

For Such a Time by Elyse Larson
Reading Group Guide

1. During her preparation for entering occupied France, Jean insisted her love for Giselle would sharpen her senses and give her an inner strength that hatred of the enemy could not. Captain Lloyd says, “If we all decided to stop Hitler with love, where do you think we’d be?” What would be your answer to his question?
2. St. Augustine, a fifth century Christian, gave some guidelines on how to judge whether going to war is just: (1) Is it a just cause? Hatred or vengeance is never a just cause. (2) Is use of force ordained by a competent and lawful authority? (3) Have all peaceful means to settle the conflict been used? (4) Is there a “right intention” in seeking to restore order and justice? (5) Is there reasonable probability of success? The benefits must be proportionate to the human cost and other costs of war. What do you think of these standards? What would you change?
3. Captain Lloyd told Jean she couldn’t enter occupied France without taking a gun and being willing to use it. Did Jean’s response surprise you? What other choices does a Christian have when faced with a situation like Jean’s?
4. Were Tom’s worries about marrying Jean realistic? Do you know any Asian war brides? Were they integrated easily into your community? In what ways has racial discrimination changed since 1945? What would improve race relations in your town or community?
5. A common saying during World War II was, “There are no atheists in foxholes.” Many men also turned to God while in prison camps. What do you think of foxhole or deathbed conversions? Do you know of anyone who accepted Christ while in a foxhole or in a prison cell? What does Jesus say about crisis conversions?
6. Giselle felt she would somehow know if Claude had been killed. Have you ever had an inner assurance that someone you loved was okay before you knew for sure? What happened? What part did prayer play in your experience?
7. Jean prayed for God’s protection as she went into occupied France. Can we expect more protection while committing a sacrificial act than while attending to our daily responsibilities? At what point does taking risks become testing God, which Scripture warns against?
8. Andre did not deserve Giselle’s forgiveness. How do we forgive an injury that feels unforgivable? If we cannot forgive, what does this do to us?
9. While Giselle was willing to kill her loved ones to spare them from torture, Jean was not willing to kill anyone. In the end, they each reacted from love. As a result, what spiritual problem did both Jean and Giselle share by the end of the book?
10. All novels contain an underlying question that the book examines and attempts to answer through the experiences of the characters. What do you think the major story question is in *For Such A Time*?