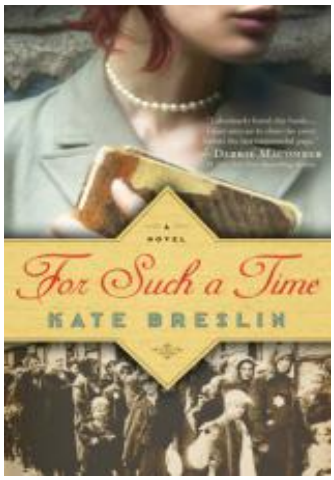
ReadingGroupGuides
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For Such a Time

by Kate Breslin



About the Book

Europe, 1944

Hiding behind the false identity of Stella Muller, blond Jewess Hadassah Benjamin is pressed into service by SS-Kommandant Colonel Aric von Schmidt at a Nazi transit camp. Unable to stand by as her people are sent to Auschwitz, Stella bravely appeals to her employer on the prisoners? behalf. She soon discovers that Aric is an officer with hidden sympathies and finds herself battling an attraction to a man she should despise.

When her true heritage is revealed, Stella?s life hangs in the balance. Perhaps God has placed her here for such a time as this, but how can she save her people when she is unable to save herself?

Discussion Guide

1. When the story opens, Stella finds herself held captive at the chalet of Aric?s cousin in the German town of Dachau, not far from the concentration camp. After the war, many townspeople insisted they knew nothing of the Nazi?s activities at the camp. What do you think? Were they truly unaware? Or did their guilt make them blind? Could we find this weakness of human nature in the injustices that surround us today --- in our neighborhoods, our cities, even our country?

2. Who was your favorite secondary character in the story? Why?

3. As Stella is taken to Aric?s new post at Theresienstadt, she believes her people to be abandoned by God. Even now, the terrible inhumanity of the Holocaust remains incomprehensible; it is also difficult to reconcile with the will of a loving Father in heaven. If you were Stella, how would you come to terms with these events in your own faith? Do you think we can prevent the genocide still occurring in other parts of the world?

4. When Stella is directed by Captain Hermann to type up the train manifest for Auschwitz, she attempts to try and save a few by omitting random names from the list. A small gesture, but one that requires courage. Consider your own character. To what lengths would you go to save someone?s life? A child or another loved one? How about someone unknown to you?

5. Stella learns from Joseph that her uncle is the sole Elder in the *Judenrat* and must decide who goes to Auschwitz. How would you cope in Morty?s place?

6. Aric was originally an officer in the *Wehrmacht*, specifically, the German Army. Because of his injuries, he was discharged and then approached by Himmler to take charge of the camp at Theresienstadt. Later at the banquet, Stella is shocked to hear him, having witnessed Heydrich?s brutality at Babi Yar, disparage the Waffen-SS in front of his peers. Why then does he take the post of SS-Kommandant at Theresienstadt? Is he truly apathetic, or does he feel he has no other choice? Is one better than the other?

7. When Aric learns of *Wolkenbrand*, his conscience begins to war with duty, especially when he considers what Stella will think of him. Do you think people of the time had the same apprehensions? If it was what you had been taught, would you? What does it say about Aric?s character that he has taken under his wing three persons, each of whom, like Aric, is damaged in some way?

8. The Bible finds its way into Stella?s possession throughout the story, despite her repeated rejection. Finally, when she?s desperate and struggling to justify sending her people on the last death train before the Red Cross arrive, the Bible reappears to her. As she reads the words of John 3:16, she finally understands the depth of God?s love and knows what she must do. Can you share your own faith experience? Are you quick to accept the Bible?s teaching or is it more of a process for you?

9. At the end of the story, Aric reunites with Stella, and though he?s helped save the lives of her people, he knows Germany is losing the war and that he must eventually answer to the world for his part in Hitler?s scheme. Morty assures him the Jewish people will speak out in his favor, but if the story were to continue, what do imagine the eventual outcome might be?

10. Stella clings to her precious Bible throughout, and as she and Aric discuss the future, he is ready to reclaim his Christian faith. Do you think Aric and Stella?s faith journeys will continue? Why or why not? In what ways can they both continue to grow?

11. What particular event or detail in the story surprised you the most?

Author Bio

A Florida girl who migrated to the Pacific Northwest, Kate Breslin was a bookseller for many years. Author of several travel articles, award-winning poet, and RWA Golden Heart finalist, Kate now writes inspiring stories about the healing power of God's love. FOR SUCH A TIME is her first book. She lives with her husband and cat in Seattle, WA.

Critical Praise

?When I finished Kate Breslin's novel for the first time, I had an urge to flip back to page one and start reading all over again. It's that good. This book deserves a wide audience, and newcomer Breslin has a bright future.?

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