

*The*  
**S W E E T N E S S**  
*at the* **B O T T O M**  
*of the* **P I E**



Smithsonian  
National Postal Museum

— *A Flavia de Luce Novel* —

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & PROMPTS

*Please see below for questions that we'll use to loosely guide our discussion on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Some of these questions were borrowed from or inspired by the Questions & Topics for Discussion at the end of the book.*

- ☞ With her high level of knowledge and her self-reliance, Flavia hardly seems your typical eleven-year-old- girl. Or does she? Can you think of other books that have similar protagonists?
- ☞ Do you think Flavia is as clever as she gives herself credit for?
- ☞ With her excessive interest in poisons and revenge, it's no surprise that Flavia is fascinated, not scared, as she watches the stranger die in the garden. In your view, is her dark matter-of-factness more refreshing or disturbing? How do you relate, it at all, to Flavia? Do you find her to be a likeable or realistic character?
- ☞ Flavia's relationships with others—both dead and alive—are complicated. How did they change throughout the novel? Which relationship was the most surprising to you?
- ☞ Buckshaw, the estate, is almost a character in its own right. What are some other objects or places that Bradley brought to life for you?
- ☞ Throughout the novel characters faces decisions involving moral ambiguity. Are there any decisions they made that you found particularly upsetting or pleasing?
- ☞ Inspector Hewitt uses a capital "P" to refer to Flavia in his notes. What might that stand for?
- ☞ Bradley has said that he set this book in the 1950's because he wanted to highlight some of the ideas and traditions of the time which do not exist in the modern world. Do you think he was successful? What era would you have set the book in?
- ☞ Bradley has said that "Detective fiction usually results in a very cerebral [response] that has to do with ...the puzzle or the crime....But Flavia has been touching something in people that generates a response from the heart..." Do you agree with his assessment?
- ☞ What do you think the title *The Sweetness at the Bottom of the Pie* means?
- ☞ Before becoming a writer, Bradley worked in TV production. How do you think this impacted his style of description?