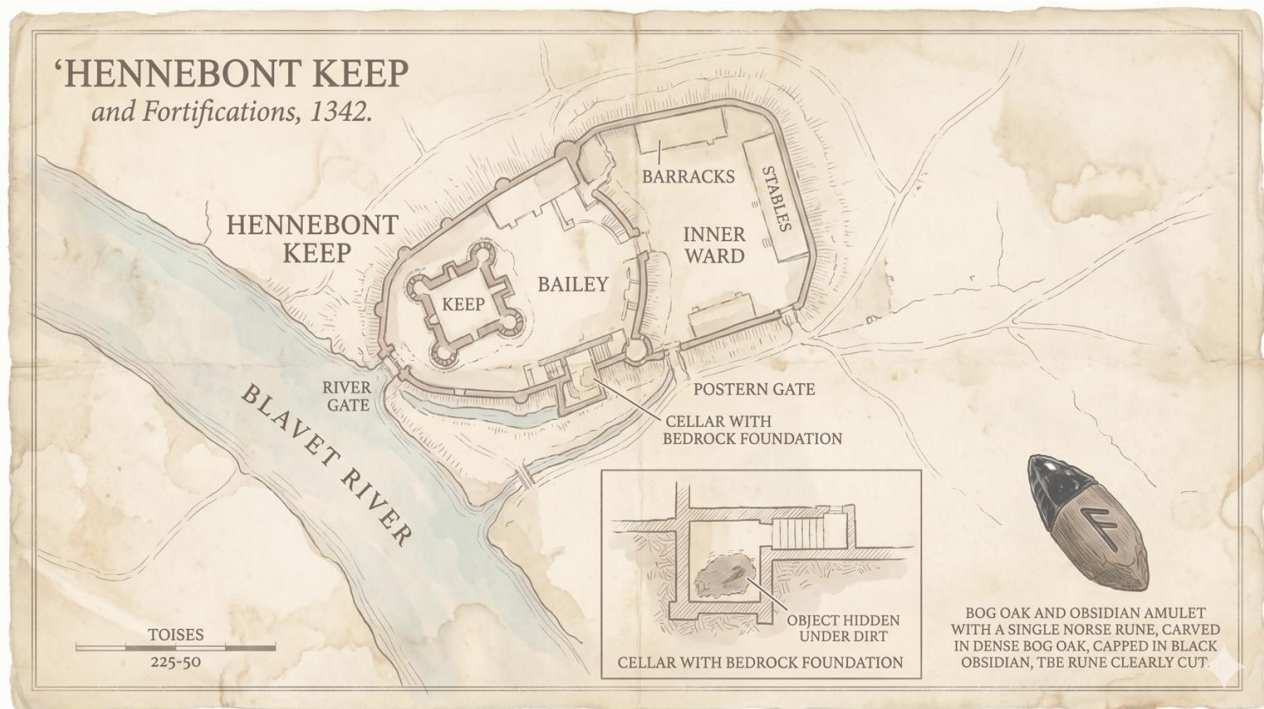


**Title:** *When Time Found Her* — Book Club Discussion Guide by Sigrid Brockenhuus



**Welcome Note:**

Thank you for choosing *When Time Found Her* for your book club. This story was written to be experienced slowly, with room for reflection, emotion, and conversation. I hope the themes, the atmosphere, and the questions raised by the characters give your group plenty to explore together.

**Brief Book-Club-Focused Summary:**

Set between the present day and the haunting echoes of 1384 Brittany, *When Time Found Her* follows a woman caught between memory and history, pulled toward a life she has never lived yet somehow remembers. The novel explores identity, fate, trauma, and the strange ways the past refuses to stay buried. It invites readers to consider what we inherit, what we choose, and what we cannot escape.

**Discussion Question Ideas:**

- The novel plays with the idea of memory as something unreliable yet emotionally true. How does the protagonist’s sense of “remembering” a life she never lived challenge the group’s ideas about memory, trauma, and identity?

- The protagonist works in a modern nursing home, spending her days with people nearing the end of their lives. How do her daily interactions—such as Mr. Dwyer’s remark about "memories trying to get out"—mirror her own internal struggle with feeling displaced in time?
- Throughout the beginning of the book, the protagonist frequently describes the modern world, including her own home, as "sterile," "artificial," and "fake". Why do you think she ultimately feels more whole and grounded in the brutal, ash-choked, and violent reality of 14th-century Brittany?
- The heavy bog oak amulet, carved with a Norse rune, serves as an ancient tether across centuries. What is the thematic significance of physical objects—like the amulet, the signet ring hidden under the hearth, and the faded digital portraits—in bridging the gap between the past and the present?
- Joanna of Flanders is depicted as a fierce, unyielding mother and a brilliant tactician who defended her keep during the 1342 siege. How does the protagonist's discovery of her connection to Joanna shape her transformation into a leader willing to fight for her stolen birthright?
- Upon arriving in the past, the protagonist deliberately burns her modern clothing, viewing them as the "rotting, offensive grave-clothes of a life that was already dead". What does this physical severing symbolize for her character's psychological journey?
- The author explores the concept of "genetic memory," where ancient trauma and grief are carried forward through a bloodline. Do you agree with the novel's premise that the past is an active, aggressive participant in the present?
- When the protagonist gathers the loyal villagers in the forest, she uses her modern 50 years of life experience to organize logistics and supply lines. How does her choice to use practical, legal resistance—like pressing the seal into wax before witnesses—contrast with the traditional violent heroism often expected in medieval stories?
- The novel suggests that the protagonist's 42 years in the modern world were not a prison sentence, but rather a forge that gave her the patience, administrative skills, and steadiness needed to lead a rebellion. Discuss how her "modern" skills gave her a unique advantage in 1384.

## **Historical Context Page:**

### **The War of the Breton Succession & The 1342 Siege of Hennebont**

To fully grasp Constance's displacement, one must understand the brutal reality of her origins. The War of the Breton Succession was a devastating conflict over the Duchy of Brittany, tearing the region apart through decades of vicious warfare and shifting allegiances. In 1342, the forces of Charles of Blois laid siege to Hennebont Keep, a vital fortress held by the House of Montfort.

Under the fierce command of Joanna of Flanders, the defenders faced relentless bombardment by siege engines, choking smoke, and the constant threat of a breached gate. The physical endurance required to survive such a siege cannot be overstated. This was not a sanitized era of romance; it was a gritty, ash-choked meat grinder where survival depended on thick stone walls and desperate, bloody resistance. Understanding this violent historical backdrop deepens the appreciation for the harsh world Constance is inexorably pulled back toward.

### **Character Spotlight: Constance's Duality**

Constance is a woman caught between two entirely different realities. On one hand, she possesses 42 years of modern knowledge—a life lived with the sterile conveniences, soft fabrics, and digital noise of the 21st century. On the other hand, she is anchored to the visceral, ash-choked reality of a 14th-century fortress under siege.

This duality is the core of her psychological struggle. Her modern sensibilities are constantly at war with her archaic, genetic memories. When she finally sheds her synthetic modern clothing for the heavy, scratchy wool of the medieval era, she is not just changing eras; she is stripping away a forty-two-year illusion to embrace the brutal, sensory exactness of her true birthright. Her journey asks readers to consider: if your soul belonged to a violent past, could you ever find peace in a peaceful present?

### **Closing Note:**

Thank you for spending time in this world with me. If your club would like to reach out, ask questions, or share your thoughts, I'm always happy to hear from readers. You can contact me through my website, and I'll reply as soon as I can.