

HELLO!

Thank you so much for taking the time to read *The Traitor*. The reception to Emma Makepeace so far has been beyond anything I could have dreamed of, and I feel incredibly lucky that I get to do this.

Emma Makepeace was inspired by a spy I met while working for the British government over a decade ago. At least, I think she was a spy. That's the thing about working in intelligence: you never know if someone is what they seem. The chatty young woman from IT who comes to fix your laptop one day, gets you talking about your family and your friends and then disappears . . . well, sure, she could have moved on to another job. But then again, she might have been an intelligence agent and that friendly coffee she invited you for might have been part of your background check. You'll never know. Spies are absolute masters at deception and their cover stories are always flawless. They have to be.

And so it is for Emma in *The Traitor*. To uncover the truth behind the death of a fellow MI6 operative she must go undercover on a superyacht belonging to a Russian oligarch. If her cover is blown, she faces certain death. The stakes could not be higher. I can't imagine living my life in that state of tension, where the smallest mistake could be catastrophic. Even writing about it left me breathless at times. And I really hope reading it does, too.

Thanks again for coming along with me on this ride. I hope you'll join me for part 3, too. But first: enjoy *The Traitor!* And remember: nobody is who they seem. . . .

All my best,

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Please note that the following questions contain spoilers for The Traitor!

- 1. The novel begins with a brief scene from the perspective of Stephen Garrick, an MI6 analyst, and then reveals his gruesome murder, which Emma is brought in to investigate. How did this opening shape your reading experience and set up the novel?
- 2. Though Emma spends a significant portion of The Traitor working undercover and out of contact with her team at The Agency, side characters such as Ripley, Martha, Ed Masterson, and Jon Frazer play large roles in the story. Discuss your initial thoughts of each side character and how they changed over the course of the novel.
- 3. If you haven't read Alias Emma, what was your first impression of Emma Makepeace? How would you describe her skill set?
- 4. Chapter two begins, "Emma Makepeace was born to be a spy. It was in her blood." Her father had been a spy for Britain and was executed by Russian authorities when he was discovered. As a result, Emma believed fiercely in vengeance, which she took "one case at a time. By making it much, much harder for Russian spies to operate in her adopted homeland." How did this motivation play out or change throughout the novel?
- 5. In chasing down the bad guys behind Stephen Garrick's murder, Emma Makepeace goes undercover on the super-yacht of a Russian oligarch named Andrei Volkov. Despite her best efforts to avoid suspicion, build trust, and gain intelligence without raising alarms, there are several moments in which Emma is nearly caught. What surprised you most about Emma's time on the yacht?
- 6. Emma Makepeace's cover was blown partially by the way she handled Volkov's girlfriend, and Emma's concern about her safety, which delves into an ethical issue: Helping one person versus risking the entire mission, impacting a wider net of people. How would you have handled such a situation? What are the pros and cons?

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- 7. After Emma's cover on the yacht is blown, she defies official instructions and keeps working the case. Why do you think she disobeyed The Agency? What would you have done in her shoes?
- 8. Were you surprised by who the traitor was? If you saw it coming, what made you suspicious and what confirmed their identity? If you were surprised, who else did you think it could be?
- 9. Discuss the ending of the novel. How did you feel when you read it? Has Emma changed at all over the course of the narrative? If so, how?
- 10. In *The Traitor*, Emma Makepeace grapples with the question of whether she can form real friendships and relationships while working as a spy. What did you think of this subplot?
- 11. Emma Makepeace has been described as "a worthy heir to the James Bond mantle" (James Patterson). Discuss the ways in which she fits into the canon of spies and action heroes, and the ways in which she is different.
- 12. If you read *Alias Emma*, the first Emma Makepeace story, how did this novel compare for you? If you haven't read its predecessor, how did this novel work for you as a standalone?