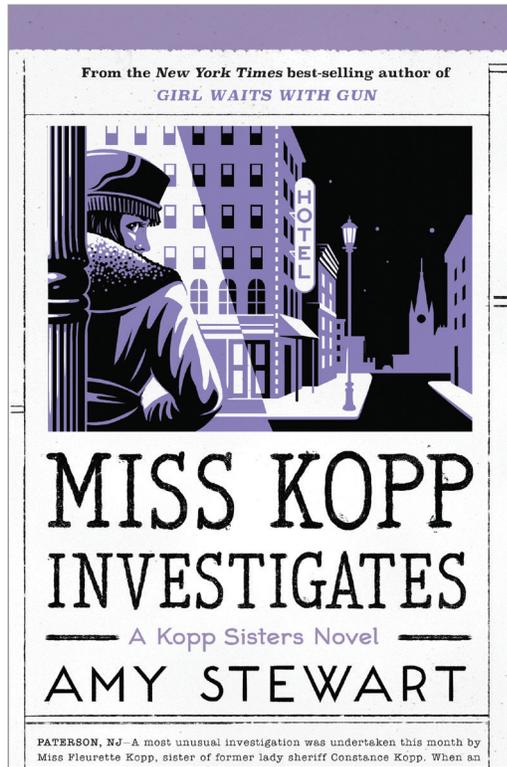


Miss Kopp Investigates

BY AMY STEWART



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Discussion Questions

1. Why does Fleurette think that she deserves to make “too much of the moment” (1) after her first assignment? What had life been like for her and for Norma and Constance prior to this? What makes Fleurette feel that the first assignment has been a triumph? What does she find thrilling about this work? What fantasies or escapism does this kind of work afford her?
2. Although Fleurette had planned to board at the home of Mrs. Doyle, why does she initially change her mind? What unexpected circumstances “propel [Fleurette] into John Ward’s employment” (16)? What assumption about her brother, Francis, turns out to be incorrect and how does this impact Fleurette’s decisions about her immediate future?
3. Why does Norma hope to steer conversations with her family away from questions about her time in France? Why did it take so long for her sisters to reach her after their brother’s death? Where was Norma headed when she received the telegram with the news, and with whom? What feelings did Norma share with many other young women following their war-time service? Were you surprised by her decision to return home?
4. Consider how the book presents a portrait of post-war living, especially for women. What does it reveal about the lives of the Kopp women before and after the war? How have they been changed by their war-time experiences? What sacrifices have each of the women made? How are the women treated by the male characters in the book? What are some of the obstacles and threats that they face?
5. When Fleurette learns that Bessie is pregnant, what question does she realize she mustn’t ask Bessie out loud? How does the revelation of another child on the way impact the Kopp sisters’ plans? What solution does Norma come up with, and how do each of the women feel about it? What “way of living” does Norma suspect will be “the new order of things” (41)? From a historical perspective, is she correct?
6. What was considered “suitable” work for the women of this time? What jobs does Norma come up with for Constance and what work does Fleurette take on? When Fleurette finds Bessie with the family’s bills, what question “hung in the air, so clearly stated that neither of them needed to say it aloud” (55)? How would this same question be answered today?
7. What does Norma learn about the post-war divorce rate from the newspaper? What is a “professional co-respondent” and why were they required at the time? Why was it considered an illicit

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profession and what were some of the dangers of the job? Do you think that Fleurette made the right choice in accepting this work? Why or why not? What ultimately leads her to quit despite the lucrative nature of the assignments?

8. What future possibility worried Fleurette more than a “year of miserly living”? What did she know about poverty? Why was the family farm no longer the “bulwark against misfortune” that she had imagined (72)?

9. How does Constance learn about Fleurette’s work and how does she react? Do you think that her response was warranted or overblown? Why does Constance involve Officer Heath in the matter? How does Fleurette feel about this? What does Fleurette believe is the only way to live with Constance and why does she feel that Constance’s reaction is hypocritical? Do you agree with her?

10. Who is Mrs. Martin and what does Fleurette discover about her husband? What leads Fleurette to follow Mrs. Martin when she sees her on the street even after her work with the law office is through? What does she uncover as a result?

11. When Fleurette learns about Mr. Herman, why does she go to the library instead of the police? What two pressing questions was she able to answer there? What additional lead does the librarian unwittingly provide her with? What do libraries offer women of this time that might not have been available to them otherwise?

12. What did Francis spend the family’s money on and how did he end up in so much debt? Why does Constance have to trick the bank secretary into giving her this information? What “good news and bad news” do Bessie and Norma learn from Mr. Griggs (209)? What opportunity does Mr. Griggs

offer the Kopp women and how do they respond to this?

13. What shocking truth does Constance hold and who else has been keeping this secret along with her? Why do you think that Constance chooses not to reveal it? How does this secret allow her to relate to Fleurette? Do you agree with Constance’s decision that what “happened in 1897 was best left there” (214)?

About the Author

AMY STEWART is the best-selling author of more than a dozen books including *The Drunken Botanist* (2013), *Wicked Plants* (2009), and seven novels in the Kopp Sisters series—a collection of novels inspired by the true story of America’s first female deputy sheriffs and her family. Stewart has won a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship, an American Horticultural Society Book Award, and an International Association of Culinary Professionals Food Writing Award. Her books have sold over one-million copies worldwide and have been translated into eighteen languages. Stewart is also a public speaker who has delivered lectures at a wide variety of venues including Cornell University, Harvard University, and Google. She resides in Portland, Oregon, where she owns a bookstore called Eureka Books with her husband Scott Brown.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Atherton, Nancy. *Aunt Dimity’s Death*
 Benedict, Marie. *The Mystery of Mrs. Christie*
 Bradley, Alan. *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie*
 Griffiths, Elly. *The Crossing Places*
 Macallister, Greer. *Girl in Disguise*
 Penny, Louise. *A Trick of the Light*
 Smith, Alexander McCall. *A Distant View of Everything*
 Winspear, Jacqueline. *Maisie Dobbs*