

Reading Group/Discussion Questions for *Bewitching Season*

1. Writers of historical fiction face the challenge of developing characters that are true to their historical period but also appealing to and understandable by modern-day readers. Do you think the author accomplishes this?
2. *Bewitching Season* takes its plot from real events in history (Sir John Conroy's attempts to force Victoria to take him as her Private Secretary), and gives them a twist (using magic to accomplish it). Was it surprising to you that Princess Victoria had to put up with what she did, even though she was a princess and would one day be queen? Why do you think she did?
3. 1837 England was a very different place from today's world in many ways. Did you feel like you were "there"? What details in *Bewitching Season* make you feel that difference? What differences between then and now are the most interesting to you?
4. In the nineteenth century, girls of the upper classes did become adults more or less overnight, going from the schoolroom to the ballroom without much more preparation for how to deal with the grown-up social scene than perhaps a "children's party" or two. How do you think it made girls feel to be dropped into the deep end like this? How has it changed since then?
5. It's 1837, and you're at a ball. The orchestra just finished up a reel, and you know they'll probably play a waltz next...which you love to dance. But look! That hideous Mr. Smythe with the bad acne and worse breath is making his way toward you looking purposeful, and you just *know* he's going to ask you to dance. You'd rather eat your fan, but the rules of etiquette say that if you refuse an invitation to dance, you have to sit it out--you can't say no to one partner and say yes to another. So what do you do? Say yes and put up with Mr. Smythe, or say no and watch everyone else having fun? And aren't you glad this isn't actually 1837?

6. Which is worse--a tight corset, or tight jeans? Or are they, at some level, the same thing?
7. Persy longed to further her education in a time when girls couldn't attend university, and Pen looked forward to the Season; by the end of the book, Persy is marrying and Pen planning to continue her magical studies with Ally and her new husband in Ireland. Do you think this sort of total change in personal goals to something very different often happens in real life? Can you see it happening to you?
8. If a girl like Persy did run away and become a governess for whatever reason, there was no going back. If she did change her mind and return home, the best she could expect was to be bundled off to live the rest of her life at one of her family's homes in the countryside, where she could maybe marry a wealthy farmer... but she would not be allowed to resume her place in aristocratic society. Do you think you could make that kind of a choice?
9. If you had Persy's magical abilities, what would you do with them?