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The Pelican Bride: Gulf Coast Chronicles, Book 1

by Beth White



About the Book

She?s come to the New World to escape a perilous past. But has it followed her to these far shores?

It is 1704 when Frenchwoman Geneviève Gaillain and her sister board the frigate *Pélican* bound for the distant Louisiana colony. Both have promised to marry one of the rough men toiling in this strange new world in order to escape suffering in the old. Geneviève knows life won?t be easy, but at least here she can establish a home and family without fear of persecution for her outlawed religious beliefs.

When she falls in love with Tristan Lanier, an expatriate cartographer-turned-farmer whose checkered past is shrouded in mystery, Geneviève realizes that even in this land of liberty one is not guaranteed peace. Trouble is brewing outside the fort between the French colonists and the native people surrounding them. And an even more sinister enemy may lurk within. Could the secret Geneviève harbors mean the undoing of the colony itself?

Gulf Coast native Beth White brings vividly to life the hot, sultry South in this luscious, layered tale.

Discussion Guide

1. In the historical context of THE PELICAN BRIDE, Geneviève escapes France because of religious persecution. Think for a minute about some doctrines of your denomination. Are there any that are controversial, especially politically? Are there any which have created divisions in your family or circle of friends? Which ones, if any, do you consider worth dying for?

2. Jean Cavalier was a real historical person. He was willing to take up a sword to defend others who were being persecuted for their religious beliefs, making him a hero to some and a felon and traitor to others. Discuss the circumstances under which civil disobedience, even violence, might be warranted. How far is too far?

3. Getting down to a more interpersonal level, how well do you think Geneviève handled her differences with her sister Aimée? Too passive? Too strong? Are there people you are close to who seem to easily push your buttons? What are your strategies for mentoring/discipling them without pushing them away? Or do you think sometimes drawing a line in the sand is the only recourse?

4. What do you think about Aimée?s initial self-centered attitude and immaturity? Was it justified by the way her parents treated her and by the traumatic events of her young life? Why or why not? Do you think her journey into adulthood is realistically portrayed? In what ways?

5. What do you think will happen to Aimée after the conclusion of the book? Do you see her happily married?

6. If you had lived in the settlement of Fort Louis de la Louisiane, what would you have made of Bienville, given the events of this story? He was a historical personage surrounded by a good bit of controversy. Can you relate some of his dealings to political personages of our day? Do you sympathize with his frustration over the interference of the priests in the governance of the colony? Why? What role should Christians play in politics, if any?

7. European dealings with native populations have become a sore spot in American history. What changes in your thinking occurred as you read THE PELICAN BRIDE? In what ways did you sympathize with Nika?

8. Character backstory plays an enormous part in the forward motion of the plot of THE PELICAN BRIDE. Choose a character and discuss how well his or her actions are justified by the events of their past.

9. Do you think of Geneviève as a traitor? Why or why not?

10. Are there plot threads that were not resolved to your satisfaction? If so, how would you have resolved them?

11. Do you think Ysabeau?s descent into madness is permanent? What evidence do you see that she may recover --- or not? How can a society humanely treat its mentally ill citizens without endangering all?

12. Tristan and Geneviève commit to what is sometimes called a ?marriage of convenience.? Predict what you think will be the future of their family. How well should you know someone before you commit to marriage?

Author Bio

Beth White?s day job is teaching music at an inner-city high school in historic Mobile, Alabama. A native Mississippian, her passion is writing historical romance with a southern drawl. Her novels have won the American Christian Fiction Writers? Carol Award, the RT Book Club Reviewers? Choice Award, and the Inspirational Reader?s Choice Award.

Critical Praise

?Not your usual setting, not your usual historical romance --- THE PELICAN BRIDE breaks new ground in the historical genre. Choosing to write a story set in the French colony that became Mobile, Alabama, draws the reader into a new and exciting period. I fell in love with Tristan Lanier just as Geneviève Gaillain did. Who can resist a kind but fearless heroine and a hero who refuses to be molded to fit what others think is right --- when he knows what is right and will do it? A winning beginning to a new historical series.?

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Publication Date: April 15, 2014
Genres: Christian, Christian Fiction, Fiction, Historical Fiction, Historical Romance, Romance
Paperback: 368 pages
Publisher: Revell
ISBN-10: 0800721977
ISBN-13: 9780800721978