pintoff*

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About this Guide

The following author biography and list of questions about *The Secret of the White Rose* 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 *The Secret of the White Rose*.

About the Book

The murder of Judge Hugo Jackson is out of Detective Simon Ziele's jurisdiction in more ways than one. For one, it's high-profile enough to command the attention of the notorious new police commissioner, since Judge Jackson was presiding over the sensational trial of Al Drayson. Drayson, an anarchist, set off a bomb at a Carnegie family wedding, but instead of killing millionaires, it killed passersby, including a child. The dramatic trial has captured the full attention of 1906 New York City.

Furthermore, Simon's assigned precinct on Manhattan's West Side includes the gritty Tenderloin but not the tonier Gramercy Park, which is where the judge is found in his locked town house with his throat slashed on the night before the jury is set to deliberate. But his widow insists on calling her husband's old classmate criminologist, Alistair Sinclair, who in turn enlists Ziele's help. Together they must steer Sinclair's unorthodox methods past a police force that is so focused on rounding up Drayson's supporters that they've all but rejected any other possibilities.

Once again, Stefanie Pintoff's combination of vital characters and a fascinating case set amongst the sometimes brutal and sometimes glittering history of turn-of-the-century New York makes for totally compelling reading in *Secret of the White Rose*, the third novel in her Edgar Award-winning series.

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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Discussion Questions

1. In *Secret of the White Rose*, how is the anarchist movement depicted in both positive and negative viewpoints? The portrayal of the anarchists is necessarily limited by the first-person POV of Detective Ziele, himself a policeman. Is he fair-minded? Or does he reflect the prejudices one might expect from a person of his class and profession? (From the Haymarket Riots in Chicago in 1886 to the Union Square bombing in New York City in 1908, policemen were frequent targets of anarchist violence).
2. This novel depicts a New York that is in the midst of social upheaval. Discuss the role of class in the novel, particularly Simon Ziele's feelings returning to his old neighborhood and reuniting with the Strupp family. How do his own ambitions, not to mention his attraction to the world Alistair and Isabella inhabit, play into it?
3. The story takes place during a time of rapid technological change and progress. What are some of the innovations represented? How do they have both a good and bad impact on society?
4. How does the relationship between Simon and Isabella change in this novel? In spite of the class differences – which are a major obstacle in 1906 – do you believe there's any possibility for a real relationship between them? Likewise, the relationship between Detective Ziele and Alistair Sinclair evolves significantly in this novel. Does it ever approach an equal partnership?
5. "Duty" is a theme that plays out in the book through many different characters, from Judge Jackson in the beginning, to Ziele, to Alistair and others. How does each characters' conception of duty shape their actions?
6. At the beginning of part two, the author chooses quotations by President Teddy Roosevelt and Alexander Berkman to introduce the section. What does each signify?
7. If you had been in Ziele's position at the end of the novel, would you have helped Jonathan Strupp? Why or why not?

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