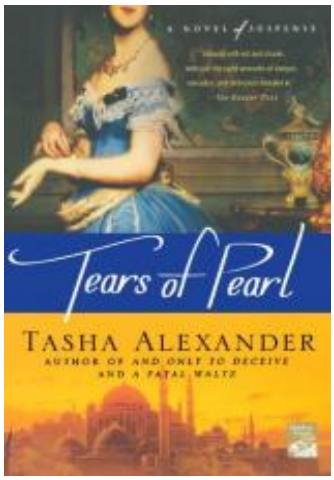
Tears of Pearl

by Tasha Alexander



About the Book

Set amid the beauty and decadence of the Ottoman Empire, Lady Emily?s latest adventure is full of intrigue, treachery, and romance.

Looking forward to the joys of connubial bliss, newlyweds Lady Emily and Colin Hargreaves, diplomats of the British Empire, set out toward Turkey for an exotic honeymoon. But on their first night in the city, a harem girl is found murdered, strangled in the courtyard of the sultan?s lavish Yildiz Palace. Sir Richard St. Clare, an Englishman who works at the embassy in Constantinople, is present and recognizes the girl as his own daughter who was kidnapped twenty years earlier. Emily and Colin promise the heartbroken father that they?ll find her killer, but as the investigation gains speed, they find that appearance can be deceiving --- especially within the confines of the seraglio.

As a woman, Emily is given access to the forbidden world of the harem and quickly discovers that its mysterious, sheltered walls offer no protection from a ruthless murderer. As the number of victims grows, Emily must rely on her own sharp wit in a heart-stopping finale if she is to stop a killer bent on exacting vengeance no matter how many innocent lives he leaves in his wake.

Discussion Guide

1. What did you know about the Ottoman Empire before reading **Tears of Pearl**?

2. Take a moment to discuss your perceptions about harems. How are they portrayed in popular film/television adaptations? In previous novels? In this novel? How, if at all, did this book inform you about harem culture and/or women?s rights in Victorian-era Turkey?

3. As the author noted in the Conversation, Victorian women faced extreme danger in childbirth, and most lost at least

one child. How do you think this affected their views on motherhood? How does it affect your own?

4. How do women, in the past and today, find ways to be independent in restrictive societies?

5. Compare the ways in which Bezime and Perestu handle their power. Do you think Perestu will maintain her influence once she?s no longer valide?

6. Do you think the concubines would be better off outside the harem? Why or why not? Discuss the types of challenges they might face in the ?real? world.

7. Why do you think modern readers enjoy novels about the past? How and when can a powerful piece of fiction be a history lesson in itself?

8. We are taught, as young readers, that every story has a ?moral.? Is there a moral to **Tears of Pearl**? What can we learn about our world --- and ourselves --- from Emily?s adventure?

Author Bio

Tasha Alexander is the author of the *New York Times* bestselling *Lady Emily* mystery series. The daughter of two philosophy professors, she studied English Literature and Medieval History at the University of Notre Dame. She and her husband, novelist Andrew Grant, live on a ranch in southeastern Wyoming.

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