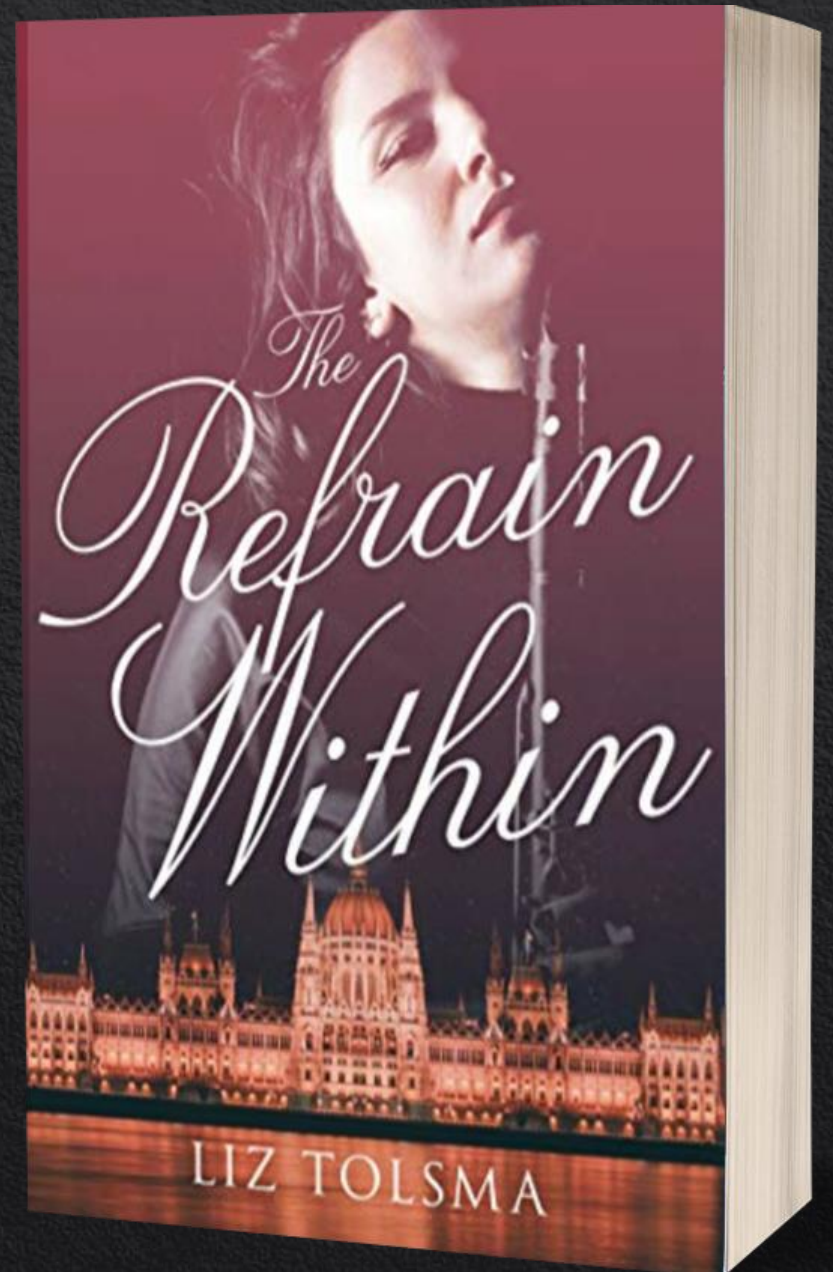


The Refrain Within

Book Club Kit



Dear Readers,

Thank you for choosing to read *The Refrain Within*. I am so honored you did so. This is a story I have been wanting to share for a long time.

Before I began researching WWII in Hungary, I knew little about it. The first surprise was that Hungary was an ally of Germany's at the beginning of the war, mostly to protect themselves from invasion. Later on, President Horthy stood up to Hitler and refused to give up Hungary's Jews. Some have called him foolish; others have labeled him as brave. Whatever he was, he was a man who wasn't going to let Hitler dictate what would happen in his country. So in March of 1944, Hitler invaded Hungary and immediately began deporting the country's Jews.

Above all, this is a story about the men and women who worked behind the scenes during the war—those who fought in the resistance, often giving their own lives to save the lives of others. Some of the characters in *The Refrain Within* struggle with the secrecy and lying that this required. Others struggled with how many lives must be sacrificed to save their own. How many is too many? How many lives is yours worth? And how did you figure out who to trust and who not to trust?

We must never lose sight of their courage, determination, and zeal in rescuing as many innocents as they could and in helping to rid their country of the Nazi scourge. The events taking place in our world require us as Christians to rise up and face these problems with the same courage, determination, and zeal. There is much we can learn from Éva, Patrik, Ernő, and Zofia. We may not be required to give up or lives, but how much are we willing to sacrifice so that the light of the gospel may continue to shine in a very dark world?

My prayer is that you will be touched by these stories, that you will find their strength and resilience in God, and that you will be a beacon of light for Jesus Christ and all the world to see.

Many blessings to you,

Liz

Book Club Questions

1. One of the epigraphs at the beginning of the book says, “One needs something to believe in, something for which one can have wholehearted enthusiasm”. What did Eva believe in and how wholehearted enthusiasm for? How about Patrik? Zofia? Erno
2. At the beginning of the book, Eva was quite naïve about the plight of the Jews in Hungary. What events opened her eyes to what Hitler was doing in her country? Trace her growth from the beginning to the end of the story.
3. When it was time for Zofia to go into hiding, Patrik made the decision not to inform her family of her whereabouts, even though she begged him to give them a message. He went so far as to destroy his relationship with Eva to keep the secret. What were his justifications for doing so? Was he right in what he did, or would you have chosen to do it in a different way?
4. Zofia mourns all the lives lost in order to save hers. At one point, she contemplates turning herself in. What could she have done differently to protect others?
5. Even in hiding, Zofia continued to write pamphlets for the Zionist Youth. Especially since she was pregnant, was this a wise thing to do? What would have made her stop her writings? What would have happened if Erno had been in on the plan from the very beginning?
6. Other than when Patrik and Eva hide in the instruments and cases to escape Hungary, what role did music play in the book? Why do you think the author chose to title the book *The Refrain Within*?
7. What more could Patrik have done to safeguard the entire Bognar family?
8. What was the hardest part for Zofia when she was hiding? Would you have been able to live in hiding for months or years on end, unable to go out at all, unable to make any noise?

9. What drove Reka to turn on Eva and Patrik and betray them? Were many people of that time driven by the same kinds of motivations? At what point in the story did you realize that Reka was the true betrayer?
10. What do you imagine happened to Erno, Eva, and Patrik after the war? Do you think Eva was ever reunited with her parents? Was she reunited with Erno?
11. When Patrik is debating about taking more leaflets from Zofia and printing them, he thinks, “Was the price too high? Was there a point at which you had to say no to the greater good for your own?” How would you answer that question?
12. When Erno and Zofia reunite, Erno says, “But let’s live life together, no matter what it might bring. I’d rather have five minutes with you than fifty-five years without you.” Who would you like to have five more minutes with?
13. Much of what Patrik does is to absolve himself from the guilt he feels for not preventing his mother’s depression and suicide. If you could talk to Patrik, what would you say to him about that? In the end, do you think he has dealt with her death properly?
14. Had you known much about Hungary and the role it played in WWII before reading the book? What did you learn more about the country, its culture, and its part in the war?
15. Because Patrik was part of the Zionist Youth movement, he chose to flee Palestine (now Israel). Was this a good place for him to take Eva? Should they have gone somewhere else?

Listen to some Hungarian Music:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LdH1hSWGFGU&list=PLJ4vXx6b1g9BQB1xm8tz1MfKzKB BbU7C3>.

Or learn more about Hungary during WWI:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TV_FoQF13A4&list=PLJ4vXx6b1g9CemKe55t11PGi7IAnRbpcW

Recipe for Gundel Crepes/Gundel Palacostina

Filling (Adapted from ZsuZsa is in Kitchen <https://zsuzsaisinthekitchen.blogspot.com/>)

3/4 cup whipping cream (you can use whole fat coconut milk)

1/2 cup raisins

1 cup sugar

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

3 cups finely chopped walnuts

Add the whipping cream and raisins to a saucepan. Bring the whipping cream to a boil. Add the sugar, cinnamon, and walnuts and combine. Cook 1 to 2 minutes, stirring continuously. Set to the side in a warm place

Chocolate sauce (Adapted from ZsuZsa is in the kitchen)

1 cup dark chocolate chips

2/3 cup cream (or whole fat coconut milk)

Melt chocolate over a double boiler or in a metal bowl over a boiling pot of water. Once melted, slowly stir in the cream.

Crepe Batter (Adapted from America's Test Kitchen)

1 1/4 cup flour (regular or gluten free)

3 tablespoons plus 1/2 teaspoon sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 cups milk (regular or coconut)

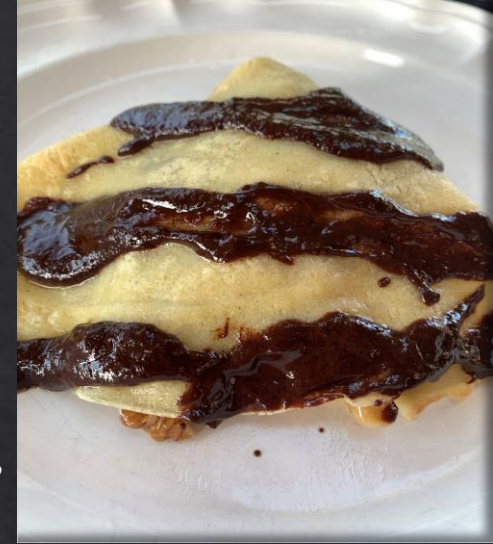
2 large eggs

2 tablespoons butter, melted and cooled

Whisk together the flour, sugar, and salt. Add in the milk, eggs, and butter, whisking until the batter is smooth. It should be thin.

Heat your non-stick skillet over medium heat and spray skillet with non-stick spray. Add 1/3 cup batter to pan. Remove from heat and tilt until batter coats the bottom of the pan. Return to heat and cook until the bottom of the crepe starts to color.

Using a large spatula, flip crepe over. Cook another 1-2 minutes. Slide crepe from pan. Keep warm in low oven. To assemble, fill 1/4 of the crepe with filling. Fold crepe in half and half again. Drizzle chocolate sauce over it and enjoy!





Passionate might best describe Liz Tolsma. She loves writing, research, and editing. Her passion shone through in her first novel which was a double award finalist. On any given day, you might find her pulling weeds in her perennial garden, walking her hyperactive dog, or curled up with a good book. Nothing means more to her than her family. She's married her high-school sweetheart twenty-eight years ago. Get her talking about international adoption, and you might never get her to stop. She and her husband adopted three children, including a son who is a U.S. Marine, and two daughters.