

Night Jasmine Discussion Questions

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?