



# LEADER'S GUIDE

## WHEN THE DAY COMES BY GABRIELLE MEYER



"We were walking on the path God had ordained, standing in the centre of His perfect will, and I never wanted to be anywhere else."

**ANNE ELIZABETH**

### THEMES

Belonging

Mother-Daughter Relationships

Womanhood and Equality

American Revolution

Time-Travel

History

God's Sovereignty

Sanctity of Human Life

### HEADS UP! (TRIGGERS AND DELICATE TOPICS)

Rape

Execution

### CHARACTERS

1774

*Elizabeth Conant (Libby)* is a time-crosser living between 1774 and 1914. She is 19 years old and helping her mother run the struggling family printing press business, the Virginia Gazette Newspaper. Libby is striving to keep her family's business afloat, so they do not fall into poverty. She's in love with Henry, a burgess and patriot, and she is passionate about freedom and helping the American heroes win the revolution. Libby is keenly aware of the radical political and social change of the era she's a part of in her 1774 timeline, having access to history from 1914.

*Theodosia Conant* is Libby's mother and also a time-crosser. She is a tender-hearted and kind mother who encourages her children and works fiercely to protect them. She has mentored Libby in her time-crossing gift, and she holds firm to her belief in the sovereignty of God, despite the hardships she's endured.

*Henry Montgomery* is a merchant, burgess, and American Patriot. He is a well-respected and influential man working alongside Mister George Washington and desires to free America from England's rule and aristocracy. He is honest and hardworking and will forfeit his life fighting for the cause he believes in.

1914

*Anne Elizabeth Wells* (Libby in the 1700s) is a wealthy American living in London. Her mother, Abigail, has manoeuvred them into London's high society, and Elizabeth is unsatisfied with the pointless nature of her aristocratic life. Her uncaring mother and social obligations drain her, and she is keenly awaiting her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday when she can forfeit her 1914 life to continue to live solely in 1774. Before moving to London, she found purpose in the suffragette movement. She grieves her forced removal from America and her mother's self-serving plan to marry her into England's aristocracy.

*Abigail Wells*, Elizabeth's disapproving mother, is impenetrable, cold, and incapable of love. Her desire to increase her aristocratic status consumes her.

*Edith* is Elizabeth's maid and best friend. She lives a mundane and tedious life yet is always cheerful, and she challenges Elizabeth to be content right where she is.

*Lord Reggie Cumberland* is an English aristocrat seeking an American Dollar Princess to marry whose fortune will reinstate his wealth and fortune.

## STORYLINE

Libby has been born as a time-crosser, a unique gift given by God, the Author of life. She bears a sunburst birthmark over her heart, distinguishing her gift.

Libby looks exactly the same in both 1774 and 1914. She is one person, one conscious mind, set in identical twin bodies. But what happens to her in one timeline does not happen in the other; if she is afflicted with illness in 1774, she wakes up perfectly healthy in 1914. Her conscious mind travels back and forth, accumulating experiences from each path to create one unique person.

At 19 years old, she is nearing her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, when she will be required to choose which path to continue with for the rest of her life. Whichever life she chooses, she forfeits the other timeline where her body dies, and her consciousness remains in the timeline she's chosen. Libby plans to stay in her 1775 timeline to seal her fate there.

Her two timelines include; Williamsburg, Virginia, in 1774 at the very beginning of the American Revolution and London, England, in 1914 during World War I. Adamant that she can be used more purposefully in the 1774 timeline, she tolerates her 1914 timeline, simply biding her time until she's able to choose.

As tensions heighten in 1774 pre-revolution, Libby realises that Henry is risking his life to sneak information to the patriots and aid the revolution, which they are both passionate about. She fears for his life, mourns the social barriers which prevent them from marrying, and works tirelessly to keep the print shop afloat and her family's debts in order.

Meanwhile, in 1914, to Elizabeth's horror, her mother arranged for her to marry Lord Cumberland. Unable to postpone the wedding, she decides she will keep him at arm's length to prevent pregnancy – the only thing that would keep her from having to remain in her 1914 timeline. After their wedding, Lord Cumberland is called to war which bides Elizabeth time. When he unexpectedly returns over Christmas, he rapes Elizabeth, and she falls pregnant – her hopes of choosing her 1774 timeline are dashed as she embraces her growing child and knows as a mother, she could never abandon her child.

Elizabeth learns of Henry's impending death in her 1914 timeline as she finds his name listed in the book "A Complete Account of America's Sons of Liberty, Founding Fathers, and Fallen Heroes" in the Cumberland library. Overwhelmed with grief, she decides she has no other choice but to tell him and save his life. She knows the consequence of trying to change history could be drastic and that she will never return to that

timeline, but she decides the sacrifice is worth it. Three weeks before her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in 1774, she tells Henry that he will be hanged for treason if he leaves for his mission.

Waking up the following day in 1914, Elizabeth immediately realises that the history book remains unchanged; Henry died sacrificing himself for the cause, and she is now permanently living in 1914.

Her son Teddy is born, and she receives a telegram with news of her husband's death. Returning to America to be with her father, she is intrigued by an offer to tour Williamsburg, Virginia – revelling in the idea that she might catch a glimpse of familiar sights from her 1774 life.

As Elizabeth tours the town, she is reunited with Congressman Hollingsworth – a fellow time-crosser she met while crossing between 1914 and 1774 – and learns that his son is also a part of the restoration project. Elizabeth discovers that Dr Hollingsworth preserves literature, one of the books being the diary of Mistress Conant (Libby's mum), which she is eager to read. When Elizabeth meets Dr Hollingsworth, her heart rejoices as she knows it is Henry; he is Congressman Hollingsworth's son and also a time-crosser. As Libby and Henry are reunited in 1914, they marvel at the sovereignty of God and His perfect will bringing them back together. They marry and have two children, and the story ends with the discovery of not one – but two – sunburst birthmarks on their youngest daughter's body.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS & TALKING POINTS

1

Q. Which character from 'When The Day Comes' did you relate to the most?

### TALKING POINTS

We may connect to a character for the following reasons;

- We feel empathy or sympathy for their circumstances.
- We share similar character traits or personalities.
- We share similar desires, hopes, or dreams.
- We have made similar mistakes or poor decisions in our own lives.
- We like or dislike particular characters because of our experiences with others.

2

Q. "I lived two lives simultaneously – one in 1774 and one in 1914" (p11). Which timeline did you most enjoy? Why?

### TALKING POINTS

Dual timeline stories are becoming increasingly popular. The separate storylines, which form a larger narrative, add cliffhangers and suspense at the end of each chapter as we journey back and forth between times and characters. We may have enjoyed one timeline more than another because of;

- The love story between Libby and Henry in 1774.
- The history; The American Revolution or World War 1.
- The different ways of life between 1774 and 1914.

# 3

Q. Libby says, "My mamma had told me life was a gift. But at the age of nineteen, I had yet to see how this life I was living... could be anything but a burden" (p7). Can you relate to Libby's feelings?

## TALKING POINTS

As we sojourn this world – full of suffering and hardship – much of what we endure may feel like a burden, not a gift. If we try to keep a grateful heart, we will be more likely to view our lives as a gift, despite hardship. God's supernatural peace and joy comes and fills our heavy hearts during suffering and grief;

- Praying the scripture can help us experience peace and draw nearer to the Lord.
- We may be blessed through help and support from others (Christian love and community are often demonstrated when a church family is suffering).
- We must first think of God's perfect love for us, then consider our circumstances, so we do not begin to question His perfect love.
- God is worthy to be praised in all circumstances. Not for all circumstances, but in them.
- Trials and suffering can strengthen our character and confident hope of salvation (Romans 5: 3-5).
- How we endure suffering may shine Christ's light and role model steadfast faith to others.
- On the other side of our suffering, we may have some perspective and understanding we did not have during the suffering.
- When we get to heaven, we will find the things we did and the lessons we learned along the road that we walked were unmistakably the best path for us.
- What has happened to us may have helped advance the gospel and saved one (or many) for Christ.
- Our pain and trials in life can bless and help others overcome their suffering through shared experience, advice, comfort and mentoring.
- God works all things together for the good of those who love Him.
- "What makes us different from everyone else? Why must we not pay a cost for freedom? Is it everyone else's job to sacrifice so that we can enjoy the benefits of their payment... The price is far greater than anyone realizes" (p214). We all have a role to play, and as Christians, our goal in life is to imitate Christ, and this will likely mean a sacrifice of some sort – just as He made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

# 4

Q. On page 32, Abigail says, "What woman has the right to choose her own fate?". We're blessed to live in the twenty-first century, where the equality gap between men and women has significantly shrunk, and women are encouraged to pursue their ambitions. What changes are you most grateful for?

## TALKING POINTS

Some examples of oppression from the novel are;

- In 1914, when the English Lords were losing their fortunes and manors, they began to seek "American Dollar Princesses" to marry. These matches brought wealthy women from America over to England to restore fortunes to the Lords, with the payoff being a place amongst the English aristocracy. The women in pursuit of this were going against the very social structures the American Revolution was trying to do away with.
- In 1774, Libby and Henry were not considered a suitable match because of her being from a "lower class" (p21).

- Libby and her mother were not considered worthy of running their own print shop; "I had too much to prove as an editor and business woman - and even more as a sister and daughter" (p15), and Louis clarifies with his proposal (p44), that men are considered essential in business endeavours.
- Libby would have loved to have been a burgess, but no female legislative representative existed until 1895 (p39).
- At age 21, Libby would have been considered "past her prime and facing a future as an old maid" (p42).
- In 1914, Elizabeth had no way of declining the proposal from Lord Cumberland.

It's important to remember that although women in Australia enjoy many freedoms and the same rights as men, there are still many places in the world where girls and women still suffer horrendous abuse and oppression. There remains a long way to go in providing God-honouring equal opportunities between the sexes.

The "feminism" represented in this novel is considered nineteenth-century feminism, which advocates for women and children alike. This type of feminism is considered pro-life and seeks equality between the sexes for things such as voting, education and employment opportunities. This is drastically different from many streams of "modern" feminism, which often seeks abortion rights for all women on demand and many other unbiblical and harmful ideologies.

## 5

Q. "My life in 1914 was so different from my life in 1774... though some might imagine the life I led was delightful, I longed for a purpose like I had in Williamsburg." (p24). Why is a life of purpose always more fulfilling than wealth?

### TALKING POINTS

- Wealth, status, and other earthy things and endeavours will never satisfy our hungry souls.
- Real contentment can only be found in Christ.
- When we're not living our lives rooted in Christ, we experience dissatisfaction and a lack of purpose.
- When we are believers in Christ, and in a season or circumstance where we feel helpless to live out our faith through good deeds and works, we may feel disheartened and yearn for ways to serve and bless others tangibly.
- On page 41, Libby wonders, "Would I leave such an indelible mark?". We all long to live with purpose and leave a legacy in the world. For those in Christ, our desire should be to leave a legacy that points others toward Him.

## 6

Q. "The stark contrast between Abigail Wells and Theodosia Conant, my marked mother, had been jarring as a child. Where one was warm, loving and understanding, the other was cold, distant and impenetrable" (p27). What was your mother like?

### TALKING POINTS

Thinking about our mothers will likely stir strong negative or positive emotions within us - perhaps both. Please keep the conversation life-giving by ensuring women share their experiences in a way that honours their mothers (despite her sinfulness or mistakes she has made).

Mothers and daughters have a unique relationship, and despite a mother's best efforts, our brokenness means many of us carry 'mother wounds'. These wounds can range from minor wounds

to serious trauma. Answers from your group members may vary significantly and include the following;

- My mother was always very loving, and we've enjoyed a healthy relationship all my life.
- I have a great friendship with my mother now that we are both adults, but it was hard during childhood/adolescence.
- My mother and I have always had a tense/strained relationship.
- My relationship with my mother is broken.
- I have hurts I've been able to let go of/I am holding onto hurts I can't or won't forgive.

## 7

Q. Libby's newspaper motto was, "Open to ALL PARTIES, but Influenced by None." (p38). Is this truly possible? Discuss.

### TALKING POINTS

Is it genuinely possible to remain uninfluenced by the world and those around us? Even as we try to stay partial, our worldviews, opinions and belief systems will usually affect how we say and do things.

We are ALL in a position of influence in some way, whether over a friend, child, spouse, colleague, Bible group or church. Many people would suggest that it is impossible to remain neutral and unaffected by influences around us. We may believe that, as Christians, it's important to influence others.

One way we can ensure we influence others positively is to follow Jesus' example of servant leadership;

- We can start with prayer. There is nothing more worthwhile to do for another than pray sincerely for our relationships and people in our spheres of influence.
- We can view our relationships as an opportunity to give instead of take.
- We can ask ourselves, 'Do the people I lead (influence) become better?' (more like Christ, well within themselves, more competent at their jobs or capable of leading others?). We are not responsible for someone else's sanctification; however, where we find good leadership and healthy influence, these things are often present too.
- We can acknowledge that our choices and actions influence others for the better or worse. We will be held accountable to God for these things.
- We should always be honest and quick to admit a mistake, taking responsibility for our actions.

## 8

Q. A beautiful pro-life message flows throughout the book, and Elizabeth refers to her pregnancy – a result of Lord Cumberland's abuse against her - as "Beauty from ashes". Can you share an experience where God has transformed suffering or hardship into something beautiful?

### TALKING POINTS

"Ashes don't have to be the end of our stories; they can actually be the sign of a new beginning" – Gretchen Saffles;

Answers may vary and could include;

- Times of suffering; poor health, terminal diagnosis, loss of loved ones.
- Times of trial; a wayward child, enduring persecution because of faith, relationship breakdowns.
- Times of discouragement or confusion; job/career loss, failure, disappointment.
- Times of exhaustion; early days of motherhood, burnout, overcommitments.

# 9

Q. Historical fiction, biographies and storytelling profoundly impact the soul, often in a way that textbooks and facts cannot. Was there a moment for you in the book where history came alive? How did this change your perspective of war or challenge your attitudes towards circumstances you may be facing today?

## TALKING POINTS

Answers may vary and could include;

- The bravery, sacrifice and patriotism of the American Revolution.
- The deaths of loved ones and casualties from World War II.
- The evolution of women's equality.
- The London Aristocracy.

Perspectives;

- Learning about the war, loss of life, trauma, poverty, and fear, may help us to put our current circumstances into a healthy perspective. Not to belittle our pain, trials, or suffering, yet to remind us we are not alone in our human experience.
- Pain, hardship, trauma, and suffering are a part of life in our broken world - many others have suffered and endured much in the past.
- While experiencing suffering, we can thank God for our blessings: food, shelter, safety, freedom to worship, family and friends.

# 10

Q. A powerful theme in the novel is the Sovereignty of God. How has reading this book shaped your thoughts and feelings toward God's sovereign plan for your life?

## TALKING POINTS

Kneeling to God's sovereign will (whether we believe God ordains, allows or sends trials and suffering) gives us a song of praise to sing that our circumstances can't change. It provides us with comfort and peace and reassures our weary and lamenting hearts that ALL wrongs will be made right in the second coming and judgement of Jesus.

The song on our lips for the duration of our lives can be one of rejoicing in God's goodness and great love. This doesn't mean we won't experience seasons of doubt, loneliness, depression and deep heartache. But during these dark seasons, we do the next thing, with our hope of heaven encouraging us to put one foot in front of another.



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