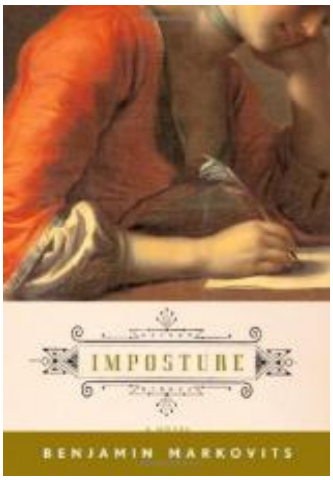
Imposture: A Novel

by Benjamin Markovits



About the Book

Lord Byron was the greatest writer and most notorious, scandalous lover of his age?an irresistible attraction for a sheltered, bookish, and passionate young woman like Eliza Esmond. Eliza believes she's met Byron on the doorstep of his publisher, and that her dreams have come true when he arranges to meet her in secret. But what if the man she believes to be Byron is someone else?

Discussion Guide

1. How does the preface change the way in which we read the novel? If we had read it *after* the story, would that have affected our opinion of what happened in it?

2. In what ways are Polidori and Eliza Esmond alike? Unlike?

3. What does Polidori?s father mean by the phrase ?the force of impossible comparisons??

4. Beatrice, Eliza?s sister, and Gaetano, Polidori?s father, stand in the novel for the voices of common sense. Have they been proved right in the end?

5. The novel, as its title suggests, examines the idea of imposture. Characters imitate and reflect each other: as, for example, Polidori and Byron do. Are there other pairs of characters in the book who mirror each other in some way?

6. Byron, Polidori, Shelley, etc., are not only characters in **Imposture** but also historical figures. Do their ?real? stories have any relevance to the novel itself? Does the novel make an issue of that question?

7. What does Polidori learn at the theater? Is there something else he should have learned?

8. Polidori?s story is called ?The Vampyre,? and there are frequent references in the novel to blood. How is his story played out in the novel itself? Who is the real vampyre?

9. What happened in Italy between Polidori, Frances, and Lord Byron? Brother and sister at one point discuss the question of forgiveness. What do they have to forgive each other for? Who should forgive whom?

10. Does Eliza Esmond love Polidori or Lord Byron?

Author Bio

Benjamin Markovits is the author of YOU DON'T HAVE TO LIVE LIKE THIS and PLAYING DAYS. He left an unpromising career as a professional basketball player to study Romanticism. Since then he has taught high-school English, worked at a left-wing cultural magazine and published seven novels, including a trilogy on the life of Lord Byron.

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