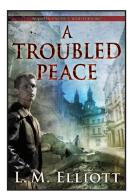
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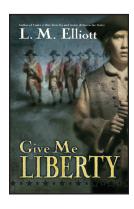
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### About the Author

L. M. Elliott is the author of several highly praised historical novels for young readers, including *Annie, Between the States, Give Me Liberty*, and *A Troubled Peace*. She is also the author of three picture books about a raccoon named Hunter: *Hunter's Best Friend at School, Hunter and Stripe and the Soccer Showdown*, and *Hunter's Big Sister*. A popular speaker, L. M. Elliott makes many memorable visits to schools and libraries each year, and teachers and libraries rave about her ability to make history come alive. She lives in Great Falls, Virginia. You can visit her online at www.lmelliott.com.



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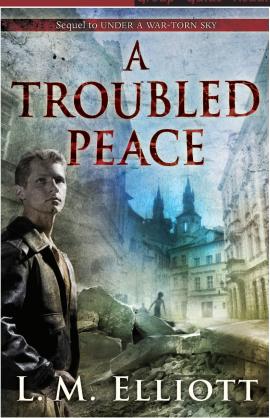
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# Reading Group Guide

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## A TROUBLED PEACE

By L. M. Elliott

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### About the Book

A Troubled Peace, the sequel to L. M. Elliott's award-winning Under a War-Torn Sky, chronicles nineteen-year-old U.S. Air Force pilot Henry Forester's adventures in France from March through July 1945. Although Henry safely returned from World War II to his family's tidewater Virginia farm the previous year, he is scarred emotionally by the horrors of war, and he suffers from nightmares and flashbacks. Leaving his parents, dog, and girlfriend, Patsy, Henry sneaks back into France in an attempt to find Pierre Dubois, the young boy who once saved his life, and thus fulfill his promise, find salvation, and move on with life.

## **Discussion Questions**

- I. In chapter one, Patsy says to Henry, "You seem so angry . . . so haunted." Why is Henry angry and what is he haunted by? What disorder is Henry suffering from? What are its characteristics? What recent events in U.S. history have resulted in people suffering from the same ailment that afflicts Henry?
- 2. Do you think Henry's plan to illegally sneak back into war-torn France is wise? Is he well prepared? Why does Henry's mother encourage him to go?
- 3. What valuable lessons has Henry learned from his parents, and what traits has he inherited from them that help him during his dangerous trip through France? Make a list of characteristics that you have inherited from your parents. Are some of these characteristics positive, while others are negative? Be honest in your appraisal.
- 4. What is rationing? What items in the United States and France were rationed during World War II and why? What is the black market? Why do the police think Henry is a black marketer? What are bribes?
- 5. Why does Henry give Pierre his good luck marble? How does Henry get the marble in the first place? What role does the marble play in Henry finding Pierre, and how does it cement family relations at the end of the story? Do you have a treasured lucky object?
- 6. Henry's heroes are Captain Dan, Billy, le patron, and Madame Gaulloise. Who are these people, and why do they matter so much to Henry?

- 7. In chapter six, the restaurant owner in Marseille says, "The world is full of grays, in-betweens. Especially France right now." What does he mean? Who or what are the RMAs, turncoats, collaborators, maquis, Vichy government, Free France, Milice, Gestapo, and Allies? Were all Germans bad and all Allies good? Are people and issues ever only bad or good, or do all things have gray areas?
- 8. Discuss the roles that women play in Henry's life and in the war. Why couldn't Henry's mother be a doctor? What is Claudette's role in Henry's quest? Why do you think Henry gives the scarf to Claudette and pressed lilies-of-the-valley to his mother?
- 9. Sadly, wars in general—and World War II in particular—are characterized by torture and the loss of human life. Who in this story is tortured? Is torture always physical, or can it take other forms? What are Ravensbruck, Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Buchenwald? Who was sent to these horrible places and why?
- 10. When Thurman calls Henry his friend in chapter eighteen, Henry thinks, "Friends? No way. He and Thurman just negotiated a mutual blackmail." What does Henry mean? Who were the OSS and the SOE? Does Henry intend to "rat" on those Frenchmen who helped him survive? Do you think he should?
- 11. Who are the Absents? What does the sky represent to the woman exiting Gare de l'Est in chapter twenty-one?
- 12. Research the historical figure of Madame Zlatin. What did she do during the war? What causes Henry to ponder in chapter twenty-five, "But fate wasn't fair-minded, was it?" What happened at Hotel Lutetia? Is life fair? Should it be?
- 13. In chapter twenty, Orwell says, "Peace? Peace is not that easy, that finite, my boy. War ends; then it takes a long time to negotiate a real truce." What do you think Orwell means? What problems come with peace? How is the United States now experiencing the difficulties of negotiating peace and assessing the price of war?
- 14. What examples of hatred and revenge can you find in A Troubled Peace? Have you experienced these emotions? Who do they hurt more, you or the object of your feelings?

### **Extension Activities**

- **I. Map Quest.** On a map of France, find the cities and rivers mentioned in *A Troubled Peace* and follow Henry's quest for Pierre Dubois. Include the following: Annecy, Chabeuil, Grenoble, Lyon, Marseille, the Massif Central, Montélimar, Morvan, Normandy, Paris, the Pyrenees, the Rhône River, the Seine River, Valence, Vassieux, and Vercors. Famous Parisian buildings and monuments are also mentioned. Locate them on a map of Paris and look at photos of these magnificent structures. Which ones would you most like to see?
- **2. The Art of War.** What is the Louvre and what does it contain? Who is Picasso and why is he important in *A Troubled Peace*? What is the *Mona Lisa*? After reading about the Louvre and its contents, select a work of art that is housed there and learn about it and its creator. What attempts were made during World War II to safeguard the contents of the Louvre? For a broader understanding, watch the documentary film *The Rape of Europa*.
- **3. Tell Me a Story.** Albert Camus, Simone de Beauvoir, Antoine de Saint Exupéry, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, and Jean-Paul Sartre are all famous authors mentioned in *A Troubled Peace*. Choose one of these authors and research his or her life during World War II. Then read one of this author's works and think about how it relates to L. M. Elliott's novel.
- **4. Living History.** Interview a World War II veteran to learn firsthand about his or her experiences during that period of history. Ask him or her some of the questions you have after reading *A Troubled Peace*.
- 5. Bombs Away. Learn to recognize the various Allied and German airplanes used during World War II. Airplane spotters could recognize them by their silhouettes can you? Messerschmitts, B17s, B24s, and Spitfires are mentioned in A Troubled Peace. What other planes were flown and what were the uses for each?
- 6. An Army Travels on Its Stomach. The subject of war often brings to mind such things as weapons or combat, but what about the more mundane aspects, like food? How did soldiers get their food during World War II? What did they eat? What are K-rations? What is Spam? Try sampling Spam and some of the other foods included in K-rations. What are CARE packages, and how has their purpose changed since World War II?