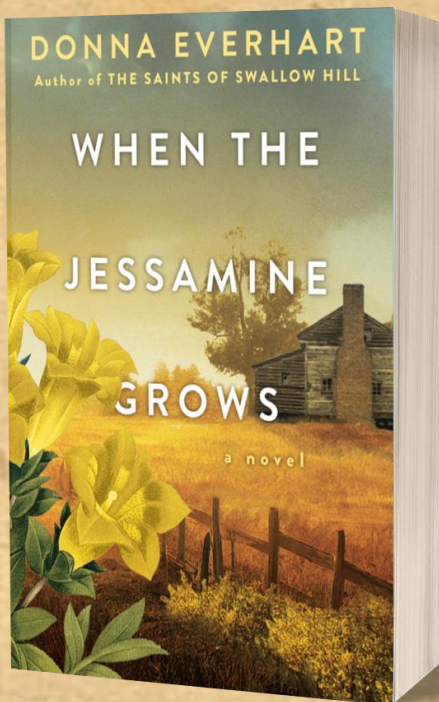


**BOOK CLUB
KIT**

From the acclaimed author of *The Saints of Swallow Hill*, a captivating story set amidst the rugged beauty of rural 19th century North Carolina, as one woman fights to keep her family united, her farm running, and her convictions whole during the most devastating period in American history...

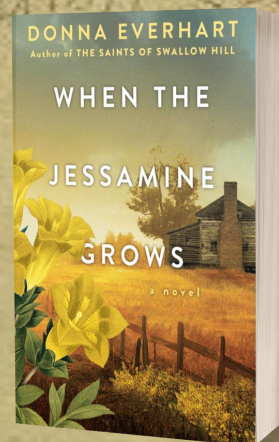


**“They are welcome to their war,
but we do not have to be
a part of it.”**

WHEN THE JESSAMINE GROWS
by Donna Everhart
On Sale 1.23.24/ Historical Fiction
ISBN: 978-1-4967-4070-0

Dear Reader,

When I approached the idea of writing a novel set during the Civil War, I was acutely aware that I wanted to explore a different angle of one of the most challenging times in our history. As I began to look more deeply into the history, I found myself wondering, “Where are the stories about people who wanted nothing to do with the conflict?”



Throughout the 19th century, my home state of North Carolina was vastly rural, and most people were subsistence farmers – individuals or families who farmed plots of land, growing enough to feed themselves and their livestock. Two thirds of the white population did not “own” enslaved people, yet many of them would fight for that “peculiar institution” in the name of white supremacy.


Even so, I had to believe some of these individuals (perhaps many) with seemingly little stake in the Southern Cause, never wanted to be part of the fight at all. Given the hostility towards anyone refusing to declare for either side, many of them would have kept this view silent and fought anyway. As a result, this perspective of impartiality or neutrality is often absent from historical accounts.

Joetta’s story takes place in Nash County, North Carolina, and begins just before the state secedes from the Union. You will come to know her as a woman who stands by her convictions, even as doing so makes her a pariah within her own family and her community.

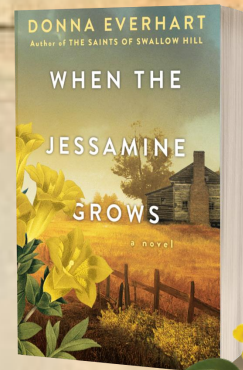
I’m truly excited for you to read *When the Jessamine Grows*, and hope you find inspiration in its story of a woman who lives what she believes to be right and true even when it is dangerous and hard for her to do so. I would love to hear your thoughts, and if you have a chance to share online, please tag **#WhenTheJessamineGrows** so I can find them. In turn, you can find me at www.DonnaEverhart.com, on Instagram [@donnaeve2](https://www.instagram.com/donnaeve2), or on [facebook.com/donnadaviseverhart](https://www.facebook.com/donnadaviseverhart).

With tremendous gratitude for your support,





Discussion Questions
to spark conversation and enhance your reading of
WHEN THE JESSAMINE GROWS



1. Throughout the novel, Joetta resolutely refuses to choose sides, insisting she is neutral. Do you believe it is possible to remain completely neutral in a time of war? Given the reaction from her community, do you think Joetta should have been so vocal about her determination to not take sides? Why or why not?
2. Even though she refuses to declare loyalty to the North or South, Joetta is undoubtedly a very loyal person. What do you think are her deepest loyalties? Are any of Joetta's loyalties similar to your own? Is there a difference between your loyalties as an individual and your loyalties as a member of an ethnic, religious, regional, or other kind of group? What do you do when they clash?
3. In the mid-1800s, the majority of white people in rural North Carolina were like the McBrides – subsistence farmers who were not enslavers. Why do you think so many of these people who did not benefit from slavery go on to fight for it on behalf of the Confederacy?
4. What do you think is Henry's primary motivation for running away to join the war when he's only fifteen? Does he believe in "the Southern cause?" Is he simply rebelling? When you were his age, did you make any decisions you later regretted? How did your parent or parents react?
5. When they discover Henry has left, Joetta wants Ennis to search for him immediately. He refuses, believing Henry should be held accountable for his decisions, while Joetta feels nothing but a mother's worry. This event creates an uncommon rift between them. Did you agree more with Ennis or Joetta in this situation? Why?
6. Mr. McBride is immensely resentful of Joetta's decision to allow Union soldiers access to her well. He foolishly talks about it while in town, and soon, the McBrides' situation becomes much more dire. Who do you think was most to blame for what happened, Joetta or Mr. McBride? What would you have done if you were in Joetta's position?

7. Bess Caldwell, Joetta's friend, encourages her to join the sewing group created to help the troops and to show loyalty to the Confederacy. Given what took place with the crops, Joetta decides it might be a good idea. After a tense exchange with two wealthy members of the group, she's asked not to return by Bess, who's certain Joetta will bring trouble to the Caldwells. Do you agree with what Bess did? Do you think Bess was betraying her friendship with Joetta, or do you think she was justified?
8. What does it mean to claim neutrality during a time of war? What are the moral implications? Are there instances when you believe it is immoral to remain neutral?
9. Robert resents his mother for many reasons. The moment she insisted his father go look for Henry, it seemed she could do nothing right from his viewpoint. How did you feel about Robert's behavior toward his mother?
10. Joetta takes in a young Union soldier, Charlie Hastings, who inadvertently gives Joetta something she desperately needs: someone to mother. In return, Joetta becomes a substitute mother to Charlie. What did you think of this special relationship?
11. Throughout human history, we've witnessed the lengths humans go to in order to survive. During the Civil War people ate almost anything for sustenance, were forced to hide for great lengths of time, and endured extreme weather, illness, and wounds. What is it about human nature that enables people to endure such hardships? What traits in Joetta and other characters enable them to cope?
12. Joetta has a special place called Fishing Creek, where she goes when confronted by a difficult situation or is feeling troubled. Do you have a special place you like to visit when you're feeling upset or distressed? Is it a place no one knows about but you? How did you discover it?

13. Mr. McBride often irritates Joetta (to say the least!), but their relationship changes over the course of the novel. Why do you think it becomes easier for them to get along? Is it because one or the other changes their views on topics they previously argued over? Or are there other reasons why their relationship changes? Do certain experiences help them understand one another better?
14. This novel takes place during a war that many people would say was fought over slavery, but all of its primary characters are white. What did you think of the absence of African American characters in this novel?
15. The activist Zainab Salbi has said, “If we are to understand war fully, we need to understand not only what happens on the front lines, but what happens on the back lines as well, where women are in charge of keeping life going.” Did reading about Joetta’s struggles change your understanding of the Civil War in any way?
16. Historical novels have the ability to shed light on contemporary issues, often teaching us something about the present through the lens of the past. Do you see parallels between the conflicts presented in this book and conflicts in American life today? How would you describe them? Which side are you on, and can you say anything good about the other side?

17. What do you think of the novel’s title, *When the Jessamine Grows*? Why do you think the author chose it and what does it signify?



CIVIL WAR COCKADES

A cockade is a rosette or knot of ribbon worn to signify allegiance to a cause, political faction, nationality, or rank. They've been worn in different colors and styles for centuries, from the red, blue, and white cockades of the French Revolution or the white ribbons worn by Jacobite supporters in 18th century England, to the black and white badges donned during the American Revolution and the purple, white, and gold of the Suffragettes.

During the Civil War, Union supporters wore the tricolor red, white, and blue. The most popular colors for Confederate cockades were solid blue or solid red, though they could also be blue and white or red and white, often varying by state. If included, the central emblems ranged from stars or military buttons, to tintype buttons showing famous people or Southern symbols such as cotton, pinecones, and state seals.

“Robert continued to stare at the cockade, such an innocuous-appearing item, yet it held substantial meaning, a sign of who you were, where you stood. In her heart, Joetta fancied burning the thing.”

- *When the Jessamine Grows*, page 111

Union Cockades



Confederate Cockades



North Carolina Secession Cockades



Images courtesy of:

- Creative Cockades, www.creativecockades.blogspot.com
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, www.dncr.nc.gov
- NCPedia, www.ncpedia.org

“She had not been gone but a single night, and even so, a great and huge longing for home clung to her the way the jessamine wrapped itself around her front porch posts.” - page 310

Jessamine (*Gelsemium sempervirens*)

Also called: Carolina Jessamine, Evening Trumpet flower, Yellow Jasmine, Trumpet vine, Poor Man's Rope, False Jasmine

- Jessamine is native to the Southeast and can be seen across the region climbing lattices, walls, fences, trees, and just about anything else put in its way. It is a tenacious and highly adaptable plant.
- The vine's fragrant flowers have a sweet, unmistakable scent that has confounded efforts to reproduce synthetically. Instead, the perfume industry must extract the plant's essential oils.
- All parts of the plant are toxic, containing an alkaloid similar to strychnine, and its nectar has proven lethal when ingested by humans and animals alike. Just touching the sap can cause skin irritation.
- Pollinators are drawn to the fragrant, brightly-colored flowers, but jessamine nectar can even be toxic to honeybees if they consume too much.
- Jessamine has the power heal as well as harm. Despite its toxicity, herbalists throughout history have used it to treat illnesses and ease pain. The Algonquian-speaking Native American tribes created tinctures for malaria and other fever diseases, and its sedative properties made it a popular remedy throughout the 1800s for everything from vertigo to whooping cough. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle even experimented with it to treat his neuralgia.



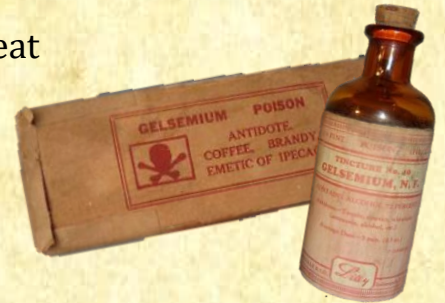


- Published in 1927, Agatha Christie's *The Big Four* includes her short story titled "The Yellow Jasmine Mystery," in which Hercule Poirot investigates a murder of a wealthy man poisoned by an injection of jessamine extract.



More about Jessamine...

- To this day, homeopathic practitioners use jessamine to treat anxiety and fear of public speaking.
- The English botanist Mark Catesby first named the plant “yellow Jessamy” in 1712.
- The yellow, trumpet-shaped flowers bloom in very late winter or early spring, announcing the new season and promise of warm weather to come.
- South Carolina declared jessamine its official state flower on March 14, 1924. It was chosen not only because it grows all over the state, but "its delicate flower suggests the purity of gold; its perpetual return out of the dead winter suggests the lesson of constancy in, loyalty to, and patriotism in the service of the State" (quote from South Carolina legislature).
- Despite the fact that it's commonly referred to as “yellow jasmine,” jessamine is not related to the jasmine plant species, which is edible and used in jasmine tea.



“The jessamine had survived, and was making a comeback, despite all. She cleared the ash away from the recovering vine, comforted immensely by the symbol of a previous life renewed. She sat back on her heels and considered the plant. It was hardy, tolerant, even in the most adverse conditions. Surely it was a sign for her, for all of them.” – page 343

Joetta's Switchel

This thirst-quenching drink is particularly restorative after field work and gardening.

I have also found it popular among company during the summer months.

Rare is the visitor who will turn down a refreshing glass of switchel on a warm day!

1/4 cup sliced or chopped ginger
3 to 4 cups water, separate 1 cup
2 tablespoons brown sugar (you may
also substitute honey or molasses)
2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar
Lemon (optional)

Bring 1 cup water to boil, add brown sugar, stir to dissolve.

Add ginger and remove from stove. Allow to steep until cooled.

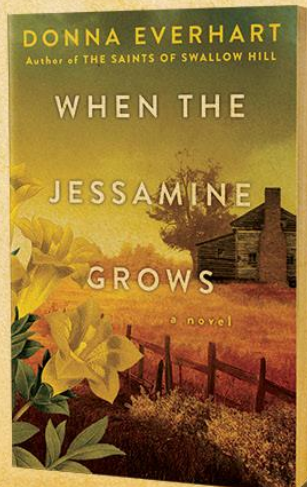
Pour all, including ginger pieces into a 1-quart jar along with the remaining water. Mix in the apple cider vinegar.

Add juice of half a lemon if you have it.

Secure lid, shake well, and store in spring house, or cellar.

Serve cool.

→ On over
chipped ice
if available!



Ms. McBride's Favorite Dessert

Idiot's Delight

Filling:

1 cup brown sugar

1 cup raisins

1 tbs. butter

1 tsp. vanilla

4 cups water

Batter:

7 tbs. butter

1 1/2 c. white sugar

2 tsp. baking powder

1 1/2 c. milk

1 c. flour

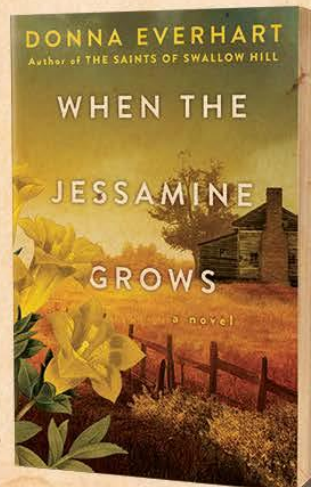
Boil together the first 5 ingredients. Set aside.

Make a batter of the second 5 ingredients.

Drop the batter by spoonfuls into a greased baking pan.

Pour filling over the top and bake in a moderate oven until golden brown.

For modern cooks,
a moderate oven
would be 350° F



"Let us Alone."



Southern Disposition.

5786.F(N2)66.c

LOAN FOR THE MILITARY DEFENCE OF THE STATE.

\$675,000.

THE BANK OF THE STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA is the Agent of the State to effect the Loan. The Bonds to be issued are for sums of \$50, \$100 and \$500 each, bearing an interest of seven per cent, payable annually at the State Treasury, and the principal is redeemable in 1868, 1870 and 1872.

Subscriptions for the Loan will be received by the Bank in Charleston and its Branches, and by all the Banks in the State. They will also be received by the Clerks of the Court in the several Districts of the State. When the subscriptions are paid to the Bank of the State the Bonds will be delivered.

The Bonds are made for small amounts to give an opportunity for small subscriptions. It is expected that at the next session of the Legislature the Bonds will be converted into Stock.

The purpose of this Loan presents an appeal to the patriotism of the people, which must secure its being promptly taken up. It is needless to enlarge on the momentous consequences dependent on the prompt completion of the Loan. Apart from considerations of patriotism, the Bonds present the most advantageous investment of money which can be made.

The interest is large, and the security superior to any other that can be offered.

The citizens of Charleston and of the State are called upon to come forward promptly and take up the Loan. February 22

THE CIVIL WAR



1861 - 1865



THE UNION



VS

THE CONFEDERACY



THE NUMBERS

OF ALL NORTHERN MALES (AGES 20 - 45)



OF ALL SOUTHERN MALES (AGES 18 - 40)



FOR EVERY MAN WHO DIED OF BATTLE WOUNDS, TWO DIED OF DISEASE

425 DEATHS PER DAY

SOME 10,500 ARMED CONFLICTS

384 PRINCIPLE BATTLES IN 26 STATES

DEATH TOLL:

620,000

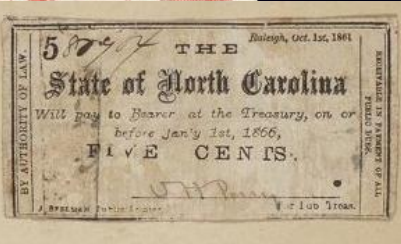


COMBINED DEATH TOLL OF ALL OTHER (11) U.S. WARS:

648,830



JEFFERSON'S REBELLION: A cartoon showing Jefferson and other leaders of the secessionist movement.



WHEN THIS Cruel War is Over...

Ballad by Henry Tucker



BATTLE OF UNITED STATES CAVALRY. Illustration of a battle scene from the American Civil War.

\$50 REWARD

The above Reward will be Paid for the Apprehension of the following-named Private Marines, Deserters from Headquarters, Washington City, D. C., viz:

- HENRY S. HYSER,**
- PETER B. CLARK,**
- EDWIN S. MARSTELLA,**
- JOHN METZ,**
- WILLIAM O. REITER,**

If delivered at the Marine Barracks, Philadelphia Navy Yard, or \$10 for each.

DESCRIPTION:

HENRY S. HYSER is aged about 28 years, 5 feet 8 1/2 inches high, blue eyes, sandy hair, sandy complexion, and by occupation a Laborer.

PETER B. CLARK is aged about 25 years, 5 feet 6 1/2 inches high, grey eyes, fair hair, sandy complexion, and by occupation a Shoemaker.

EDWIN S. MARSTELLA is aged about 20 years, 5 feet 5 1/2 inches high, blue eyes, dark hair, fresh complexion, and by occupation a Shoemaker.

JOHN METZ is aged about 25 years, 5 feet 5 1/2 inches high, blue eyes, dark brown hair, swarthy complexion, and by occupation a Carter.

WILLIAM O. REITER is aged about 18 years, 5 feet 6 1/2 inches high, grey eyes, light hair, fresh complexion, and by occupation a Farmer.

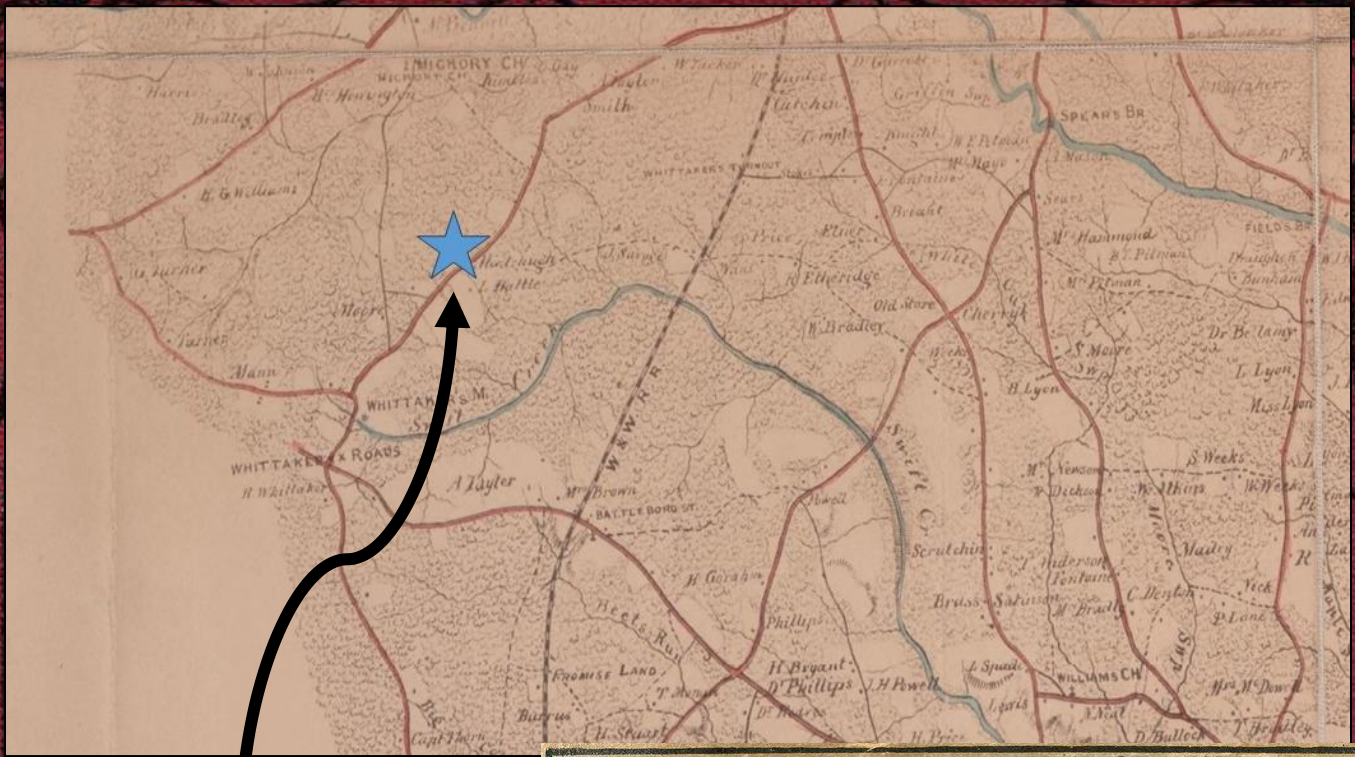
J. ZEILIN,

Major Commanding Post.

Marine Barracks, Philadelphia, July 17th, 1862.

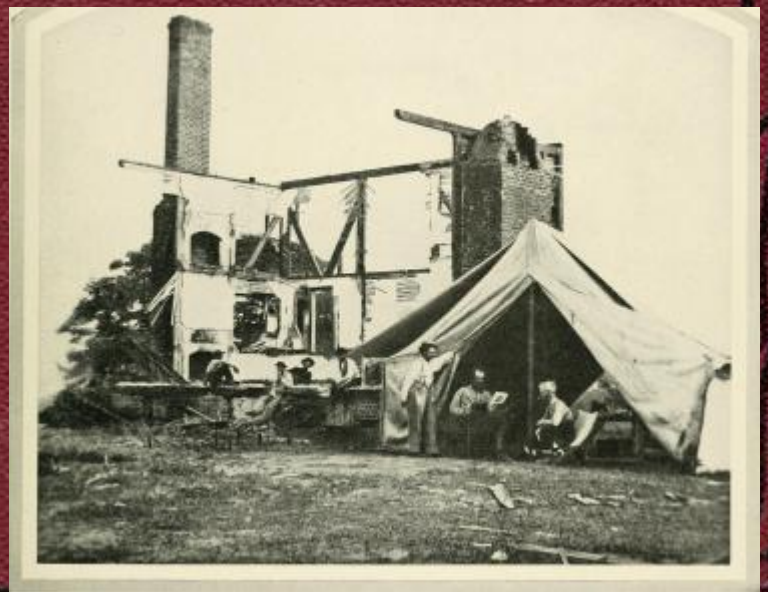
U. S. San Fran. College Building, Philadelphia.

You would have from my last I love you, and our encampment several months we will winter efforts to find is ascertained all I now and know he in the vicinity of Centerville, Virginia where a battle took place in a creek called Run Creek in July. He was not yet missed the action, as my new friends would style it. They don't know how glad I am we've not been



Nash County, NC
(location of Joetta's
family farm)

Since much of the war was fought on Southern lands, few households could remain insulated from it. Many homesteads were destroyed and families were uprooted. Some homes were requisitioned for use as soldier housing and hospitals as well.





Donna Everhart is a *USA Today* bestselling author known for vividly evoking challenges of the heart and the complex heritage of the American South in her acclaimed novels *When the Jessamine Grows*, *The Saints of Swallow Hill*, *The Moonshiner's Daughter*, *The Forgiving Kind*, *The Road to Bittersweet*, and *The Education of Dixie Dupree*. She is the recipient of the prestigious SELA Outstanding Southeastern Author Award from the Southeastern Library Association and her novels have received a SIBA Okra Pick, an Indie Next Pick, and two Publishers Marketplace Buzz Books selections. Born and raised in Raleigh, she has stayed close to her hometown for much of her life and now lives just an hour away in Dunn, North Carolina.

Visit Donna online:

www.DonnaEverhart.com



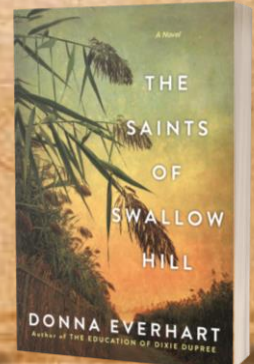
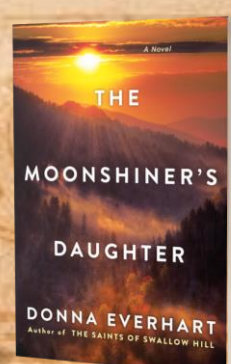
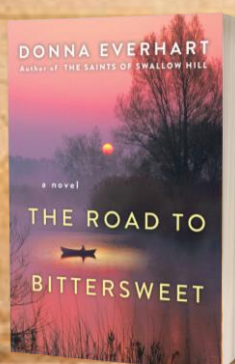
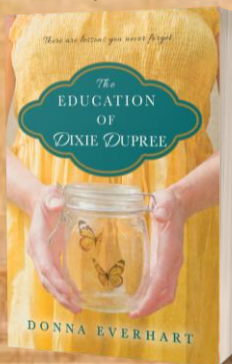
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#WhenTheJessamineGrows

Also by Donna Everhart:



“The divide of the North and South was like a great crack in the earth, a gaping maw of distrust, and the self-righteousness and determination that grew with each passing conflict only served to expand the differences. And here she dwelled, in this land divided, impartial, and nonaligned, hoping to remain thus until it was all over.” - page 171

