

## Reading Group Guide for *Moonlight Masquerade: A Novel* by Ruth Axtell

1. What does the opening scene reveal about Rees Phillips's 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 you?
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. 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. When they kiss during the night of the masquerade, Rees believes he is the only who has lost his head and that Céline, by contrast, has behaved in a calculating manner. What was Céline's real reaction to the kiss?

11. How does the kiss cause Rees to reevaluate the way he has lived up until then, particularly in regards to his personal choices (his feelings for Jessamine and his reasons for contemplating marriage to her)?
12. When Rees is shot, how does Céline react? In life and death situations, what holds fast: love or principles?
13. How do Céline's feelings about God begin to change when Rees survives the gunshot?
14. Rees's assignment in Céline's household changes 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?
15. Why is Céline so afraid to follow her heart once Rees finds her in Paris after the war? How does her view of God help her overcome her feelings of inadequacy and allow her to receive a man's love?



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