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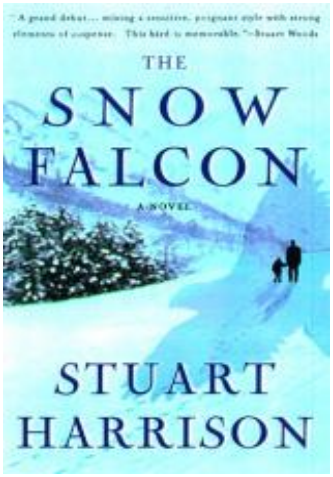
The Snow Falcon

by Stuart Harrison



About the Book

A magnificent gyrfalcon, soaring over the irocky cliffs of the Pacific Northwest, is winged by a hunter and falls to earth. Rescued and taken to a nearby farmhouse, the bird will irrevocably change the lives of her savior, Michael Somers, and the woman and child he comes to love.

After many years, Somers has returned to his hometown of Little River Bend to unlock secrets from his own past--secrets that almost drove him to destroy his family in a night of irrational violence. Shunned by his neighbors, he is determined to heal the bird and release her to freedom. Watching from afar as Somers coaxes the bird to fly is Jamie Baker, a deeply troubled little boy who lost the power of speech after witnessing his father's death in a hunting accident.

Through caring for the falcon, a tender and emotional bond forms between the child, his mother--who yearns to free her child from his self-made prison--and the strange man who seems able to heal.

Discussion Guide

1. Discuss the importance of nature as a redemptive force in **The Snow Falcon**. How does this differ from the portrayal of nature in books like **The Perfect Storm** by Sebastian Junger or **Into Thin Air** by Jon Krakauer?

2. How does the author compare and contrast physical pain with emotional pain? How are these different kinds of pain conveyed through Ellis? character?

3. In **The Snow Falcon**, Michael Somers, a man with a checkered past, forsakes the anonymity of the big city for the prejudices of a small rural town. Why does he do this? How does the author use Somers decision to portray one?s personal roots as both important and inescapable?

4. Discuss the theme of alienation as it pertains to Michael Somers? character in **The Snow Falcon**. Are the townspeople justified in their feelings toward Somers? Who is responsible for or capable of reestablishing trust once it has been broken?

5. How does Harrison treat the responsibility owed by one generation to the next? How is this reflected in Somers? problematic relationship with his own parents and the very troubling history with his wife and daughter?

6. All the characters in **The Snow Falcon** are somehow scarred from past experiences. Through the falcon, and by empathizing with one another?s torment, each starts down the path to salvation. To what extent is the bird merely a focal point for their energies? To what extent is it innately capable of healing their psychological wounds?

7. How is love treated in the novel? Is the possessive/obsessive love sometimes felt by Somers and the other characters real love? Is it really directed toward another person, or is it a kind of self-love?

8. How do the characters develop throughout the novel? How do they grow personally?

Author Bio

Stuart Harrison was born and educated in England and has worked in a variety of occupations all over the world. He wrote **The Snow Falcon**--his first novel--while living in New Zealand. He currently resides in Ireland.

Critical Praise

"This is a beautiful, lyrical ode to a magnificent bird of prey and a novel of forgiveness and redemption . . . Highly recommended. "

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