



Book Club Kit

A Note From Trish

Dear Reader,

I've been an antique dealer since I was a teen, and a life-long New Englander. I've written two series under the name of Pat Esden that are contemporary fantasy. But for some time, I wanted to create a series that would show an up-to-date look at the antique trade and Vermont life—not just the picturesque and romanticized version but books set where old ways clash and meld into the modern. This is one reason I chose to place the fictional town of Scandal Mountain close to the progressive small city of Burlington and equally near the rural towns that spread along the border of Vermont and Quebec. The mix of older traditions butting against the onrush of contemporary life offers an extra layer of tensions, especially for an antique and art dealer like Edie Brown. To succeed in restoring her family's antique business to its former glory, Edie must keep one foot on the cutting edge of the antique trade while also respecting the history and cultural value of the antiques she loves and their owners and creators.



At the beginning of the novel there is a quote from Edie Brown about the world of art and antiques. She says: “And to us dealers in the art and antiques trade, it really all comes down to the cash. Well, that, plus the love of history. And the hunt. And the desire for beautiful things.” The relationship between people—particularly collectors and dealers—and antiques and art is a subject that has always fascinated me. Why do people covet and collect? Why are they drawn to keep certain items and throw out others? I suspect these questions filter into the series in several ways—not just focusing on art and antiques, but also on relationships people choose to hold on to and others they freely leave behind.

I hope you enjoy this book club kit, which includes discussion questions, an awesome playlist, a recipe, and some photos from my own antiquing adventures. Thank you for reading, sharing, and reviewing!

-Trish

Discussion Questions

The questions below have some spoilers for **THE ART OF THE DECOY**. Please come back to this page after you've finished reading and are ready to enjoy discussion.

1. What Vermont town(s) is Scandal Mountain based on? Can you guess?
2. Who's your favorite character in the book? Why? Do they remind you of someone from your own life?
3. Do you think Edie is too hard on her Mom? What do you think caused their strained relationship?
4. Do you think Edie is a morally gray character? How about Shane?
5. 'Laws of inheritance' play a role in the novel. How often do you think this so-called type of 'law' is still used today? How about a generation ago?
6. Folk art reflects the region and culture of the people who created a specific piece. Besides decoys, what other objects do you think fall into the folk-art category? Do you think it's important that these pieces are preserved for the future?
7. Kala has skills. Where do you think she learned them?
8. How do you interpret the book's last two pages. What do you think was revealed? Was it one secret or more?
9. **A WEALTH OF DECEPTION** is book 2 in the series. What characters do you think might reoccur? Do you like series where background characters become important later in the series? Who do you hope returns?

THE ART OF THE DECOY: my playlist!

This is a playlist of the songs I listened to while writing THE ART OF THE DECOY. Some of them like *Colder Heavens* and *Lie Alone* helped me get into the main character, Edie Brown's head. Others like *Way Down We Go*, *Brave Enough*, and *Complainte Pour Ste Catherine* put me in the right mood for writing specific scenes. *Light On* reminded me of Edie's determination and *That's What Makes This House a Home* speaks to the past that drives her. *Sunscreen*? Well, it was the lyrics that made me chose that song. And *Serenade to Spring* and *Who Else Could I Be* are nods to Uncle Tuck and Edie's new employee, Kala Acosta.

Colder Heavens—Blanco White

Way Down We Go—KALEO

Brave Enough—Lindsey Stirling, Christina Perri

Complainte Pour Ste Catherine—Kate and Anna McGarrigle

Juramidam—Nick Mulvey

That's What Makes This House a Home—Holley Maher

Belle-fille—Fally Lpupa

Sunscreen—Ira Wolf

Lie Alone—Blanco White

Natural Skin Deep—Neneh Cherry

Serenade to Spring—Songs from A Secret Garden

Cornflake Girl—Tori Amos

Castles—Freya Ridings

Who Else Could I Be—Peter Bradley Adams

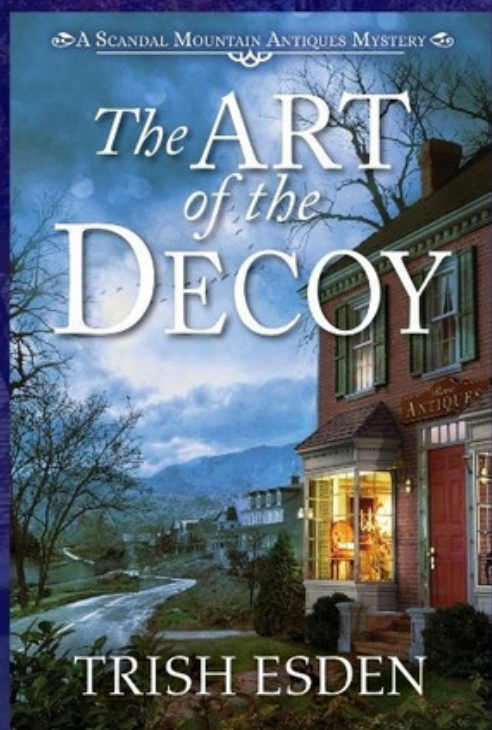
Light On—Maggie Rogers

Listen on Spotify:



<https://bit.ly/3OUiO2j>

"A sense of history and wistful thoughts of times gone by swept over me. Here we all stood under the eaves of a Vermont farmhouse, probably not much different in appearance than the Quebec home where these decoys once sat in their china hutch. They'd most likely been carved and painted in that same home, perhaps on a table under a sunny window or by the light of a kerosene lamp. Rural history. Quebec history. The history of families who lived along the frontière of two countries."



~**The Art of the Decoy**~
a Scandal Mountain Antiques Mystery



www.TrishEsden.com

Recipe: Sucre a la Creme

Ingredients

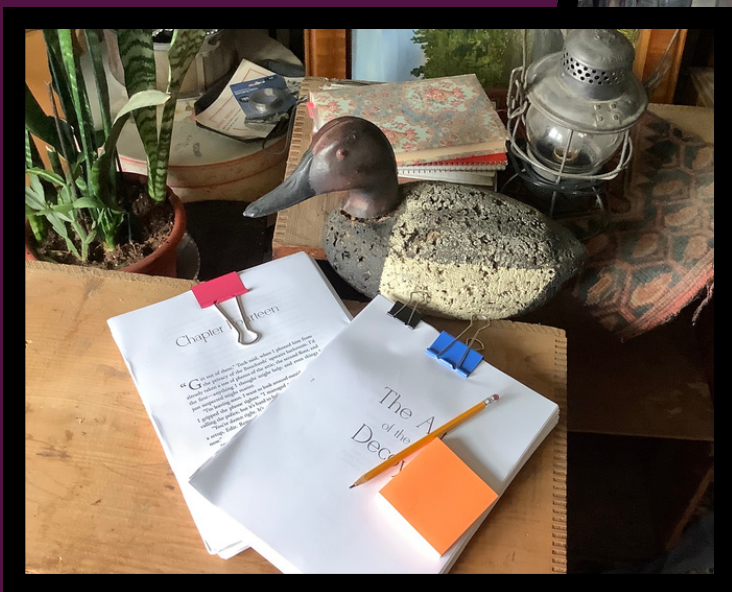
2 cups maple syrup

1 cup granulated white sugar

1 cups light whipping cream

1/ 2 cup ground walnuts or butternuts (optional)

1. Butter 9x9 pan then line with parchment paper (parchment should hang over edge of pan to make removal easier).
2. In medium size pot (4 quart) add maple, sugar, and cream. Bring to boil on high heat stirring constantly.
3. Once it reaches boil, lower to medium heat, boil without stirring until it reaches soft ball stage (238 degrees F on candy thermometer)
4. Remove from heat immediately. Do not stir. Let cool to 110 degrees F.
5. Beat with mixer or by hand until mixture thickens and loses its gloss (color will become lighter and dull).
6. Pour immediately into lined pan, sprinkle with nuts (if desired) and refrigerate for 1-2 hours. (The sucre a la creme can be scored with knife before refrigerating to make it easier to cut after hardening)
7. Once cool, cut into pieces. (Store in airtight container, and cool, dry place/ 2-3 weeks)



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