

# GRAB BAG

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## BOOKMONGER

### Breslin gets it right with High as the Heavens

Third time's a charm for author Kate Breslin, who writes early 20th century historical romance novels from a Christian faith perspective.

Breslin's first novel was published in 2014. "For Such a Time" was a World War II tale that had good character development and chemistry, but that exercised questionable judgment in treating the subject matter.

The author's second book, "Not by Sight," was set in World War I England. Although the narrative description of the lives and times of women in that era was quite good, the plot floundered.

But with her brand-new novel, "High as the Heavens," Breslin has hit her stride. This tale, also set during World War I (with some pre-war flashbacks), successfully combines a soulful love story with a harrowing espionage tale and some fascinating historical background.

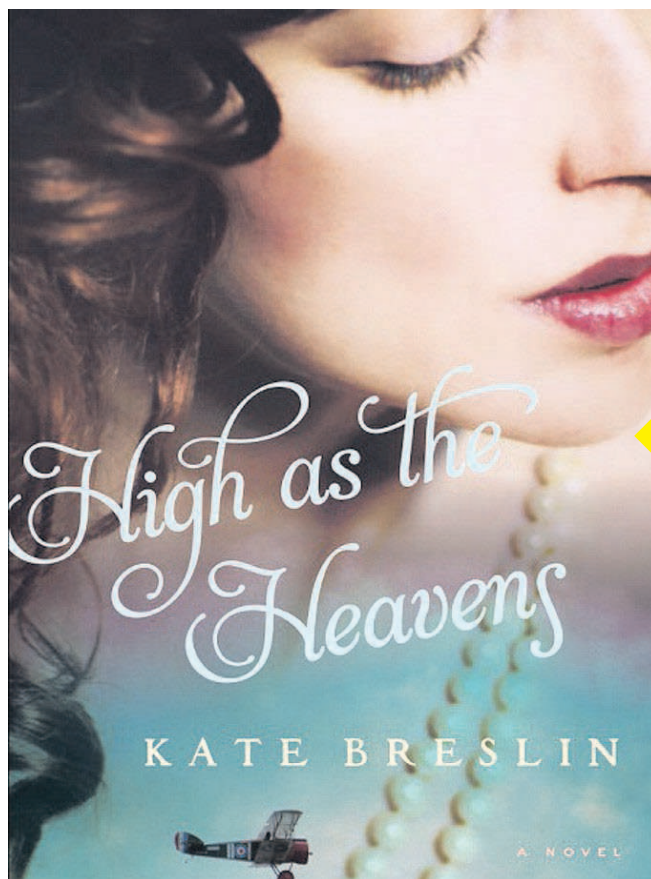
The protagonist is British-born Evelyn (Eve) Marche, who is living in German-occupied Belgium during World War I. Evelyn lost her British RFC Captain husband early in the war. The young widow also suffered a miscarriage during the violent German invasion, and her younger brother and sister were taken away by German troops.

Of Belgian descent, Eve is now living with her elderly mother, also a widow, and her aunt and uncle in a house that has been forced to billet German soldiers.

By day, Eve works as a Red Cross nurse in a hospital operated by the German occupiers. In the evenings, she waitresses in the café owned by her aunt and uncle.

And after finishing at the restaurant, Eve turns to her third line of work: undertaking espionage activities for the Belgian resistance.

At this point, what else



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does she have to live for? Eve is on her way to a

covert midnight rendezvous when her mission is inter-

rupted by anti-aircraft gunfire that shoots a plane out of the sky. It crashes to her street in a fireball, and she is first to arrive on the scene, discovering two bodies in the blazing wreckage. The dead pilot is British, judging by his uniform. The other man, in civilian clothes, is alive but terribly injured.

for instance, who tats coded intelligence messages into lace that passes unsuspected out of the country and gets delivered into the hands of the British Secret Service.

But it is Eve who carries the story. Breslin has created a nuanced figure who grapples with the war-time realities of bereavement, trauma, ethical compromise and a challenged faith while risking all for what's left of her family, and for her community.

"High as the Heavens" gets high marks. This story is spellbinding.

The Bookmonger is Barbara Lloyd McMichael, who writes this weekly column focusing on the books, authors and publishers of the Pacific Northwest. Contact her at [bkmonger@nwlinc.com](mailto:bkmonger@nwlinc.com).

**"High as the Heavens"**  
By Kate Breslin  
Bethany House  
395 pp  
\$15.99

She turns him over to administer first aid, and is shocked to see — now, Reader, I don't want to spoil this for you. Let's just say this is the first of many twists in a plot that repeatedly surprises and intrigues.

Breslin has developed a varied cast of characters who are sympathetic, devious, resilient and vulnerable — sometimes all at the same time. You'll get a kick out of Eve's sweet old mother,

**"HIGH AS THE HEAVENS" GETS HIGH MARKS. THIS STORY IS SPELLBINDING.**

#### Crossword Answer

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