Golden Earrings

by Belinda Alexandra



About the Book

For fans of Colleen McCullough, Kate Morton, and Lucinda Riley, a powerful saga of family, love, honor and betrayal set in historical Barcelona and romantic Paris, from the author of TUSCAN ROSE.

?You who judge me: come! Let me tell you a story?? Paloma Batton is the granddaughter of Spanish refugees who fled Barcelona after the Civil War. A disciplined student attending the school of the Paris Opera Ballet, Paloma lets little get in the way of her career until she receives a mysterious pair of golden earrings. She begins exploring her Spanish heritage and becomes fascinated by *la Rusa*, a woman who rose from poverty to become one of the great flamenco dancers of modern times before committing suicide. As Paloma begins to unravel the secrets of the past, she discovers more than one person who had good reason for wanting *la Rusa* dead --- including Paloma?s own grandmother.

Written with the same depth and emotion as Belinda Alexandra?s ?rich, unforgettable saga? (Kimberly Freeman, author of WILDFLOWER HILL) TUSCAN ROSE, GOLDEN EARRINGS moves between two of the great cities of Europe: Barcelona in the lead-up to the Civil War and Paris in the 1970s. It is the story of two women and the extremes to which they are willing to go for love. And above all, it is a story of great passions --- and great betrayals --- where nothing is quite as it seems.

Discussion Guide

1. How would you characterize the landscape of Spain in the early 1900s? How does it differ from Paris in the 1970s? In what ways do their differences color the stories of the narrators?

2. What are your initial suspicions as to why Evelina (Mamie) refuses to discuss her Spanish past with Paloma?

3. Paloma deeply resents her father for his affair with another woman while her mother was ill and dying. What details

might she not know about her parents? marriage? Can you think of other explanations to the circumstances?

4. Evelina and Celestina experience their worlds very differently, despite living in the same city in the same period. How do poverty and wealth impact the girls? day-to-day lives? What knowledge or experiences are they isolated from in their respective situations?

5. Author Belinda Alexandra employs the theme of rebellion in GOLDEN EARRINGS both as a literal and figurative storytelling device. How are they used most powerfully? Which character is most defined by his or her rebellion?

6. Describe Conchita. What does her dress and behavior tell you about her character? How does she seem to fit in with the Montella family and lifestyle?

7. In chapter 24, Celestina compares her father?s death to a bull dying in a matador fight, meaning both of them were destined to lose no matter what. What else does this metaphor represent within the context of the entire story? How did each of the main characters overcome or succumb to their respective destinies?

8. Do you think Celestina needed the tragedies in her life to happen in order to be able to dance as well as she did? Are certain experiences required to develop passion, or can a person simply be born with it?

9. Despite their upbringing, Xavier and Margarida believe in and fight for equality among classes. What kind of experiences may have influenced their altruistic personalities? Do you think good or bad can exist in people regardless of upbringing?

10. How were Paloma?s and Evelina?s perceived betrayals similar? How would Evelina?s life been different if she had known the truth about La Rusa and Conchita?

11. Knowing the purpose for why La Rusa visited Paloma beyond the grave, why do you think her ghost appeared to Paloma during that time of her life? Why not years before, or years later?

12. Why do you think Evelina never tells Julieta or Paloma about their real mother/heritage? Do you think there were reasons beyond her shame and anger toward La Rusa?

13. In GOLDEN EARRINGS, infidelity is never exactly as it seems to those on the outside. When have you made assumptions about a person or persons and been wrong? Is it better to always give people the benefit of the doubt?

14. Do you agree with the inscription on La Rusa?s tombstone, ?All honorable causes eventually succeed even if at first they fail?? Why or why not? If La Rusa?s family hadn?t suffered such tragic deaths for fighting for their beliefs, what honorable causes do you think she would have fought for?

15. If you had been faced with the choice La Rusa was forced to make with Salazar, what would you have done? What do you think La Rusa?s life would have been like if she had chosen to protect Xavier?

16. Belinda Alexandra uses first-person narration from three perspectives to tell her story. How is this better (or worse) than third-person omniscient? How different would your experience have been with the characters within a different

narrative style?

Author Bio

Belinda Alexandra has been published to wide acclaim in Australia and New Zealand, France, Germany, Holland, Poland, Norway and Spain. She is the daughter of a Russian mother and Australian father and has been an intrepid traveler since her youth. Her love of other cultures and languages is matched by her passion for her home country, Australia, where she is a volunteer rescuer and caregiver for the NSW Wildlife Information and Rescue Service.

Critical Praise

"A rich, unforgettable saga, brimming with intrigue, historical detail and heart."

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