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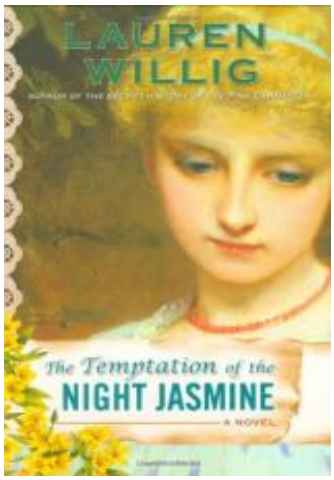
The Temptation of the Night Jasmine

by Lauren Willig



About the Book

The much anticipated fifth installment in the inventive and original Pink Carnation series

?**Pride and Prejudice** lives on? in Lauren Willig?s acclaimed Pink Carnation series, which continues with another deliciously lighthearted, romantic, and suspenseful novel. Willig introduces to her series the most elusive spy of all time, whose calling card is the faint whiff of jasmine in the cold night air.

After twelve years in India, Robert, duke of Dovedale, returns to his estate in England to avenge the murder of his mentor during the 1803 Battle of Assaye. Robert plans to infiltrate the infamous, secretive Hellfire Club to uncover the murderer?s identity --- but he has no idea that an even more difficult challenge awaits him --- one Lady Charlotte Lansdowne.

Having cherished a romanticized view of Robert since childhood, Charlotte is thrilled by his return. To Charlotte, Robert is all the knights of the Round Table rolled into one. That?s not exactly the case, but she can?t help but search for the man she loves inside this less-than-pristine package. And while Robert works to dissuade Charlotte from her delusions, he can?t help but be drawn to her innocence and inner beauty.

When Charlotte is approached by Lady Henrietta Selwick to join her in a bit of espionage --- investigating a plot to kidnap the king --- Robert soon realizes that Charlotte is not only the perfect partner in crime; she?s the perfect partner, period. Caught in a dangerous game with deadly flower-named spies and secret members of the Hellfire Club, Robert and Charlotte must work together to reveal the villain?and confront their true passion for each other.

Discussion Guide

Attention: Some plot spoilers in this guide.

1. The past and present worlds of **The Temptation of the Night Jasmine** are inhabited by many memorable characters. Were there any who reminded you of someone you know in real life? Who? What do the real and fictional people have in common?

2. In thinking of the dual time periods author Lauren Willig employs in the novel --- nineteenth-century England and modern-day London --- did you prefer one over the other? Which one? Why?

3. Along these lines, how would the novel be different if the stories were to take place in the opposite time period? For example, if Eloise?s story took place in 1800s Norfolk, and if Charlotte lived in 2004 Sussex?

4. Talk about Robert, the Duke of Dovedale. What were your first impressions of him? Did they change as the novel progressed?

5. What does the book?s title mean to you? Who is tempted in the book? Do they succumb? If so, at what consequence?

6. At the beginning of the book, Robert encounters Charlotte as she?s reading the Frances Burney novel Evelina; she and Robert refer to this book periodically throughout The Temptation of the Night Jasmine. From Wikipedia: ?Evelina, the title character, is the unacknowledged daughter of a dissipated English aristocrat. Her dubious birth has seen her raised in rural seclusion until her eighteenth year. Through a series of humorous events that take place in London and the resort town of Bristol-Hotwells, Evelina learns how to navigate the complex layers of eighteenth-century society and earn the love of a distinguished nobleman.? How does Charlotte?s story mirror that of Evelina?s? Why do you think the author chose to reference this work in her novel?

7. Charlotte?s grandmother, the Dowager Duchess of Dovedale; Colin?s mother, Mrs. Selwick-Alderly; the Queen --- Lauren Willig populates the novel with several formidable female figures. Discuss the matriarchs in **The Temptation of the Night Jasmine**. What did you think of them? How are the elder women portrayed in the book, compared to those who are younger?

8. ?For a moment, Robert was tempted to confide in her, to tell her the whole sordid story of the Colonel?s death and Wrothan?s disappearance. It would be a relief to have someone else to talk to? [page 78]. Why didn?t Robert tell Charlotte why he had returned to Girdings House? Do you think he should have confided in her sooner than he ultimately did?

9. Did you notice any parallels between the relationships of Eloise and Colin and Robert and Charlotte? What were they? Compare and contrast each couple --- with which did you identify most?

10. Discuss the theme of flowers that Lauren Willig employs in her series of novels. What do flowers represent in **The Temptation of the Night Jasmine**?

11. ?It gave Charlotte a slightly squirmy feeling in the pit of her stomach to realize how carelessly she had been dicing with her own reputation? [page 129]. Talk about the power of gossip, both in nineteenth-century society and modern times. Does gossip more adversely affect women than men?

12. After overhearing Joan make reference to Colin?s furtive occupation, Eloise becomes determined to find out if he?s a spy and sets about snooping through his belongings. What did you think of her actions? If you were in her position, would you have done the same thing? Were you surprised to discover what Colin was really up to?

13. What did you think about the plot twist involving King George III? Were you surprised as the details unfolded?

14. Talk about the ending of Robert and Charlotte?s story. Did you expect that Robert would propose in front of the King? Did you want Charlotte to immediately accept?

15. Have you read the author?s four previous books in the Pink Carnation series? If so, did doing so enhance your experience of **The Temptation of the Night Jasmine**? How? Do you have a favorite book?

Author Bio

Lauren Willig is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of more than 25 works of historical fiction, including BAND OF SISTERS, THE SUMMER COUNTRY, THE ENGLISH WIFE, the RITA Award-winning *Pink Carnation* series, and five novels co-written with Beatriz Williams and Karen White.

Her books have been translated into over 20 languages, picked for Book of the Month Club, awarded the RITA, Booksellers Best and Golden Leaf awards, and chosen for the American Library Association?s annual list of the best genre fiction.

An alumna of Yale University, she has a graduate degree in history from Harvard and a JD from Harvard Law School. She lives in New York City with her husband, two young children and vast quantities of coffee.

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