

All Through the Night

Book Club Kit

"This novel sings with spiritual truths sure to harmonize with any reader's life story. Another winner from Tara Johnson."

Jocelyn Green, Christy Award-winning author of *Veiled in Smoke*



About Tara Johnson

A passionate lover of stories, Tara Johnson uses fiction, nonfiction, song, and laughter to share her testimony of how God led her into freedom after spending years living shackled to the expectations of others. Tara is the author of three novels set during the Civil War: *Engraved on the Heart*, *Where Dandelions Bloom*, and *All Through the Night*. She is a member of American Christian Fiction Writers and makes her home in Arkansas with her husband and three children. Visit her online at tarajohnsonstories.com.

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A Note from the Author



While *All Through the Night* is completely fictitious, the character of Cadence Piper is loosely based on a very courageous woman named Elida Rumsey. Young, beautiful Elida was desperate to do her part in the Great Conflict but was turned away by Dorothea Dix. Elida was known throughout Washington for her beautiful singing voice and was called upon to use her gift at various benefits. She was the very first person to publicly sing “The Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

When starving soldiers were released from Libby Prison in a prisoner exchange, a young Navy Department clerk named John Allen Fowle sought out Elida and asked her to sing in order to rouse the soldiers’ spirits. Her popularity grew among the troops from that day forward, and she was soon labeled “The Songbird of the North.” Elida organized libraries for recuperating soldiers and even took food and provisions to the battlefronts to give to the sick and dying. It was in the heat of battle that she began nursing the wounded. Upon seeing fresh blood pumping from the arm of her very first patient, she fainted. Elida resolved that would never happen again and immediately went back into the field hospital to nurse those who needed her. She eventually became the youngest member of the Massachusetts Army Nurses.

Because of their popularity, John and Elida were married in the Hall of the House of Representatives. They had four biological children, adopted two orphaned soldiers’ children, and took in two emancipated slave children. I chose to honor Elida Rumsey by using her first name for one of my characters in this book—Cadence’s friend, the mother of baby Rose.

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While researching this story, I was horrified to learn the depths of evil perpetrated by the Knights of the Golden Circle. I had heard of the secret society before, but only in the realms of treasure hunters seeking the rumored fortune the Knights supposedly left behind. These forerunners of the KKK funded much of the Confederacy and their influence reached even into the Union ranks. A particularly haunting memoir by Edmund Wright, one of the few who managed to leave the Knights and paid a high price, laid a rich foundation of research for this novel. My character Edmund Warwick was inspired in part by this brave man. Many historians believe that both Jesse James and Lincoln's killer, John Wilkes Booth, were also members of the Knights.

Fanny Crosby is one of my favorite songwriters of all time. When faced with the possibility of giving her a cameo in *All Through the Night*, my imagination took flight. Just before penning her part of the story, I went to sing and speak to some inmates at the Little Rock penitentiary. When it came time for worship, one of the inmates stood and led us in a beautiful rendition of "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior." Seeing the tears in his eyes as he lifted his face to heaven, I marveled at how Crosby's touching words still move so many today.

In the epilogue, I had Miriam humming this hymn as she went about her work after hearing it performed at a revival service in 1863. In reality, "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" wasn't written until 1868. I wanted to wrap up Cadence and Joshua's story with the reminder that all of us long to be seen . . . and there is a God who sees and hears us, even in the darkest night.

Hear more from Tara about the inspiration for *All Through the Night*.
Listen to her talk about it in the video here: <https://youtu.be/GD9TEYKjooY>

Discussion Questions

- 1 How does a doctor's misdiagnosis from Cadence's childhood affect the way her father treats her—and the way she views herself—for years afterward? Think of a significant event from your own childhood. What were the repercussions of this event, and how do they still affect you today?
- 2 Joshua endured a difficult childhood until he was taken in by Papa John. How did his impoverished early years shape his character as an adult, for good and for bad? In what ways does he choose to channel his painful experiences for the benefit of others?
- 3 Dorothea Dix turns Cadence away when she asks to train as a nurse, leaving Cadence unsure about her purpose. How does Cadence react? How have you reacted to setbacks or rejections in your career or plans for your life?
- 4 In response to the evil of slavery, Joshua and his associates engage in the dangerous business of buying—and then freeing—enslaved children. What compels them to do this work? What injustices do you see around you in today's world? How do you typically respond to them?
- 5 After Cadence loses the joy she once found in singing, Joshua tells her, "The gifts God gives only continue to flourish when we pour them out through love. They dry up when we use them motivated by any other purpose." What does he mean by this? Consider your own gifts. Have you ever used them selfishly? In what ways can you use them for God's glory and out of love for others?
- 6 Tate is initially disturbed and upset by little Etta's efforts to befriend and play with him. Why is this so troubling to him? How is he eventually able to come to terms with his past choices?

7 When Stephen Dodd learns that Cadence is married, he tells her, “Truth hurts, but it ultimately heals. Deception, though done with good intentions, always destroys. Always.” Do you agree with him? What were Cadence’s intentions in her relationship with Stephen, and why did he misconstrue them? Have you ever unintentionally misled someone or been on the receiving side? What was the outcome?

8 Toward the end of the book, Joshua puts his family at risk in order to continue his anti-slavery work. Why does he make that decision? How would you have advised him to proceed? Why is it often difficult to balance the demands of ministry with the needs of family?

9 How does faith in God sustain Joshua, Cadence, and other characters in this story? Think of the moments their faith is put to the test. How are they able to see God at work in the midst of these trials? When do they choose to rely on their own strength rather than God’s?

10 Did you learn anything new about the Civil War era from this book? Or was anything particularly surprising to you?

My Book Group Questions

Jot down some questions you want to ask your group:



Recipe: Ginger Muffins

Craving a tasty snack to enjoy while discussing the novel? This recipe from Tara might just hit the spot.

During the Civil War, gingerbread was known as the ultimate comfort food. Often called the “dying man’s food” because it was offered to wounded soldiers in field hospitals, gingerbread was found to be easy to digest and extremely nutritious. Its sweet taste was especially appreciated after months of eating little more than hardtack, beans, and poor substitutes for coffee.

Gingerbread was a favorite of Abraham Lincoln. It reminded him of his poor childhood and brought back memories of his mother, who would make gingerbread men for him as a rare but sweet treat. He even referenced her gingerbread men in a heated debate with Stephen Douglas.

This food was often found in care packages sent to the soldiers by their families, along with toiletries and socks. According to one Civil War nurse, the cake-like bread was a constant source of fights among the ranks, every man vying to get his hands on a bite. The four items that caused the most jealousy were gingerbread, meat, apples, and pickles.

I’m including my own grandmother’s recipe for gingerbread muffins, a sweet treat passed down through our family. Although I prefer them with a spoonful of whipped cream alongside a warm cup of tea, feel free to enjoy yours however it suits you. Happy eating!

Recipe on next page



Ginger Muffins Ingredients:

1 cup shortening
1 $\frac{1}{8}$ cups sugar
8 cups flour
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ tablespoons salt
2 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons soda
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 teaspoon cloves
3 teaspoons ginger
3 teaspoons allspice
4 large eggs
3 cups buttermilk
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups molasses

Directions:

Cream sugar and shortening until creamy. Add eggs one at a time and beat well. Mix dry ingredients together and add to egg mixture alternately with buttermilk and molasses. Bake at 400 degrees until done in muffin tins lined with paper cups.

Note to readers: Be sure to exercise caution when making the recipe. Remember you're trying it out for the first time and making and consuming the ingredients at your own risk. Some ingredients may contain allergens.

Q&A with Tara Johnson

Tell us about some of the core themes of *All Through the Night*. How do you hope these themes will resonate with and challenge your readers?

Cadence yearns for her father's approval and does anything to seek unconditional love in conditionally minded people. Joshua fights the demons of his past, particularly his battered existence growing up as a street rat in the slums. He seeks to find his worth in saving others. Cadence seeks her worth in being seen. Themes found in this story are true worth, identity, unconditional love in Christ, how the hurtful things said in our past affect our future, and finally, how to overcome the lie you believed about yourself.

I want the readers to know that whatever lie they have believed—"I am worthless," "I need to be seen," "If only _____ would love me, then I'd be happy . . ."—there is hope and freedom in Jesus. There is nothing we can do to earn his love and nothing we can do to lose his love.



Who did you write this book for?

This book is written for anyone who has wondered if God sees them. It was birthed for anyone who has wrestled with approval or people-pleasing and been left with a gnawing ache inside. This story is for anyone who longs for freedom.

How did you get the idea for the relationship between your two main characters?

Since Cadence is desperate to become a nurse, I knew Joshua would need to directly oppose her goals, at least in the beginning. What better opposition could a nurse have than a stubborn doctor? As their relationship grows, I loved that Joshua becomes her biggest cheerleader but is blind to his own flaws. In many ways, Cadence and Joshua are both struggling with facets of the same issue . . . being accepted. They just have different ways of handling their wounds. This is true for many relationships. The way we see the world is filtered through our past, and that filter affects how we deal with fear. I loved exploring Cadence's and Joshua's emotions and the way they see the world.

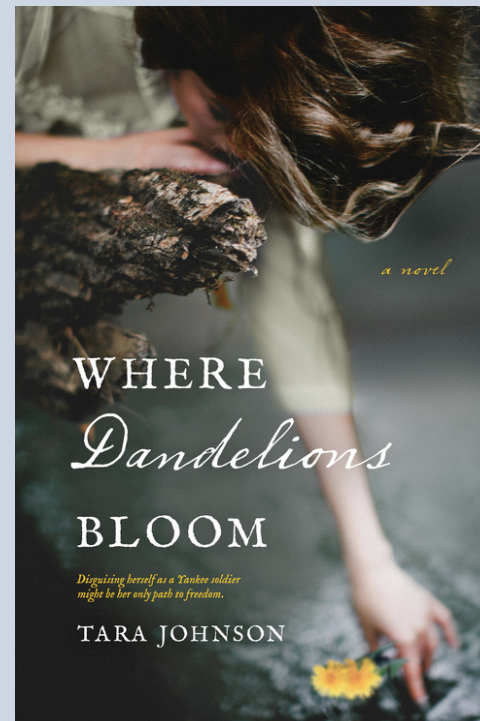
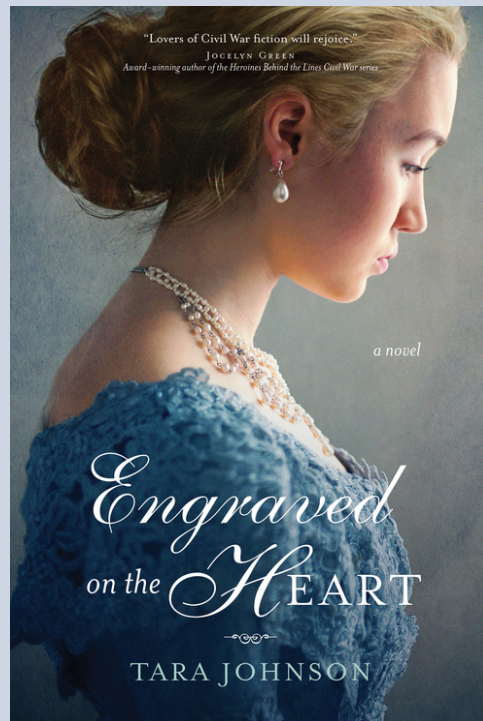
Which was your favorite character to write? Do you identify with this character in any way?

My favorite character to write is the humorous secondary character. They lend so much charm, charisma, and wisdom to a story. They usually bring an opportunity for the reader to take a breath but also give the main character a chance to reflect on some sage advice . . . even if it's delivered in a comical manner. I relate to this character because I'm a bit this way myself! Laughter is great medicine but it also speaks truth.



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