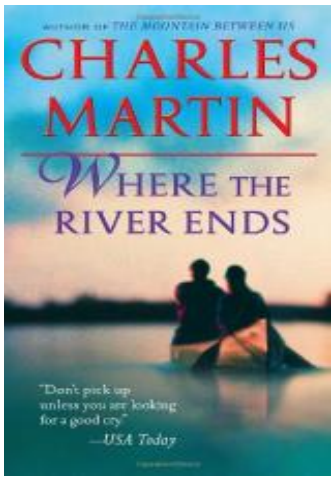
Where the River Ends

by Charles Martin



About the Book

He was a fishing guide and struggling artist from a south George trailer park. She was the beautiful only child of South Carolina?s most powerful senator. Yet once Doss Michaels and Abigail Grace Coleman met by accident, they each felt they?d found their true soul mate.

Ten years into their marriage, when Abbie faces a life-threatening illness, Doss battles it with her every step of the way. And when she makes a list of ten things she hopes to accomplish before she loses the fight for good, Doss is there, too, supporting her and making everything possible. Together they steal away in the middle of the night to embark upon a 130-mile trip down the St. Mary?s River?a voyage Doss promised Abbie in the early days of their courtship.

Where the River Ends chronicles their love-filled, tragedy-tinged journey and a bond that transcends all.

Discussion Guide

1. What does Doss?s mother teach him in the novel?s opening scenes? What gift does she give him through the words ?if you ever find your well empty, nothing but dust?then you come back here ? dive in and drink deeply??

2. Doss recalls overcoming his suffocating asthma and growing up without a father figure. Abbie had to cope with the death of her mother and life with a domineering father. In what ways did Doss and Abbie heal each other through love?

3. Discuss the Saint Mary?s River as a character in **Where the River Ends**. What ?personality? is reflected in the variety of scenes depicting the river? How does the timeless symbolism of water?as cleansing, life-sustaining, and ever-changing?shape its power in the novel? Where does the river ultimately take Doss and Abbie?

4. What versions of beauty are presented in the novel? What does Doss discover about himself by painting Rosalia in chapter 15? Why are some able to see inner beauty, or unconventional physical beauty, while others are not?

5. What makes Charleston and South Carolina appropriate settings for this novel? How do the region?s beautiful landscape and complex history, encompassing the grim slave trade as well as the rise of an exceptional aristocracy, shape the families depicted in **Where the River Ends**?

6. What does the novel indicate about modern medicine and its limits? What was Doss able to do for Abbie that no doctor could?

7. Doss?s first up-close encounter with Abbie occurs when he fends off her attacker. During their river journey, they must again defend themselves against other threatening characters. What is the nature of such evil in the world? What determines whether victims remain optimistic, like Doss and Abbie, or descend into a quest for vengeance?

8. How does Doss and Abbie?s journey down the river compare to their fantasy of it? What does it say about them that, despite the lack of creature comforts or security, they are able to savor every moment of the voyage? Why was Abbie better off without traditional hospice care?

9. Which of the wishes on Abbie?s list seemed the most difficult to achieve? Which one would have been the most exhilarating for you?

10. What does Bob?s history as a defrocked religious leader say about the frailty of human beings, and the power of second chances? How did the marriage ceremony he performed for Doss and Abbie compare to more lavish nuptials you have witnessed?

11. How was the storytelling enhanced by the author?s use of flashbacks? In what way did the timeline mirror the way memories are woven into the present?

12. Were you surprised by the scene of forgiveness in the end? What did Doss and his father-in-law ultimately have in common?

13. Describe the most important farewell you have experienced. Have you ever served as the navigator for someone who had to endure a difficult journey?

14. If you were faced with Abbie?s prognosis, what unfulfilled promises and unfinished wishes would you make haste to experience? What would it take to accomplish the dreams on this list even if you were not faced with Abbie?s fate?

Author Bio

Charles Martin is a *New York Times* and *USA TODAY* bestselling author of 13 novels. He and his wife, Christy, live in

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