



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH KRISTI ANN HUNTER



A Noble Masquerade

A HAWTHORNE HOUSE NOVEL
by Kristi Ann Hunter

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1. What does the title, *A Noble Masquerade*, mean?

The idea of a masquerade—in which people wear masks to hide their true identity from those around them—plays out on many different levels in the book. There’s the obvious correlation between a spy and a hidden identity, but there is also the deeper notion that people walk around living a masquerade every day. They try to wedge their way into a particular personality because they feel it is expected of them instead of finding ways to be themselves while fulfilling chosen or necessary obligations. In Miranda’s case, there’s the question of how to be a lady and still be herself. We often wear these masks with the best of intentions, even if they do us harm.

2. The Regency era isn’t often known as a particularly religious time period. How did you reconcile that with a book that would appeal to today’s Christian readers?

People’s views of the church, God, and personal relationships with Christ were undergoing a major shift during this time, making it a great backdrop against which to explore Christian thinking. Despite the dominance of the Anglican church, Methodists and Baptists were gaining new members quickly, something the government was forced to address by creating laws allowing people to attend churches that didn’t align with Anglican theology (such as Roman Catholic and Protestant). Thoughts and views were changing, paving the way for some of the evangelical greats of the Victorian era, such as D.L. Moody, who traveled to England from America, and Charles Spurgeon.

At the same time, a spirit of secularism was rising as well, in part due to the decadence of the Prince Regent and a state-run church. This broadening rift between two ways of thinking is something today’s Christian readers can definitely relate to.

3. *A Noble Masquerade* features a well-connected spy. Was there really a spy network organized against Napoleon?

Yes and no. Accounts of actual spies are vague and difficult to find. Not surprising, as they were spies. Undercover work wasn’t exactly respected at the time and was usually done by people acting as double agents: mistresses, traveling poets, scholars, etc. The War Office in the novel is fictitious and considerably more organized than anything that truly existed in nineteenth-century England. By most accounts, the French were a little better at it than the English (hence the Napoleonic spy infiltration in the book), and most of England’s spies were working in France (which is how our hero became a spy in the first place). Instead of having a centralized organization, if someone such as the prime minister, foreign minister, or even General Wellington needed information, they built their own slipshod network. Since my spy group was fictitious to begin with, I made them a bit more competent.

4. How does *A Noble Masquerade* tie in with the rest of the Hawthorne House series?

As the first full-length novel, *A Noble Masquerade* really lets readers get to know the Hawthorne family that they met in the novella *A Lady of Esteem*. While all the books in the series will be able to stand on their own, this story is very closely tied to Book 2, which I’m working on now. This is a close and loving family, and they will be in and out of each others stories throughout the series.