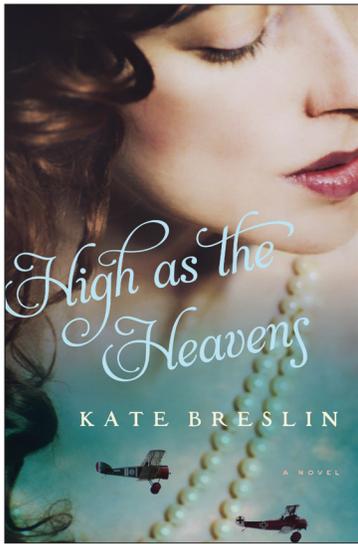




QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH KATE BRESLIN



High as the Heavens

by Kate Breslin

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1. What is *High as the Heavens* about?

High as the Heavens is a story about a woman who hides a terrible secret while working as an Allied agent behind enemy lines in WWI. It's also a story about love and loss and how two people struggle to find their way back to one another.

2. How were you inspired to write this story?

I enjoy weaving intrigue into my stories, and so the spy craft of the Great War was my inspiration for writing *High as the Heavens*. During my research on the real WWI Belgian underground network, *La Dame Blanche*, I was tantalized by the notion that secret agents like 007 worked in Belgium and France over one hundred years ago! I was amazed at their daring and sacrifice, and the courage of so many other French and Belgians who risked their lives collaborating with the British Secret Service to aid the Allies during the war.

3. The WWI battlefield can be a difficult setting for writing romance. Tell us how you arrived at the finished story. Was it what you expected it would be?

Honestly, writing *High as the Heavens* was a challenge for exactly those reasons. I wanted to avoid the trenches, so I chose instead for my setting a large, cultural city like Brussels—which happened to be occupied by the German army. With a downed British pilot and his nurse trying to keep him hidden, their surroundings weren't conducive to courtship. No going out for a nice cup of tea or a stroll in the park. What's more, the story opens in October of 1917, three years after the start of the war. What happened during those years? I decided to write flashback chapters, showing Eve and Simon's prior relationship and revealing Eve's haunted past. I felt it was the best way to maintain the story's pacing, and in retrospect, I think the past scenes offer a good balance to the dramatic intensity taking place in the present.

4. What do you hope readers come away with?

The Great War often conjures images of soldiers fighting in the trenches or Red Cross nurses tirelessly tending wounded behind the front lines. Their loss and suffering are by no means insignificant, but I hope readers will gain insight into the lives of others who aided in the war effort—civilians forced to live under German occupation, who often starved and endured hardship and abuse yet fought the enemy by whatever means they could. *High as the Heavens* is also one woman's struggle to find peace, to seek reconciliation with the past and learn to accept God's mercy. I hope her journey will resonate and inspire others as well.

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5. How long have you been writing?

A very long time! In fact, 2017 marks twenty-five years since I began writing my first manuscript. With three published novels to my credit, I hope aspiring authors take heart! I was always a voracious reader and wrote poetry and short stories as a child, but I didn't begin my novel writing until adulthood, when I discovered historical romance. For someone who daydreamed during history class, novel writing has certainly sparked my appetite for learning history!

6. Give us a snapshot of your writing life.

I have a spiral staircase leading up to my lovely "tower," better known as my office library, which looks out on our lovely saltwater bay. Perfect for inspiration! I have books galore on the shelves and all things historical on my walls—ancient Scottish weaponry, old maps, even a framed Celtic cross. It's here in my little sanctuary that I gather my research and create a working outline. Once I sit down and begin writing the story, I work several hours a day, five to six days a week. My cat, Coco, naps on a nearby chair and occasionally makes me take a break when she jumps onto the desk to stand in front of my computer screen until I surface from my fictional fog.

7. What's next?

I'm excited about my next novel, another inspirational romance for Bethany House and a connecting story to *Not by Sight* and *High as the Heavens*. It's scheduled for release in 2019. With most of my research finished, I'm happily typing away!