



THE PRETENDER

Celeste Bradley, St. Martin's Press 2003

- 1.** In the opening of *THE PRETENDER*, Agatha is very comfortable lying in order to control her own destiny. Do you believe that “anything goes” when faced with an unfair situation? What would you have done in such an unequal society?
- 2.** Agatha doesn't hold Simon's poor beginnings against him. How likely do you think that would be in the Regency era? What about in our time?
- 3.** Simon blames himself for his mother's death. Do you think he was responsible? How could he have prevented it?
- 4.** Like Simon, have you ever blamed yourself for something you would not hold against another person? Why is it so much easier to blame ourselves?
- 5.** Without a mother, Agatha was not brought up “properly,” so she is very wholehearted about sex. Do you think that if her mother had lived, Agatha would have behaved differently? How do our mothers influence our own views on sexuality?
- 6.** Simon admires Agatha's fearlessness. Do you think you could be that bold in her time? Are you brave in this one?
- 7.** At the end of *THE PRETENDER*, Simon retires rather than endanger Agatha by remaining spymaster. Agatha figures out a way for him to stay in the spy game he loves so much. Do you know of many couples who are so equal in their level of sacrifice?