

The Coroner's Daughter by Andrew Hughes

One Dublin One Book 2023



Book club questions

Abigail and her father have a unique relationship. Do you think Mr Lawless is overly indulgent of his daughter's scientific interests? Does he show the appropriate level of concern for her social standing and reputation? How did the death of Abigail's mother affect her relationship with her father?

Dublin city plays an important role as setting. If you know Dublin, did you find it pleasing to be able to follow the action along its streets and squares, or did it not make any difference to your reading? Despite the distance of time, did the city still seem familiar to you?

Did the historical period of 1816 feel authentic? Did any elements of speech or dress or mannerisms strike you as anachronistic? In general, how much do you feel historical fiction should be bound by historical fact? A contemporary thriller might present a fictional US president, for example. Should historical fiction have the same leeway to invent fictional characters, movements, or events?

To what extent did the weird weather of *The Year Without a Summer* affect the atmosphere of the book? Did debates among the characters about the unseasonable cold have similarities to modern concerns with climate change? Can you think of other examples in literature in which weather plays a prominent part in the narrative – Banville's *Snow* for example, or the heatwave in McEwan's *Atonement*?

What did you think of the novel as a crime book and a mystery? Did Abigail make for a plausible sleuth? Do you think she was unusually talented, or simply ahead of her time? And did the reveal at the end surprise you, or had you seen it coming?