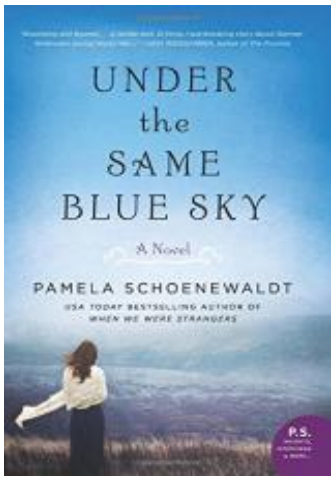
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Under the Same Blue Sky

by Pamela Schoenewaldt



About the Book

A shopkeeper?s daughter, Hazel Renner lives in the shadows of the Pittsburgh steel mills. She dreams of adventure, even as her immigrant parents push her toward a staid career. But in 1914, war seizes Europe and all their ambitions crumble. German-Americans are suddenly the enemy, ?the Huns.? Hazel herself is an outsider in her own home when she learns the truth of her birth.

Desperate for escape, Hazel takes a teaching job in a seemingly tranquil farming community. But the idyll is cracked when she acquires a mysterious healing power --- a gift that becomes a curse as the locals? relentless demand for ?miracles? leads to tragedy.

Hazel, determined to find answers, traces her own history back to a modern-day castle that could hold the truth about her past. There Hazel befriends the exiled, enigmatic German baron and forges a bond with the young gardener, Tom. But as America is shattered by war and Tom returns battered by shell-shock, Hazel?s healing talents alone will not be enough to protect those close to her, or to safeguard her dreams of love and belonging. She must reach inside to discover that sometimes the truth is not so far away, that the simplest of things can lead to the extraordinary.

Filled with rich historical details and intriguing, fully realized characters, UNDER THE SAME BLUE SKY is the captivating story of one woman?s emergence into adulthood amid the tumult of war.

Discussion Guide

1. Hazel?s mother sees signs of an extraordinary future for her daughter. While Hazel?s healing powers in Galway are certainly extraordinary, in what other, quieter ways does her mother?s prediction come true?

2. Discuss the nuanced nature of Hazel?s sudden gift of healing powers. How might a similar gift play out in your

community?

3. What roles does Ben Robinson play in Hazel?s journey throughout the novel?

4. Hazel?s journey is often driven by dreams of the past and of the future. Can you compare this to your own experience?

5. How are the qualities of air --- smoke, fog, blue sky --- woven into the plot and themes of UNDER THE SAME BLUE SKY?

6. Hazel, Tom and Georg were in various ways ?orphaned.? How does this fact help bring them together?

7. As Hazel gradually discovers, the legacy of her birth mother, Margit Brandt, is complex. What challenges and unexpected gifts comprise this legacy?

8. What experiences help prepare Hazel for the challenge of life with Tom when he returns shell shocked, or as he would be diagnosed today, with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD)?

9. The communities in this novel struggle with cultural and ethnic diversity. How has this struggle changed or not changed in the last century?

10. ?We?re not the same,? Jim Burnett says after the war. How does the experience of World War I transform characters and communities in this novel?

Author Bio

Pamela Schoenewaldt is the *USA Today* bestselling author of WHEN WE WERE STRANGERS and SWIMMING IN THE MOON. Her short stories have appeared in literary magazines in England, France, Italy and the United States. She taught writing for the University of Maryland, European Division, and the University of Tennessee.

Critical Praise

?Absorbing and layered with rich historical details, Schoenewaldt weaves a tender and at times, heartbreaking story about German-Americans during World War I. With remarkable compassion, the author skillfully portrays conflicted loyalties, the search for belonging, the cruelty of war and the resilience of the human spirit.?

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