



BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

Classical Music Thriller



THANK YOU FOR
CONSIDERING ANGELS'
BLOOD FOR YOUR NEXT
BOOK CLUB READ

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RESOURCE GUIDE

Roberta Mantell

Roberta Mantell's *Angels' Blood* is a captivating and surprising read that masterfully blends the worlds of classical music and crime fiction. The richly detailed setting of New York Luminoso, a prestigious chorus, immediately immerses the reader in a world of passionate rivalries and hidden tensions. The mystery itself is cleverly constructed, keeping the reader guessing until the very end, with unexpected twists and turns that will leave you breathless. The author's writing is both elegant and engaging, seamlessly blending descriptions of chorus music with the dark and suspenseful elements of the mystery. The novel's exploration of gender inequality within the world of classical music adds a layer of thoughtful social commentary, making *Angels' Blood* more than just a simple whodunit. This is a book that will stay with you long after you finish reading, prompting reflection on the complexities of human relationships and the power of music to both heal and destroy. Highly recommended for fans of mystery novels, literary fiction, and music.

WORD COUNT: 85,000

PAGE COUNT: 304

KEY WORDS: Choir Mystery | Choral Murder | Music Mystery | Classical Music Thriller

DEMOGRAPHICS: Women aged 35+ | Music lovers, particularly classical music enthusiasts
| literary fiction with social commentary readers

COMP BOOKS: *The Thursday Murder Club* by Richard Osman | *The Silent Companions* by
Laura Purcell | *The Music Shop* by Rachel Joyce:

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A Night at the Chorus

Invitations:

Design invitations resembling vintage theater or chorus tickets or playbills. Include a quote from the book hinting at the mystery. Specify a dress code: Black tie optional, but a touch of red is encouraged!

Decorations:

- **Elegant and Mysterious:** Use a color scheme of deep reds, purples, and blacks, accented with gold. Think dark velvet tablecloths, candlelight, and perhaps some strategically placed theatrical masks.
- **Musical Touches:** Display sheet music from classical pieces, particularly those mentioned in the book. You could also include framed photos of famous composers.
- **A Touch of Suspense:** Scatter subtly around some props related to the mystery- a single, crimson-red rose, a magnifying glass, perhaps some dramatically placed opera glasses, a few strategically placed detective hats.

THEMED PARTY

Activities & Entertainment

Musical Interlude

- Play some classical music during the party, particularly pieces that complement the mood of the book.

Music Trivia

- Include a musical trivia game, featuring questions about composers, chorus, and other classical music elements.[see next panel to find instructions for the trivia game]

Costume Contest

- Award a small prize to the person with the most creative costume inspired by the book (a character, a period costume, or even a murder mystery theme).

Extra Touches:

- Personalized Place Cards: Use elegant place cards with guests' names written in elegant calligraphy.
- Opera Glasses: Provide opera glasses for guests to use (adding to the mystery and visual interest).

THEMED PARTY

Appetizers:

- Angel's Whisper Bruschetta: Toasted baguette slices topped with whipped goat cheese, a drizzle of honey, and a sprinkle of edible glitter (for a touch of sparkle and mystery).
- Devil's Delight Deviled Eggs: Classic deviled eggs with a twist – add a tiny drop of hot sauce or a sprinkle of paprika for a touch of spice. (Reflects the devilish aspects of the plot)
- Barlow's Bites Mini Quiches: Mini quiches filled with a variety of savory ingredients, reflecting the rich and varied life of a prestigious chorus .

Main Course:

- Requiem Salmon: Pan-seared salmon, served with a rich, creamy dill sauce. (The Requiem is a central piece of the story, and salmon is elegant).
- Siren Song Pasta: Creamy pasta dish with sun-dried tomatoes, pesto, and Parmesan cheese—a subtle nod to the seductive and compelling nature of the story.
- Hidden Melody Roasted Vegetables: A medley of roasted vegetables (e.g., asparagus, carrots, zucchini) seasoned simply, representing the subtle yet powerful musical themes of the novel.

THEMED MENU SUGGESTIONS

Dessert:

- The Fallen Angel Chocolate Lava Cake: A decadent chocolate lava cake, rich and dark. (Referencing the dramatic overall tone of the mystery).
- Sweet Harmony Crème brûlée: This classic dessert offers a sweet and satisfying ending to the meal. The crack of the brûlée can also suggest the cracks in the relationships and secrets of the story.

Drinks:

- The Fallen Angel Cocktail: (See Signature Drink)
- Diva's Delight Sparkling Wine: A celebratory sparkling wine to toast the success of the choir (and perhaps celebrate surviving the murder mystery).
- Maestro's Choice Red Wine: A full-bodied red wine, appropriate for a sophisticated evening. (Could be a Merlot, as suggested in the novel).

Ambiance:

Play some classical music softly in the background during the party (but not too loudly, so people can converse). Consider including some operatic arias or choral pieces. You could also create a playlist of songs that reflect different emotions found in the novel. This menu provides a balance of elegance, subtlety, and dramatic flair, reflecting the tone and themes of Angels' Blood. Feel free to adapt it to your book club's preferences and available resources. Enjoy your Night at the Chorus!

THEMED MENU SUGGESTIONS

This game is flexible and can be adapted to your book club's specific interests and knowledge level. You can also find online resources that provide chorus music trivia questions.

Adaptations:

- Visual Aids: Use images of composers, scores, or instruments to make the game more interactive.
- Music Clips: Play short audio clips of famous pieces to make it more engaging.
- Team Names: Name your teams after chorus terms such as: CHORISTER, SOPRANO, ALTO, TENOR, BASS, CONDUCTOR, COMPOSER, SOLOIST, AUDIENCE
- Prizes: Award small prizes to the winning team.

Instructions

Divide into teams. Each correct answer earns a point. The team with the most points at the end wins! You can adjust the difficulty of the questions to suit your group's knowledge.

Easy:

1. Which composer wrote Für Elise? (Ludwig van Beethoven)
2. What is the name of the famous opera featuring the aria Nessun Dorma? (Turandot)
3. What instrument is prominently featured in a concerto by Antonio Vivaldi? (Violin)
4. Which composer is known for his use of the Dies Irae sequence? (Many composers, but Mozart's Requiem is a common answer)
5. What is the name of the famous opera by Giacomo Puccini that features the aria O mio babbino caro? (Gianni Schicchi)

MUSICAL TRIVIA GAME

Medium:

1. What is a madrigal? (A type of polyphonic vocal music popular in the Renaissance)
2. Which composer is known for his use of leitmotifs (recurring musical themes)? (Richard Wagner)
3. Name a famous opera by Giuseppe Verdi. (La Traviata, Rigoletto, Aida, Otello, etc.)
4. What is the name of the famous ballet featuring music by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky? (The Nutcracker)
5. Which composer's life is associated with the famous quote, Music is the universal language of mankind? (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, though it's often incorrectly attributed to many composers).

Hard:

1. Name three composers from the Baroque period. (Johann Sebastian Bach, George Frideric Handel, Antonio Vivaldi, among others)
2. What is the difference between a sonata and a symphony? (A sonata is typically a smaller instrumental work in several movements, while a symphony is a much larger orchestral work, usually in four movements.)
3. Which opera by Richard Strauss features a famous portrayal of Salome? (Salome)
4. Identify the composer of the opera The Marriage of Figaro. (Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart)
5. What is a concerto grosso? (A Baroque-era orchestral work featuring a small group of solo instruments against a larger orchestra).

MUSICAL TRIVIA GAME

The Fallen Angel

Ingredients:

- Layer 1 (The Angel): 1.5 oz. Crème de Violette (a beautiful, vibrant purple liqueur)
- Layer 2 (The Mystery): 1 oz. Dry Gin (for a crisp, slightly mysterious base)
- Layer 3 (The Blood): A splash of Pomegranate Liqueur (a deep red color to represent the bloodshed)
- Garnish: A single, fresh blackberry, carefully placed on the rim of the glass.

Instructions:

1. Chill: Chill a martini glass or a similar elegant glass.
2. Layer: Carefully pour the Crème de Violette into the chilled glass, letting it settle at the bottom.
3. Layer: Slowly pour the gin over the back of a spoon to create a distinct layer on top of the Crème de Violette.
4. Layer: Gently add the pomegranate liqueur, again using the back of a spoon to maintain the layers.
5. Garnish: Place the blackberry on the rim of the glass.



SIGNATURE DRINK

Lacrimosa from Mozart's Requiem
Dies Irae from Verdi's Requiem
Pie Jesu from Fauré's Requiem
Nimrod from Elgar's Enigma Variations
The Armed Man: Mass for Peace by Karl Jenkins
Miserere mei, Deus by Allegri
Ave Maria by Schubert
O mio babbino caro from Puccini's Gianni Schicchi
Habanera from Bizet's Carmen
Nessun Dorma from Puccini's Turandot
Summertime from Gershwin's Porgy and Bess
Gloomy Sunday by Rezső Seress
Hallelujah by Leonard Cohen
Bridge Over Troubled Water by Simon & Garfunkel
What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong



SPOTIFY MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A watercolor illustration of a cozy living room. In the center, a wooden chair with a curved back sits on a light-colored rug. To the left and right are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books. In the background, a wooden table with a plant on it is visible. The overall style is soft and artistic, with a warm color palette.

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS POSSIBLE
SPOILERS FOR THIS BOOK IN
THE DISCUSSION SECTION.

WARNING

- The Mystery: How effective was the mystery in Angels' Blood? Were the clues well-placed and the solution satisfying? Did you guess the killer's identity before the reveal?
- The Characters: Which character was your favorite, and why? Were the characters well-developed and believable? Did any characters surprise you? How did the author portray the complexities of human relationships?
- The Setting: How did the setting of the New York Luminoso chorus contribute to the overall atmosphere and plot of the novel? Did the author effectively use the setting to create suspense and intrigue?
- The Music: What role did music play in the novel? How did the author use music to enhance the emotional impact and create a sense of atmosphere? Did you find the descriptions of the music evocative and engaging?
- The Social Commentary: What commentary did Angels' Blood offer on the treatment of women in the world of classical music? Was this commentary effectively integrated into the narrative, or did it feel heavy-handed? What is your opinion on the author's approach?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- The Love Triangle: Discuss the romantic relationships in Angels' Blood. How did these relationships affect the characters' actions and the plot of the novel? Were the relationships believable and relatable? Did you empathize with any of the characters involved
- Piper Morgan: Analyze Piper Morgan as a character. Is she a relatable protagonist? How does her background as a journalist inform her perspective and actions in the novel? What were her strengths and weaknesses?
- Todd Barlow: Discuss Todd Barlow's character arc. Was his transformation believable? How did his actions contribute to the plot and the overall themes of the novel? How did his actions affect other characters?
- The Ending: How satisfying was the ending of the novel? Were all loose ends tied up effectively? What is your opinion on the way the author dealt with the themes of justice and revenge?
- The overall theme: What did you think was the central theme of this novel? Did you connect with any of these themes personally?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Roberta Mantell began writing fiction after 30 years as an arts reporter and photographer for The New York Times and other publications, where her byline was Roberta Hershenson. Inspired by the books of the mystery writer Batya Gur, she now enjoys writing literate mysteries to challenge and delight readers. Her debut mystery, *ANGELS' BLOOD: Murder in the Chorus*, is set in a present-day chorus where an arts reporter investigates how the murders of two singers connect to a Requiem possibly composed by a forgotten 19th century woman.

Roberta Mantell is an East Coast native who leads workshops in memoir writing and contributes essays to the website www.NYCityWoman.com. As a chorus member for more than two decades, she sang at Carnegie Hall and on stages in Beijing, Prague, and St. Petersburg. She lives in Manhattan.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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