

Readers Discussion Guide

A Note Yet Unsung

a Belmont Mansion novel, Book 3

by Tamera Alexander

SPOILER ALERT! As would be expected in a discussion guide, crucial plot points and events are revealed in the following questions. So if you haven't finished reading *A Note Yet Unsung* and don't wish to have these "surprises" spoiled, you might want to skip reading the group guide until you have.

Check out the Belmont Mansion Novels page on Tamera's website (www.TameraAlexander.com) for pictures of the mansion, conservatory, and other parts of the Belmont estate featured in the novel.

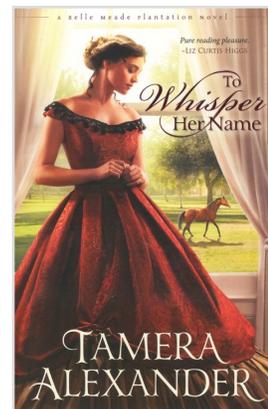
Dear friends,

I'm thrilled you've chosen *A Note Yet Unsung* as your reading group selection, and I hope you enjoyed Tate and Rebekah's story, and the setting of the Belmont Mansion. Christ drew me closer to Him as I wrote this story, and my prayer is that somewhere along the way as you read, you took a step closer to Him too.

I'd love to join your group discussion!

If you're interested in having me join your group via a Virtual Book Club Meeting, visit my website (www.TameraAlexander.com) and click on BONUS FEATURES to learn more about Virtual Book Club Meetings. Also, if you're ever in Nashville, please make a point to see the Belmont Mansion. Visit www.belmontmansion.com for details, and be sure to ask them about the special "novel tour" for readers.

Incidentally, if you enjoyed *A Note Yet Unsung*, a Belmont Mansion novel (the third book in the series, book 1 and 2 being *A Lasting Impression* and *A Beauty So Rare* respectively), I think you'll also enjoy *To Whisper Her Name*, a



Belle Meade Plantation novel (also the first of three in a series).

I've written these two three-book Southern series to be read together, because the families in the mansions really knew one another. So understanding that their lives connected in the 1800s, it only makes sense that they should connect again...on the page of these novels.

Continued blessings—and thanks for reading!

Tamera

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1. Rebekah is gifted in a way that isn't socially accepted in her day. Yet she still strives to achieve her dream. How do you relate to her stubbornness and tenacity? What decisions, if any, would you have made differently? And before reading this novel, were you aware that women weren't allowed to play the violin in public in that era?
 2. Why caused Rebekah's grandmother to accelerate the plan for Rebekah to be sent to study in Vienna? Do you think this decision was justified? Abuse issues (and potential abuse issues) are handled so differently today versus the 19th century (or even thirty years ago). Discuss the differences in how society then and now chooses to handle such occurrences and whether we have progressed in that regard.
 3. As mentioned in the author's note, Tate's illness was otosclerosis, yet it went undiagnosed due to the level of medical knowledge at the time. Is there anyone in your life who is deaf? Or who is going deaf? What have you learned from them? What an incredibly frightening prospect for anyone, but especially for a composer. At one point, Tate contemplates how odd it is that finally, once he's learned to use his gift for God, his hearing may be taken away completely. Discuss the spiritual aspects surrounding this possibility and whether you believe God not only allows bad things to happen to those who love him, but that He sometimes specifically brings those challenges into their lives, and why.
 4. Adelia Acklen Cheatham, the real woman who built the Belmont Mansion in 1853, is a prominent secondary character throughout the Belmont Mansion novels, and *A Note Yet Unsung* is no exception. Discuss her character arc through this book and—if you've read *A Lasting Impression* and *A Beauty So Rare*—throughout the series. What do you

- like most about Adelia? What do you like least? How are you able to relate to her?
5. In every one of Tamera's books, there are cameo appearances of a character or characters from other series (like old friends dropping in to say hello). Did you catch the cameo appearance in this novel? Who was it, and what novel was he/she originally in?
 6. Based on Rebekah's past experience with musicians, she'd certain Tate is struggling with an addiction. When faced with the possibility of losing her dream, she takes matters into her own hands, follows him, and confronts him. Review that confrontation (Ch. 19 and 20). What does she accuse him of? If given her same circumstances, how would you have handled the situation? Have you or someone you loved ever struggled with an addiction? Were you aware that the substances mentioned in this novel were used by musicians in the 19th century to enhance creativity?
 7. Tate is somewhat embarrassed about his family and about Rebekah meeting them. Could you relate to his feelings? Has there even been a part of your life that you've been uncomfortable to let others see? Please share.
 8. Tate struggles throughout the story to finish his symphony. Where is he finally able to complete it? And why do you think that is? What does this say about him? And even about us (if the same sentiment holds true for you that does for Tate)?
 9. Darrow Fulton was Rebekah's childhood nemesis, of sorts. Did you have a childhood nemesis? How did that person shape you in younger years? And if you've been so fortunate (or unfortunate, as the case may be) to cross paths with them again, what was your experience? Any lessons learned?
 10. Rebekah's relationship with her mother was estranged, at best. And Barton Ledbetter being in the picture only complicated things. What issues do you believe were at heart of the rift between Rebekah and her mother? Can you relate to those issues? If yes, how?
 11. Toward the end of the novel, Rebekah and Tate are led down a long tunnel in the opera house. What does she see? And who does the depicted scene remind her of? Were you surprised by how that relationship in her life turned out? Or did you expect it?
 12. Do you have a favorite scene in the novel? A favorite character? What is the takeaway message for you from *A Note Yet Unsung*?

Please take a picture of your group (holding up your books!) and share it with Tamera at TameraAlexander@gmail.com. Be sure to include first names of all those pictured. Tamera would love to share the picture on her Facebook Page.

For the complete Discussion Guide for this novel—including recipes from the story—visit the book page for *A Note Yet Unsung* at www.TameraAlexander.com.

Recipe Ideas for Group Gatherings--

Cordina's Tennessee Teacakes

Cookie ingredients

- 1 Cup butter or margarine
- 1 Cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 3 1/2 Cup self rising flour
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and mix again. Add vanilla and flour and mix well. Roll thin (on floured board, cut with cookie or biscuit cutter. Bake at 350 for ten minutes. Don't overcook! Sprinkle with sugar while warm or ice with simple icing. Or, like a beignet, cover with powdered sugar while warm.

Note: If you want more cake-like cookies, roll thicker, about 1/2 inch in thickness. The thinner the dough, the more like crisp cookies they'll be.

Simple Icing

- 2 Tablespoon softened butter or margarine
- 1/2 Cup Confectioner's sugar
- 2 Tablespoons milk (can add another if needed)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Few drops food coloring, if desired

Cut butter into confectioner's sugar. Add milk and stir until lumps are gone. Add one teaspoon of vanilla and a few drops of food coloring, stir until combined. Spoon onto cookies or tea cakes and spread with back of spoon. Top with sprinkles while still wet, if desired. Let dry before stacking.

Delphia's Sugar Cookies

- 3 sticks butter, softened
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 tsp vanilla

4 cups plain flour
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp cream of tartar

Cream together softened butter and sugar, then add eggs and vanilla and blend well, then set aside. In a medium-sized bowl combine flour, soda, and cream of tartar and blend well. Add flour mixture to butter mixture and mix well.

Roll into one-inch balls and place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 8 -10 minutes or until lightly brown. Delicious!

Fresh Apple Cake with Buttered Rum Sauce

1 1/2 cups cooking oil
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
2 tsp vanilla
3 cups plain flour
1 tsp salt
1 tsp soda
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
3 1/2 - 4 cups chopped Golden Delicious apples
1 cup chopped pecans

Blend cooking oil, sugar, eggs and vanilla for 3 minutes on medium speed and set aside. In a medium-sized bowl combine flour, salt, soda, and cinnamon and mix well. Blend the flour mixture with the oil mixture and mix well.

Fold the chopped apples and pecans into the batter, then pour into a greased and floured tube or bundt pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour and 15 minutes. Let cool for 20 minutes before removing from pan. Drizzle each piece of cake with warm buttered rum sauce when serving.

Warm Buttered Rum Sauce

1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/2 cup butter
1/8 tsp salt

1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
1/3 cup dark rum (or use 2 tsp rum flavored extract)
2 tsp vanilla

In a medium saucepan, combine brown sugar, butter, salt and condensed milk. Bring to a boil over medium heat, stirring constantly to prevent scorching. Cook the mixture until sugar is completely dissolved (not grainy). Remove from heat. Stir in rum and vanilla. Reheat sauce before drizzling over cake. Store leftover sauce in refrigerator.

**Recipes for all of Tamera's novels are available
at www.TameraAlexander.com**

Tamera's Complete Book List--

Fountain Creek Chronicles series

Rekindled, Fountain Creek Chronicles, Book 1 (ISBN 0-7642-0108-5)

Revealed, Fountain Creek Chronicles, Book 2 (ISBN 0-7642-0109-3)

Remembered, Fountain Creek Chronicles, Book 3 (ISBN 0-7642-0110-7)

Timber Ridge Reflections series

From a Distance, Timber Ridge Reflections, Book 1 (ISBN 978-0-7642-0389-3)

Beyond This Moment, Timber Ridge Reflections, Book 2 (ISBN 978-0-7642-0390-9)

Within My Heart, Timber Ridge Reflections, Book 3 (ISBN 0-7642-0391-6)

Stand-alone novel (not part of a series)

The Inheritance, Women of Faith Fiction (ISBN 978-1-59554-632-6)

Belmont Mansion novels (3 book stand-alone novels)*

A Lasting Impression, a Belmont Mansion novel, Book 1 (ISBN 978-0764206221)

A Beauty So Rare, a Belmont Mansion novel, Book 2 (ISBN 978-0764206238)

A Note Yet Unsung, a Belmont Mansion novel, Book 3 (ISBN 978-0764206245)

Belle Meade Plantation novels (3 book standalone novels)*

To Whisper Her Name, a Belle Meade Plantation novel 1 (ISBN 978-0310291060)

To Win Her Favor, a Belle Meade Plantation novel 2 (ISBN 978-0310291077)

To Wager Her Heart, a Belle Meade Plantation novel 3 (August 2017)

*To Mend a Dream***, a Belle Meade Plantation novel, (ISBN B00PWOGZVM)

* I've written these two three-book Southern series (**the Belmont Mansion novels and the Belle Meade Plantation novels**) to be read individually OR together (your choice!), because the families in the mansions knew one another. So seeing that their lives connected in the 1800s, it only makes sense that they should connect *again* on the page of these novels.

**"To Mend a Dream" is available by itself as an ebook, or in print form in the Southern novella collection entitled *Among the Fair Magnolias* (ISBN 978-1401690731).