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Moonlight Masquerade: A Regency Romance

by Ruth Axtell



About the Book

Sometimes it is hard to tell if you are the cat or the mouse.

Lady Céline Wexham seems the model British subject. French by birth but enjoying life in 1813 as a widowed English countess, she is in the unique position of being able to help those in need --- or to spy for the notorious Napoleon Bonaparte.

When Rees Phillips of the British Foreign Office is sent to pose as the countess?s butler and discover where her true loyalties lie, he is confident he will uncover the truth. But the longer he is in her fashionable townhouse in London?s West End, the more his staunch loyalty to the Crown begins to waver as he falls under Lady Wexham?s spell.

Will he find the proof he needs? And if she is a spy after all, what then will he do?

With sharp wit, fast-paced dialogue, and infectious intrigue, Ruth Axtell deftly creates a world where black and white burst into a confusion of colors --- and no one is who they seem.

Discussion Guide

1. What does the opening scene reveal about Rees Phillips? character --- the kind of man he is? How does this make his spying assignment easier? More difficult?

2. How is Céline, Countess of Wexham, his opposite? How does she react to the suspicion that there is a spy under her roof?

3. Rees?s patriotism and his deeply held principles begin to gradually shift as he gets to know Céline. How does a

Christian achieve a proper balance between holding fast to convictions and maintaining relationships with individuals with opposing principles?

4. Valentine is the epitome of a woman scorned. This motivates her desire to bring Rees down. Why does personal rejection lead to disliking the person who has rejected one?

5. Although Rees has to play the part of an aloof, respectful butler, what gives Céline clues that he is not a servant but a gentleman?

6. What makes Rees see beyond the elegant, alluring ?enchantress? he observes at the dinner party to a person he suspects is as solitary as he?

7. Why does Céline ultimately decide to take Rees with her to Hartwell House, knowing by this time that he is her enemy? Have you ever made a decision knowing it went against all reason and could ultimately be harmful, if not fatal?

8. What are Céline?s feelings upon arriving at Hartwell House and the French émigré community there? What causes such mixed emotions?

9. By the time they are at Hartwell House Rees admits he is falling in love with Céline despite hating her politics and subterfuge. Yet, when he overhears Monsieur de la Roche?s threats, all Rees?s protective instincts rise to the fore. Is he right or wrong to follow his heart over his head concerning Céline? Is this always the wisest course? How can one know?

10. Rees?s assignment in Céline?s household metamorphoses during the course of the story from a single-minded duty to his country to protecting Céline?s safety above all. How does his faith guide him in his dilemma? Does he always receive clear-cut direction from God?

Author Bio

Ruth Axtell is the author of many novels, including MOONLIGHT MASQUERADE and WILD ROSE, one of Booklist's Top Ten in Christian Fiction. Currently a resident of Downeast Maine, Axtell has lived in the Canary Islands, Miami, and the Netherlands.

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