



Calling Me Home: A Novel

By Julie Kibler

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***Calling Me Home* by Julie Kibler is a soaring debut interweaving the story of a heartbreaking, forbidden love in 1930s Kentucky with an unlikely modern-day friendship.**

Eighty-nine-year-old Isabelle McAllister has a favor to ask her hairdresser Dorrie Curtis. It's a big one. Isabelle wants Dorrie, a black single mom in her thirties, to drop everything to drive her from her home in Arlington, Texas, to a funeral in Cincinnati. With no clear explanation why. Tomorrow.

Dorrie, fleeing problems of her own and curious whether she can unlock the secrets of Isabelle's guarded past, scarcely hesitates before agreeing, not knowing it will be a journey that changes both their lives.

Over the years, Dorrie and Isabelle have developed more than just a business relationship. They are friends. But Dorrie, fretting over the new man in her life and her teenage son's irresponsible choices, still wonders why Isabelle chose her.

Isabelle confesses that, as a willful teen in 1930s Kentucky, she fell deeply in love with Robert Prewitt, a would-be doctor and the black son of her family's housekeeper--in a town where blacks weren't allowed after dark. The tale of their forbidden relationship and its tragic consequences makes it clear Dorrie and Isabelle are headed for a gathering of the utmost importance and that the history of Isabelle's first and greatest love just might help Dorrie find her own way.

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Comparisons to *The Help* (2009) are inevitable, and though there are echoes of Kathryn Stockett's popular best-seller to be found in *Calling Me Home*, Kibler has crafted a wholly original debut. The novel, set in 1930s Kentucky, centers on a forbidden romance between a teenage white girl, Isabelle McAllister, and Robert Prewitt, the black son of the McAllister's maid. Chafing under her mother's restrictive notions of female propriety, Isabelle finds a kindred spirit in Robert. The two begin to meet clandestinely, but any hope of a future together is threatened by the overwhelming racism of the era. Against impossible odds, the pair elopes to neighboring Cincinnati, but their happiness is short-lived when Isabelle's thuggish brothers drag her back to the family home. The sad story is presented in flashback, as told by a now-elderly Isabelle to her black hairdresser, Dorrie, while the two drive cross-country to a funeral. Some may object that the civil rights struggle is once again being filtered through a white perspective, but there's no denying the pull of Kibler's story. --Patty Wetli

Review

"I laughed out loud in places and had tears in my eyes as I turned the last page. I can't wait to watch Julie Kibler's star rise!" Diane Chamberlain"

About the Author

JULIE KIBLER began writing *Calling Me Home* after learning a bit of family lore: as a young woman, her grandmother fell in love with a young black man in an era and locale that made the relationship impossible. When not writing, she enjoys travel, independent films, music, photography, and corralling her teenagers and rescue dogs. She lives in Arlington, Texas. *Calling Me Home* is her debut.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Paul Ring:

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Elijah McWhorter:

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