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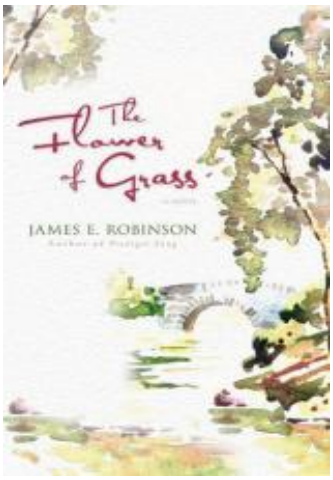
The Flower of Grass

by James E. Robinson



About the Book

Sometimes we have to lose ourselves to find our way back home

John Allen had come home to say goodbye. But he was too late. Now faced with secrets and pain buried just beneath the service, he begins to wonder if his homecoming was maybe a bad idea. Can he truly make amends with the people in his past?

This powerful, romantic novel depicts a prodigal's return to a small town in Tennessee --- and the emotions he must face once there. An exquisitely written, passionate, and thoughtful novel, this classic love story frames deeper themes of mortality and the passage of time, the true nature of faith, and the delicate balance of human relationships.

Discussion Guide

1. James E. Robinson opens his novel with a poem by Z. Bryan Haislip. What are some of the themes/images embodied in the poem? In what ways does the novel reflect the themes of the poem?

2. What are some of your early impressions of John Allen? As John drives across the bridge, returning home after many years away, what internal struggles are at work within him? Is he justified in his fear and feelings of loneliness?

3. When we meet Jessie, she seems lost in winter's gloom. In what ways do you relate to her? Do you find her weak or strong?

4. Once Jessie's mother, Belle, enters the scene, how does the unfolding of their relationship influence your feelings about Jessie? About Belle? What circumstances have led them to this place in their relationship?

5. Why do you think Robinson chose the name ?Tranquility? for the town in the story? How does the local pharmacist, Swain, serve the reader as a kind of "tour guide" into the nature of Tranquility? Into the nature of John's family?

6. How does Belle's deteriorating physical condition affect Jessie's behavior and mood? How does it affect her faith? In what ways does the thought of losing her mother impact the way Jessie is processing Johnny's return? How does it impact her marriage?

7. As John meets his sister, Maggie, and later Joey, what kinds of family dynamics are exposed? Did you expect some of the reactions the characters had? What did each character's interactions with Johnny tell you about them? About Johnny?

8. What did John's decision to stay in his father's cabin tell you about their family? Could you relate to his decision to stay in Tranquility for a while? Would you have made the same choices regarding John's decision to contact Jessie?

9. What part does nature play in John's life? What part does it play in Jessie's life? What might the woods and river represent? How does the author use nature and the changing seasons as a centerpiece for the overall thematic elements of this story?

10. Think about the end of this book. What happens to John? To Jessie? Is this the end of the story?

Author Bio

James E. Robinson is an award-winning singer/songwriter whose songs have been recorded by many country, Christian, and rock musicians. He has written one previous book, PRODIGAL SONG, and also works as a professional recovery counselor in Nashville, Tennessee. He and his wife, Teresa, have two children.

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