



UNDER A WAR-TORN SKY



L. M. ELLIOTT

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Disney • HYPERION BOOKS

About the Book

It's March of 1944. Nineteen-year-old Henry Forester is the youngest pilot in his Air Force squadron. Based in England, Henry is far from his Virginia home as he faces Hitler's Luftwaffe in the war-torn skies above France. On his fifteenth mission, his plane is shot down behind enemy lines, and Henry finds himself in unknown territory on a whole new battleground.

Wounded, hungry, afraid, and lost, he longs for home and help. Relying on the kindness of ordinary French citizens, Henry soon arrives in neutral Switzerland. Healing in a Swiss hospital, he's given a choice: spend the rest of the war in an internment camp or make his way to Spain, then England. Henry chooses escape so he can continue to be of service and to show he's made of sterner stuff than his father thinks.

But luck and high school French won't get him safely across France. To move through this hostile country, Henry puts his trust in members of the French Resistance and quickly comes to admire the strength, determination, and courage of the men, women, and children who risk everything to protect him. He also grows more appreciative of the influences that shaped his life and wants very much to make it home to show his gratitude to his parents.

Always in peril during his many months in occupied France, he falls into the hands of the Nazis more than once and experiences unthinkable cruelty and brutality. As he struggles for survival, Henry is forced to realize all that he is capable of—both good and bad—and that he'll be going home a very different person from the farm boy who wanted to fly.



Common Core Alignment

This guide is aligned with the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (CCR) for Reading in the areas of Literature, Writing, and Language. The broad CCR standards are the foundation for the grade level–specific Common Core State Standards. Each question and activity in this guide includes a reference for a specific grade level strand, domain, and standard. As you instruct, please keep this teaching note in mind: For each of the guiding questions, students should support their claims with textual evidence.

Pre-reading Activities

To have a fuller understanding of this historical novel, social and historical context is useful. With a topic as expansive as World War II, it is worth the time to investigate what students already know—or think they know—about the largest and most destructive conflict in history. To engage students, make them responsible for this investigation.

Provide small groups or pairs of students with a primary source, such as photographs, maps, video or documents related to World War II, that connects with the historical focus of the book. Topics and sources include:

- **The Allies and Their Leaders**

The FDR Library’s Digital Collections:

fdrlibrary.marist.edu/archives/collections.html

The Library of Congress’s Churchill and the Great Republic Interactive Exhibition:

loc.gov/exhibits/churchill/interactive/

- **Hitler, the Nazis, the Gestapo, and the Third Reich**

Go Social Studies Go: Hitler’s Germany:

www.gohistorygo.com/#!hitlers-germany/cjkq/

- **General Charles de Gaulle and the Free French**

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum’s Holocaust Encyclopedia:

ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005429

- **Jean Moulin and the French Resistance**

World War II Database: The French Resistance:
ww2db.com/battle_spec.php?battle_id=153

- **World War II Air Warfare**

The 392nd Bomb Group Memorial Association:
Photos of Wendling Air Base 1943–1945:
www.b24.net/wendling44/

Fight for the Sky Video:

<http://docsteach.org/documents/63894/detail?the-great-depression-and-world-war-ii>

National Museum of the U.S. Air Force World War II Gallery:
www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/exhibits/airpower/

NOVA: Bombers of World War II:

pbs.org/wgbh/nova/bomber/photos.html

303rd Bomb Group: WWII Uniforms and Flight Gear:

303rdbg.com/uniforms-gear3.html

- **D-Day**

The National WWII Museum: D-Day:

<http://dday70.org/timeline/>

History.com: Remembering D-Day Photo Gallery and Related Media:

history.com/photos/d-day

Our Documents: General Dwight D. Eisenhower's Order of the Day:

ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?doc=75

- **Other WWII Primary Source Collections:**

National Archives World War II Photos:

archives.gov/research/military/ww2/photos/images/thumbnails/

National Archives World War II Records:

archives.gov/research/military/ww2/index.html

The Digital Collections of the National WWII Museum:

ww2online.org/

Veterans History Project: World War II Stories:

loc.gov/vets/stories/wwiilist.html

To engage students with their source, you may need to provide them with some guiding questions to consider as they carefully read or view. (See the Library of Congress’s “Using Primary Sources”: loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources). Have student groups discuss and organize what they know about the source and brainstorm and discuss what they want to learn about it using the K-W-L chart below to record their ideas. (If students are unfamiliar with the K-W-L strategy, you may want to model it first). When the first two columns are complete, have groups share information and combine everyone’s efforts. As students share their questions with the class, discuss where they might find answers.

K	W	L
What do we know (or think we know)?	What do we want to learn (or what questions do we have)?	What have we learned?

As they read the novel, students should keep their chart handy and investigate other sources (books, Internet, etc.) to uncover answers and develop additional questions. Students should also reflect on the accuracy of their answers in the first column and note information that confirms what they know.

If you are using *Under a War-Torn Sky* in your social studies or history classroom, align your introduction to the book with the goals, objectives, and essential questions in your World War II unit of study.

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.5.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.6-8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2

Vocabulary and Use of Language

While the vocabulary in the novel is completely accessible, it is authentic to the time period, so readers will encounter many terms specific to World War II and other historical references that may be unfamiliar. Words and some dialogue in foreign languages may also be challenging, but students should be encouraged to take clues from the context and consider cognates. Have students include unfamiliar words and the definitions they develop from context clues in their K-W-L charts. Students can also locate additional primary and secondary sources to develop expansive definitions of World War II terms.

See also Adlit.org's Glossary of World War II Vocabulary and Concepts (European Theatre): adlit.org/unlocking_the_past/glossary_of_terms

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.4

During Reading

To enrich discussions and deepen understanding of both the novel and historical era, consider assigning related nonfiction texts during the reading of *Under a War-Torn Sky*. These suggestions may provide additional perspective on the people, places and events in the novel:

- Spartacus Educational's French Resistance pages:
www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/2WWresistance.htm
- "FRANCE: Hunger Cramps." *Time* magazine, March 3, 1941.
- Norris, Frank. "Free France, Poor and Paralyzed, Waits for Germany to Finish War." *Life* magazine, September 23, 1940: oldlifemagazines.com/september-23-1940-life-magazine-2442.html. Also in this issue: "Vichy."

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.6-8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4

Discussion Questions

The questions below can be used for class or small group discussion and reflection or offered to students as reflective writing prompts. Also encourage students to note ideas they find interesting or that make them wonder, passages they don't understand and ones they like, details they question and their predictions, text evidence, and conclusions. Consider asking students to generate these further points for discussion in a reader's notebook or on sticky notes. Students should also be encouraged to develop their own questions for discussion.

- 1 Henry is still a teenager. Why did he, fresh out of his Virginia high school, want to join the fight? What was his motivation to come and fly for the Air Corps?
- 2 Why do ordinary French citizens agree to take the risk of helping Henry? If caught by Nazi troops or turned in by a collaborator, a French citizen would be executed, and his or her family might be arrested, questioned, and killed. Why do you think the French took such terrible risks?
- 3 To help someone escape, the Resistance relied on many people to playact a variety of roles in a sequence of carefully planned events. These exchanges had to happen quickly and fluidly. Henry is “handled, just like a hot potato. He was a package no one wanted to be caught holding.” How do you think Henry feels when he realizes this? How does Henry know whom he can trust?
- 4 Henry's father, Clayton, is a harsh, never-ending voice in Henry's mind. How does this help Henry and how does it hurt him? Why do you think Clayton is the way he is? In the end, Henry realizes that his father did the “wrong things for the right reasons.” What does he mean by that?
- 5 As he leaves Pierre, “Henry sang a song his own mother had sung to him in hard times, ‘You Are My Sunshine.’ It was a song about the joy one person could bring another, and what sadness would come if that sunshine were taken away.” What do you think Henry hopes to give Pierre by singing this song?
- 6 How does the use of foreign languages—particularly dialogue in French—convey tone and mood? Point to examples in the text, explaining the tone and mood.

- 7 What did you learn about the roles of men and women during World War II? Point to any actions of the book's female characters that foreshadow the women's liberation and equal rights movements that would take place in Europe and the U.S. a generation after the war. What does Henry think about the women he meets in France, and how does he compare them with the women in his life back home?
- 8 Describe Billy White. Is he the type of person you would want as a friend? Why or why not? Do you think Henry considers Billy a friend? Why doesn't Henry leave Billy behind? What would you do in a similar situation?
- 9 Torture is a serious violation of human rights. Though outlawed, torture continues to be practiced in many countries around the world. The author never uses the word torture to describe Henry's interrogation by the Gestapo. Was Henry tortured? How would you describe what happened to him? During war, where would you draw the line between legitimate interrogation and torture?
- 10 During the course of the novel, Henry travels two "odysseys"—one is his physical escape, and the other is a journey of personal discovery. How are the two odysseys linked? What does he discover about mankind and himself along the way? How does he change?
- 11 Think about the traits of heroes. Which character or characters show these traits? Point to evidence in the book where a character you consider to be heroic does something you think is unheroic.
- 12 In what ways is *Under a War-Torn Sky* relevant today, with regard to conflict and war? Has this book changed the way you regard human suffering or how you define courage? How?

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.3; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.3

Curriculum Connections

Reading, Research, and Writing

Geography and Literature: Mapping Henry's Transformative Journey

After Henry parachutes from his plane, he is unsure of where he has landed and still unclear about where he is when told he's in Alsace. "All he knew was that west was the way home." Students may also be unclear about where Henry is and unfamiliar with many of the places he travels to and through.

Provide students with maps or display a world map in the classroom to help students appreciate and understand the true global nature of World War II. As students read and discuss the book, have them use the map to locate the places that are mentioned. After reading, have students create maps of their own that trace Henry's physical journey from his parachute landing in Alsace to his return home to Virginia. Encourage them to include political boundaries, physical features, and major landmarks that Henry encountered.



They should also plan to include Henry's emotional journey on their maps. Students should examine and trace how and why he changes. Have them add place markers with descriptions for defining moments in Henry's emotional journey, including backstory and those points where emotions drive Henry's movement or when his actions fuel his emotions.

Give students the option to create their maps using paper and art supplies or web tools like MapMaker Interactive (mapmaker.education.nationalgeographic.com) or Click2Map (click2map.com). Students should have the opportunity to present their maps and explain Henry's transformation during his journey.

Resources

- Interactive Map of Northern Europe in World War II:
teachingamericanhistory.org/static/neh/interactives/wwii/lesson3
- Map of the World at War, 1944 (Rand McNally Polar Map of the World):
publications.newberry.org/k12maps/module_15/index.html
- West Point Department of History: World War II European Theater:
westpoint.edu/history/SitePages/WWII%20European%20Theater.aspx

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.9; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.9

History: Time of War

Timelines allow students to see how events occur in relation to other events. To help students understand Henry's connection to events before and during World War II, have them work in small groups to create a timeline. To help them personally connect with this time in history, have them plan to include information about the experiences of their own families during World War II on their timeline.

In small groups, students should note and then research significant events about World War II found in the book. As they review and research, they should select additional events they feel are important to understanding why the war happened and who was involved in it. Encourage them to keep track of dates and facts on note cards to easily add to and order their chronology. Note cards can also be used for dates and significant events in Henry's journey, as well as for dates and facts about their own families' activities. Students should plan to interview family members or look up military service records for details about family during World War II.



As they choose what to include on the timeline, students must understand the details of the event and be able to explain why those details are significant. To keep timelines manageable, set a limit on the total number of events that students may include.

Give students the option to create their timelines using paper and art supplies, PowerPoint, or web tools like Timeline (readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2), Timetoast (timetoast.com), or Prezi (prezi.com). Encourage students to include images, photographs, and maps on their timelines.

Student groups should present their timelines to the class, giving each student in the group the opportunity to share his or her own family history.

Resources

- “Interviewing the Reluctant Relative”:
archives.com/experts/morton-sunny-mcclellan/interviewing-the-reluctant-relative.html
- The National Archives Military Records: Pictures of World War II
archives.gov/research/military/ww2/photos/
- Timeline of WWII
pbs.org/thewar/at_war_timeline_1939.htm
- World War II: Summary Outline of Key Events
bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwtwo/ww2_summary_01.shtml

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.6; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.8.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.7; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.5; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5

Music: Unsung Heroes

The people who helped Henry are always in his mind. And the songs and music he associates with the teenage trumpeter, Pierre, and Madame Gaultoise offer an opportunity to introduce students to several genres of music.

Ask students to close their eyes to listen as you play “Moonlight Sonata.” What images or words come to mind? Does the music make them think of a particular character or part of the book? Have them open their eyes and write or draw their thoughts as they continue to listen. Give students time to finish noting any additional thoughts once the song has finished. Have them share their ideas or drawings with the class.

Ask students to do the visualization exercise again with “I Can’t Give You Anything but Love” as recorded by Louis Armstrong or with “You Are My Sunshine.” Have them break into small groups to discuss how the music makes them feel and how it connects them to events and characters in the book.

Students should continue to work in small groups to brainstorm and discuss other characters who helped Henry in his journey. What music do they think would be appropriate to honor or represent these unsung heroes? Have each group choose a character and research and select a song or music that they feel fits with the character and his or her actions. Groups should present their song to the class and see if the class can determine the character their song represents. Groups should explain their choice of character and song to the class along with their ideas and reasons for their selection.



Resources

- Wilhelm Kempff Plays “Moonlight Sonata”
[dailymotion.com/video/x30gfx_wilhelm-kempff-plays-beethoven-s-mo_music](https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x30gfx_wilhelm-kempff-plays-beethoven-s-mo_music)
- Louis Armstrong Plays “I Can’t Give You Anything but Love”
[youtube.com/watch?v=TvKEzc3JXo4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TvKEzc3JXo4)
- “You Are My Sunshine”
[youtube.com/watch?v=jDNDELFF1ok](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jDNDELFF1ok)

Correlates to CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.6.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.7.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.8.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.9-10.1; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.2; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.6.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4; CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4



History and Writing: War in Perspective

After Henry is reunited with the U.S. Army, he is debriefed about his escape, the *maquis*, and the German troops he saw while making his way back to the Allies. The National Archives has nearly three thousand digitized firsthand accounts of escape and evasion during World War II. Since Henry and his escape are fictional, there is no military record of his statement, of course. But escape and evasion (E&E) files tell the real stories of the thousands of U.S. military personnel who crashed in Nazi territory and had to evade capture or escape from German prisons. These fascinating accounts are ideal to compare and contrast with Henry's story and suggest unique writing opportunities. Have students choose from the E&E files included the resources below or from the thousands at the National Archives (blogs.archives.gov/prologue/?p=1798).

Introduce students to these accounts by sharing the escape and evasion case file for Flight Officer Charles (Chuck) E. Yeager (chuckyeager.com/escape-and-evasion or research.archives.gov/description/305272). E&E files are sometimes in the returnees' own handwriting; sometimes they are typed. Asked students to think about why and what that might mean as you work together in class to evaluate Yeager's account as you would any primary document.

So that students may support each other in evaluating an additional E&E file, organize them into small groups of four and present one file to each group. After working together to evaluate the file, each student in the group should take on different writing prompt below.

Writing Prompts

- Imagine that you kept a journal during your escape or evasion. Create a journal entry based on information read in an E&E file that gives details about how the returnee might have felt about his situation. For example, a returnee's report might include that those aiding him provided him with food. Your journal entry might detail how hungry you were, what food you were given, how the food tasted, what it reminded you of, and thoughts about the hunger of those helping you.

- In an E&E report, you get a firsthand account of what happened to someone who escaped or evaded the enemy, but it is not a complete account. Reread the E&E report. Is there any information about what the experience was like for the people who helped the returnee? Do some research about underground groups that organized escape lines and individuals who helped hide and transport servicemen and then an account told from the point of view of someone who risked his or her own life for the freedom of another.
- As part of their routine intelligence debriefing, returnees were asked to rate the helpfulness of the individual items in the aids box—or “escape kit,” as Henry calls it—and give suggestions for how to improve upon the contents. Recreate this questionnaire (usually Appendix D of the E&E file) and answer it, writing as Henry. Complete it based on what you read about the contents of Henry’s “escape kit.” Base your recommendations for improvements on Henry’s experiences, and be creative but realistic.
- Use the E&E file to demonstrate your understanding of how the author used and/or interpreted history in *Under a War-Torn Sky*. Compare and contrast Henry’s story with the historical account presented in your E&E file. How is your personal interpretation of the account in the E&E file similar to or different from the way the author presents Henry’s account? Use specific examples from both the book and the E&E file to support your ideas.

After writing, have students peer-review drafts in their groups. Each group’s finished student writing should be compiled into one dossier, along with the E&E file, to complete the writing project. To share what they’ve learned and created, each group should present the account in its E&E file along with one work produced by a group member.

Resources

- E&E Files

Robert M. McCowen, Second Lieutenant
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-317.pdf

Robert E. Sheehan, Flight Officer
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-340.pdf

William R. Hartigan, Second Lieutenant
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-231.pdf

Carroll F. Haarup, Technical Sergeant, and Robert C. Giles, Technical Sergeant
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-333.pdf

Henry M. Heldmann, Second Lieutenant
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-543.pdf

William J. Cook, Jr., Second Lieutenant
media.nara.gov/nw/305270/EE-410.pdf

- Royal Air Force Museum (search Escape and Evasion Aids)

navigator.rafmuseum.org

- Winged Boot: Escape and Evasion in World War II

www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/factsheets/factsheet.asp?id=14571

- The Escape Lines of WW2

ww2escapelines.co.uk/escapelines

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Additional Readings and Resources of Interest

To further help students question, understand, and relate to the diverse people, places and events of World War II, push them toward to additional historical inquiry and introduce them to a variety of resources. Some suggested titles and resources are below. Your school or public librarian can recommend many additional excellent books of fiction and nonfiction about wartime experiences and the war on all fronts.

- *B for Buster* by Iain Lawrence
- *Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein
- *Going Solo* by Roald Dahl
- *Tamar* by Mal Peet
- *Jackdaws* by Ken Follett
- *Number the Stars* by Lois Lowry
- *Twenty and Ten* by Claire Huchet Bishop
- *Snow Treasure* by Marie McSwigan
- *For Freedom: The Story of a French Spy* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley
- *The Boys from St. Petri* by Bjarne Reuter
- *Remember D-Day: The Plan, the Invasion, Survivor Stories* by David Eisenhower
- *Candy Bomber* by Michael O. Tunnell

And, of course, the author's companions to *Under a War-Torn Sky*: its sequel, *A Troubled Peace*, and *Across a War-Tossed Sea*.

About the Author

L. M. (Laura Malone) Elliott is the author of a number of picture books and award-winning historical novels for young people, including *Under a War-Torn Sky*, its sequel, *A Troubled Peace*, and the companion title *Across a War-Tossed Sea*. Other historical fiction titles include *Annie*, *Between the States*, *Give Me Liberty*; and *Flying South*.



A longtime journalist, Elliott made the leap from journalism to fiction with *Under a War-Torn Sky*. While inspired by her father's World War II experiences and homecoming, her main character, Henry Forester, is not her father—though they do have similar personalities. Instead, Henry Forester is an everyman, an amalgamation of many individual war experiences, representative of the thousands of ordinary boys who took to the skies to fight Nazi aggression.

Under a War-Torn Sky has been named a Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Young People, NCSS/CBC; a Jefferson Cup Honor Book; winner of the Borders Original Voices Award; finalist for the South Carolina Junior Book Award, the Pennsylvania Young Reader's Choice, the Iowa Teen Award, and the Maryland Black-eyed Susan Book Award; a Best Children's Book of the Year, Bank Street College of Education; and a Best Book about Trauma, Tragedy and Loss, CBC.

Elliott was twice a finalist for the National Magazine Award and recipient of numerous Dateline awards. *The Alan Review* describes L. M. Elliott as one of “the great authors of historical fiction providing a lantern of learning about history and the connectedness of humankind in times of peace and prosperity, as well as poverty, war, and transition.” Educators will find a wealth of information about her research and writing process and ideas for using historical fiction as a springboard to exploration in history and social studies classrooms at lmelliott.com.

Rachael Walker (belleofthebook.com) created this guide. She consults on a wide variety of educational programs and multimedia projects with a special focus on children's literacy, and develops educational materials and reading resources for children, parents, and teachers.

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