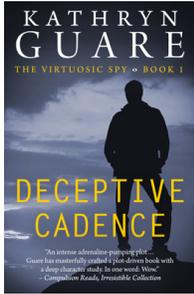


## *Deceptive Cadence* BOOK GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



My recommendation for this guide is to make it available to the book club members in advance of your meeting, to give the participants a chance to read it and prepare some thoughts ahead of time. I would further suggest not going through the guide in strict order as a formal (and not very fun!) exercise, but just open it up for participants to choose any question they found particularly interesting and then go with the flow! Every group is different, so feel free to abandon the tool immediately if it doesn't seem useful for your members!

### CHARACTERS, MOTIVATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS

#### Conor McBride and Thomas McBride

1. In the story's opening pages, Conor McBride is a man who feels he's been betrayed by his brother, that Thomas intentionally implicated him in a crime that ruined his career. Why do you think he agreed to go on this mission at all? (*Ref: Chapter 2/Scene 1*)
2. When the brothers are finally face-to-face, what does their reunion scene tell you about the relationship they've had in the past, and how is it different now? (*Ref: Chapter 21/Scene 1*)
3. How do you feel about Thomas McBride? Do your feelings about him change at all during the course of the book?

#### Conor and Frank Emmons Murdoch

(*Ref: Chapter 1/Scene 1; Chapter 7/Scene 1; Chapters 40 and 41*)

1. Frank Emmons Murdoch conducts himself almost as a stage actor – suave, polished, urbane - and he presents an ever-changing persona to Conor. What do you think about Frank? What does Conor think about him? And, what does Frank think about Conor?

#### Conor and Curtis Sedgwick

(*Ref: Chapter 9/Scene 1, Chapter 16, Chapter 33, Chapter 37*)

1. What are their first impressions of each other? How does their relationship change over the course of the story?
2. How do you think Sedgwick felt about deceiving Conor for so many months?
3. Sedgwick is a man who's struggled against heroin addiction for almost ten years. Near the end of the book, he makes a promise to Thomas. How successful will he be at keeping it?

#### Conor and the Women in his life

(*Ref: Chapter 13, Chapter 38/Scene 3, Chapter 39/Scene 1*)

1. Conor shares a deep, near-psychic bond with his mother. Talk about how she has influenced him, and how her spirit continues to guide him during his months in India.
2. Conor seeks Kavita out when he's at his lowest point. Why do you think he is so inexorably drawn to Kavita, and what does he get from their relationship?

(*Ref: Chapter 12/Scene 1; Chapter 17, Chapter 19/Scene 1*)

1. What do you think Radha's purpose is in this story?

## OTHER CHARACTERS

1. Talk about any other characters that stood out for you – either because you liked them or didn't!

## THE VIRTUOSIC SPY

1. Conor's "talent for repose" is mentioned at various points in the story. What does that mean, and why do you think he unexpectedly found himself capable of becoming a skilled undercover operative?
2. At the beginning of the book (*Chapter 2*) we get a scene of Conor playing his Pressenda violin before he leaves, in the latter third of the book (*Chapter 27/Scene 2*) we get a sense of what the weight of a Walther semiautomatic handgun has done to his peace of mind, and in the book's final scene we see him yearning to have the violin in his hands again. What do these three scenes say about him?
3. What possible symbolism might there be in Conor's illness?

## THE SETTINGS

1. What were your impressions of these various settings:
  - a. Conor's farm in Dingle
  - b. Fort Monckton, the MI6 training facility
  - c. Mumbai
  - d. Rishikesh – Kavita's ashram
  - e. Gulmarg – the mountains of Kashmir

## THE STORY

1. Which scenes stood out for you in particular?
2. What did you like best and least about the story?
3. What did you think about the deceptive set-up of Conor's mission and the eventual disclosure of what Thomas had really been doing, and how it ended up
4. What do you think will happen next?