



Readers Discussion Guide

Christmas at Carnton a Carnton novella 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 *Christmas at Carnton* and don't wish to have these "surprises" spoiled, you might want to skip reading the group guide until you have.

Check out the [Carnton Novels page on Tamera's website](#) for images of the mansion and for details about the real people who lived at Carnton—and about how you can visit Carnton too!

Dear friends,

I'm thrilled you've chosen ***Christmas at Carnton*** as your reading group selection, and I hope you enjoyed Jake and Aletta's story. Christ drew me closer to Him as I wrote this novella (or short novel!), 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**, then **FOR BOOK CLUBS** to learn more about Virtual Book Club Meetings. Also, if you're ever in Nashville, please make a point to see Carnton. Visit www.boft.org for details, and be sure to tell them you've read ***Christmas at Carnton***!

I've also written two other Southern series you may be interested in . . . The Belmont Mansion novels and the Belle Meade Plantation novels:



The families in these mansions knew one another in the 19th century. So in understanding that their lives connected in the 1800s, it only made sense that they should connect again...on the pages of these novels!

Continued blessings,
Tamera

Discussion Questions (expanded from those included in the back of the novel)

1. What happened to Aletta—being widowed so young, already a mother and with another child on the way—was the norm rather than the exception during the Civil War. Over 620,000 soldiers were killed during the course of the war. Could you empathize with Aletta and her challenges? Her choices? Have you experienced the loss of a spouse? Could you relate to her grief and her difficulty in accepting the truth about her husband's death?
2. MaryNell, Aletta's friend, also faced a difficult choice. What did you feel toward MaryNell in her circumstances? And toward Aletta as she realized what decision her friend was facing?
3. Before reading *Christmas at Carnton*, were you aware of Women's Relief Societies and how women from both the South and the North created these organizations to support both the Confederate and Federal soldiers? Had you been living back then, do you think you would have taken part in one of these societies? And in their auctions? Discuss the important role these organizations made in the lives of the soldiers, and the differences they made to the women themselves.
4. Did you understand Jake's reluctance to be part of the Women's Relief Society? How did you feel about the newspaper article espousing that women were "best suited for hearth and home" (a common—and even celebrated—Victorian view of the day)? Did you share Aletta's reaction to that statement? What were your impressions of Jake upon his arrival at Carnton?

5. Come Christmas and other holidays, we tend to especially miss those loved ones who've gone on before us. Can you relate to Aletta's "dreading" Christmas? Have you ever felt that way? If yes, share that experience. Read II Corinthians 5:1-10 and discuss what it means to be "swallowed up in life" as the Scripture is translated in the NLT Bible, as well as what the believer in Christ has to look forward to following the death of the earthly body.
6. As Aletta grows closer to Jake, she harbors fear. Describe her fear and what it stems from. Could you relate? What finally draws her to Jake?
7. What did you think of Tempy's character, and about what she said to Aletta in reference to being "left behind" when the rest of the slaves were taken farther South? Were you aware that oftentimes the Federal Army wasn't all that concerned with freeing the slaves? In Ch. 20, Tempy offers counsel to Aletta about her own marriage and about trusting God. Do you share Tempy's belief? Do you consider God trustworthy? Read Isaiah 26:4; Jeremiah 17:5-8; 1 Timothy 4:9-10 and discuss.
8. What is the most important lesson Jake learned in the course of the story to you? What about Aletta? How do you relate to those eternal truths?
9. Who were your favorite characters in the novel? Favorite scenes? Any similarities among your group?
10. Understanding that God's beloved Son is the greatest Christmas gift ever, what's the next best Christmas gift you've received?

Be sure and take a group picture of your book club (holding up your books!) and share it with Tamera at TameraAlexander@gmail.com.

Would you be willing to send Tamera a picture of your book club? She'd love to feature it on her [Facebook Page](#). Send the picture to TameraAlexander@gmail.com with your name(s), your group's name, and the city where you're located. Be sure to hold up your books!

Tamera's website: www.tameraalexander.com
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/tamera.alexander>
Twitter: <http://twitter.com/tameraalexander>
Pinterest: <http://pinterest.com/tameraauthor>

Tamera's group blog: <http://inspiredbylifeandfiction.com>
Instagram: <http://instagram.com/tameraalexanderauthor/>
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Recipe Ideas for Group Gatherings—

Aletta's Chocolate Chess Pie

1 stick butter
3 tablespoons powdered cocoa
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1/4 cup milk
1 teaspoon vanilla (for the love, please no imitation vanilla! <g>)

In a mixing bowl combine eggs, milk, and vanilla and stir well. In a saucepan, melt butter over low heat, then stir in cocoa and sugar and mix well. Then add the egg mixture (eggs, milk and vanilla) a little at a time until well combined. Pour into unbaked pie shell and bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes (or until the center is set).

Could it be any easier—or more delicious! Enjoy!

More recipes included in the back of the book

**Recipes from all of Tamera's novels
are available
at www.TameraAlexander.com
Click: [BONUS FEATURES / NOVEL SWEETS AND SAVORIES](#)**

Tamera's Complete Book List—

The Carnton Novels (3-book series)

Christmas at Carnton, a Carnton novella (ISBN 978-0310293248)
Book 1, Fall 2018
Book 2, Spring 2019
Book 3, Fall 2019

Belle Meade Plantation novels (3-book series)

To Whisper Her Name, a Belle Meade Plantation novel, Book 1
(ISBN 978-0310291060)
To Win Her Favor, a Belle Meade Plantation novel, Book 2
(ISBN 978-0310291077)
To Wager Her Heart, a Belle Meade Plantation novel, Book 3 (ISBN
978-0310291084)
*To Mend a Dream**, a Belle Meade Plantation novella e-book,
(ISBN 978-1401690731)
**To Mend a Dream* is also available in print in *Among the Fair Magnolias*, a
Southern love story collection ((ISBN 978-1401690731)



Belmont Mansion novels (3-book series)

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)

Stand-alone novel

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

Timber Ridge Reflections (3-book 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 978-0764203916)

Fountain Creek Chronicles (3-book 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)

Tamera's series books are considered stand-alone novels, meaning they can be read out of order. However, if you're planning to read all books in a series, you're encouraged to read them in book order for the most fulfilling story experience.

Tamera's books are available in print, ebook, and audio—and also in Dutch, German, Polish, Romanian, and Slovak.