



Q&A With Katie Powner *Where the Blue Sky Begins*

Please provide a brief summary of your new novel *Where the Blue Sky Begins*.

When a shallow but charming financial advisor from Seattle and an eccentric terminally ill woman in rural Montana are thrown together for the summer, their unconventional friendship will produce surprising results. Eric and Eunice couldn't be more different, but they each must learn lessons about themselves, what friendship really means, and how to let go. When the end of summer comes, neither of them will ever be the same.

Can you tell us a little more about who or what inspired you to write this story?

I had been thinking about what I wanted to write next for several months when I was driving to an appointment one day. I turned onto a certain road and found myself steering carefully around a woman on a scooter driving on the shoulder. She was wearing an oversized helmet and a trench coat and just pattering along as if it were perfectly reasonable for her to be on a busy high-speed road with her scooter. I couldn't help but wonder: Where is she going? Why is she driving a scooter? Why is she wearing a trench coat in summer? And the next thing I knew, the storyline for *Where the Blue Sky Begins* was born.

***Where the Blue Sky Begins* is the third book you've published with Bethany House. What do you think your novels have in common and what sets this latest release apart?**

All three of my novels so far feature small-town settings and focus on ordinary people. All three contain a mix of both humor and heart. What sets this release apart, I hope, is its willingness to venture into some pretty uncomfortable territory.

What did you enjoy most about creating an eccentric yet complicated protagonist like Eunice Parker? What did you find the most challenging?

I loved writing Eunice because she was unpredictable. Nothing about her life was "normal," and she had no way of being prepared for what she was facing and experiencing, so there was no telling what she might do next. Her moods changed frequently; her health influenced her decisions. Those same things also made her difficult to write because I've never been in her shoes. Though I couldn't necessarily relate to her, I just tried to imagine what I might feel in her situation and write as honestly as I could.

Without giving away any spoilers, what makes Eric Larson and Eunice Parker such a compelling duo?

They're a very unlikely pair, which I think makes them interesting. But more than that, I think it's compelling that they aren't looking for each other. Not at all. They would both be happy if they could be left alone to do their own thing, but of course that's not possible.

***Where the Blue Sky Begins* bravely addresses the realities of facing terminal illness. How did you approach creating Eunice's character in light of her circumstances?**

I've been around a lot of death and dying in my life. My own father faced a terminal illness when I was a teenager. Those experiences didn't necessarily give me the insight I needed to create Eunice, because every situation and person is unique, but they did give me the conviction that her story was important and shouldn't be shied away from. So I was determined to approach Eunice head-on without turning away from the hard and messy and scary.

What do you hope readers will take away from reading *Where the Blue Sky Begins*?

This is difficult to answer without giving too much away, but one thing I hope readers are encouraged to do after reading this book is give people, especially people who seem hard to love at first, a chance. Don't be too quick to judge based on outward appearances or first impressions. You never know what someone else is going through.

What are you working on next?

I have a couple of stories in the works. They're both small-town stories, which is my thing, but they have big aspirations. I enjoy challenging myself and exploring new territory.

How can readers connect with you?

I love connecting with readers! If you go to my website at katiepowner.com, you can sign up for my newsletter, which is the best way to get exclusive news, deals, content, and giveaways. You can also find a contact page on the website and links to all my social media accounts.