

Wildflowers from Winter Devotional

He led you through the vast and dreadful wilderness, that thirsty and waterless land, with its venomous snakes and scorpions. He brought you water out of hard rock.

-Deuteronomy 8:15

I met a woman once who lived in Kibera, the biggest slum in sub-Saharan Africa. She slept in a tiny shack with six kids, three of whom weren't her own. Her husband had left. She was sick with AIDS. Yet she was lit from within, beaming with the hope of Christ.

If I close my eyes right now, I can see her. And most likely, five years later, she's no longer sick. She's no longer living in a shack. She's rejoicing with the One who gave her that hope.

I have a friend who struggled for three years with infertility. She and her husband were faithful and obedient to the Lord. So why wouldn't He give them the child they yearned for? They had no idea God was using that time to lead them down a different path. A path toward adoption. A path toward their daughter.

When I think of that African woman, when I think about my friend, I picture wildflowers.

Because the harshest, snowiest winters produce some of the most beautiful wildflowers in the spring.

I love when truth reveals itself in nature.

Because this is truth.

God uses what the human eye sees as cold and harsh and lifeless, to bring about beautiful things. Breathtaking things.

Like a once-snowy field bursting with wildflowers.

Like an infertile woman who realizes she doesn't have to get pregnant to be a mother.

Like a woman riddled with sickness, steeped in poverty, yet beaming with hope.

Lord Jesus, thank you for being a God who can redeem the most barren times in our lives. Thank you for being a God who brings beauty from pain. Help us to trust You, no matter our circumstance or season. Help us to trust that You are faithful and You are good.

Are you trusting God to bring water from the hard rocks in your life?

Meet Katie Ganshert

By Katie Ganshert

My favorite book as a child was *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster. I read it in sixth grade, and I can still remember lying in bed, but somehow not, because that story transported me into a different world. I remember gobbling it up in three days and feeling so much wonder, so much hope, so much awe as Milo transformed into a better version of himself. I remember putting that book down and looking at the world with different eyes. Better eyes. It was the first time a story became something more. The first time reading felt truly magical.

It's what led me to start writing. A twelve-year old girl eager to recreate that experience for others. Only instead of writing about fantasy and adventure and lands beyond, I found myself writing about love. About romance. About a prince who falls for a girl and rescues her from danger. Back then, I didn't know what cliché meant. I just knew I liked writing those stories.

As I got into high school and college, I tried other genres. But for me, it always came back to romance. I couldn't understand why. What was up with this infatuation? Why was I so enamored with the concept of rescue? Why do so many little girls dream about a prince? Why do so many little boys pin their hopes on super heroes? Where does this little-kid longing to be cherished and desired, fought for and protected, awed and inspired come from?

Then I met someone. And I don't mean my husband, as amazingly wonderful as he is. I mean my prince. I mean Jesus. The ultimate knight in shining armor. The ultimate super hero. He rode into my life, rescued me from my brokenness, and promises that someday, we'll live happily ever after. But until then, stories need to be told.

Because the world is hurting. The world is broken. And people are digging through the mire of that hurt and brokenness, hoping to find satisfaction for a little-kid longing the world was never meant to satisfy.

So this is why I write. To sweep readers away like I was when I read *The Phantom Tollbooth*, yes. To get readers to see the world through fresh eyes, yes. To give readers hope that they, too, can become better versions of themselves, yes. To give them that fun, giddy experience that comes with romantic tales—even for the men out there—of course. But more important than all of that, I write to show readers what they're searching for.

That while we were battered, bruised, and broken. Marred with scars. Covered in filth. Jesus laid down His life to rescue us. Writing these stories reminds me that He is the answer to our longing. I hope it reminds readers too.



Katie Ganshert was born and raised in the Midwest, where she writes stories about finding faith and falling in love. When she's not busy plotting her next novel, she enjoys watching romantic movies with her husband, playing make-believe with her wild-child of a son, and chatting with her girlfriends over bagels and coffee. She could talk books all day and is often spotted around town pushing a stroller, walking a dog, and reading—all at the same time.