



FAITHPOINT BOOK CLUB

October 2019 Selection

***Where Dandelions Bloom* by Tara Johnson**

Cassie Kendrick is on the run. Her abusive father arranged her marriage to a despicable man, but she's discovered an escape. Disguised as a man, Cassie enlists in the Union army, taking the name Thomas Turner. On the battlefields of the Civil War, keeping her identity a secret is only the beginning of her problems, especially after she meets Gabriel Avery, a handsome young photographer.

Anxious to make his mark on the world and to erase the darkness and guilt lurking from his past, Gabriel works with renowned photographer Matthew Brady to capture images from the front lines of the war. As Gabriel forges friendships with many of the men he encounters, he wonders what the courageous, unpredictable Thomas Turner is hiding.

Battling betrayal, their own personal demons, and a country torn apart by war, can Cassie and Gabriel learn to forgive themselves and trust their futures to the God who births hope and healing in the darkest places?

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Discussion Questions:

1. When Gabe was an impoverished child, he was inspired to pursue photography as a way to escape from—and improve upon—his difficult life. Did you have any childhood experiences that set you on the path to where you are today? What about those experiences was so formative?
2. Cassie disguised herself as a man and joined the Union Army because she felt it was her only way out of a desperate situation. Why did she come to that conclusion? Did you agree with her, or can you think of another route she might have taken?
3. Describe Gabe's view of women early in the story. What factors in society and in his own life contributed to that view? How and why does his perspective change by the end of the book?



4. Cassie is able to hide her identity, even from some of her closest friends. Would you say her ruse was acceptable, or was she wrong to pretend to be someone she wasn't? How can a person discern when deception might be morally justified?
5. Over the course of the story, Cassie struggles to forgive her father. How does her anger toward him affect her? What causes her to finally make the decision to forgive? Is she able to find closure even though she doesn't interact with her father after she forgives him?
6. Gabe compromises Cassie's disguise when he sells her photo in order to pay Jacob's bills, but he doesn't realize that Jacob has already been provided for by someone else. Have you ever tried to take control of a situation when you should have stepped back and trusted God's provision instead? What was the outcome?
7. The Civil War was the first large-scale conflict that was documented extensively by photographers such as Brady and Gardner, whose images were printed in newspapers for the public to see. What impact do you think these photographs had on American society's view of war? When is media coverage of violence and war helpful, and in what ways can it be harmful?
8. Gabe's mother told him, "Wherever dandelions bloom in mortar, it reminds us hope is still alive." How do the characters in this story keep hope alive in the midst of war and traumatic circumstances? What are some "dandelions" that have inspired hope in your own difficult times?
9. In what ways are Gabe and Cassie able to heal from the scars of their pasts by the end of the story? How have you seen God at work in healing your own scars or those of someone you know?
10. Why do Cassie and Gabe decide to travel to the Western frontier? What adventures await them and their family after the final pages of the novel?

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Recommendations:

- If you liked *Where Dandelions Bloom*, you might like [*To Wager Her Heart*](#)
- You might also enjoy [*The Spy of Richmond*](#)