



What Readers Are Saying about

K A R E N K I N G S B U R Y ' S

Books

“My friend Shelley and I call your books ‘peanut butter books’ because when we start reading we just can’t stop, and our families know it’s peanut butter and jelly for dinner that night!”
—Cathy S.

“Everyone should have the opportunity to read or listen to a book by Karen Kingsbury. It should be in the Bill of Rights.”
—Rachel S.

“Karen Kingsbury’s books are filled with the unshakable, remarkable, miraculous fact that God’s grace is greater than our suffering. There are no words for Ms. Kingsbury’s writing.”
—Wendie K.

“Because I loaned these books to my mother, she BECAME a Christian! Thank you for a richer life here and in heaven!”
—Jennifer E.

“When I read my first Karen Kingsbury book, I couldn’t stop. . . . I read thirteen more in one summer!”
—Jamie B.

“I have never read anything so uplifting and entertaining. I’m shocked as I read each new release because it’s always better than the last one.”
—Bonnie S.

“*Let Me Hold You Longer* is breathtaking! My friend read this story to me—the first night we both left our new babies overnight. And by the end, the two of us were bawling. She bought me my own copy for Mother’s Day, and I read it to everyone . . . and each person cries as I read the words. I now buy it for every baby shower I go to. I think every parent should own or read this book. I read it as often as I can.”
—Shannon

“My husband is equally hooked on your books. It is a family affair for us now! Can’t wait for the next one.”
—Angie

“I told my husband I want to pack up our home and three kids and move to Indiana and become a Baxter. . . . Your stories have touched my heart.”
—Christy P.

“Every time our school buys your next new book, everybody goes crazy trying to read it first!”
—Roxanne

“Recently I made an effort to find GOOD Christian writers, and I’ve hit the jackpot with Karen Kingsbury!”
—Linda

“When Karen Kingsbury calls her books Life-Changing Fiction, she’s merely telling the unvarnished truth. I’m still sorting through the changes in my life that have come from reading just a few of her books!”
—Robert M.

“I must admit that I wish I was a much slower reader . . . or you were a much faster writer. Either way, I can’t seem to get enough of Karen Kingsbury’s books!”
—Jillian B.

“I was offered \$50 one time in the airport for the fourth book in the Redemption series. The lady’s husband just couldn’t understand why I wasn’t interested in selling it. Through the sharing of Karen’s books with many of my friends, many have decided that contemporary Christian fiction is the next best thing to the Bible. Thank you so much, Karen. It is truly a God thing that you write the way you do.”
—Sue Ellen H.

“Karen Kingsbury’s books have made me see things in ways that I had never thought about before. I have to force myself to put them down and come up for air!”
—Tabitha H.

“Karen, how did you get inside my head and heart to portray your characters so accurately? I identify with so many of the Baxter family in every one of the Redemption series! Due to all the tears I have shed in reading your books, I have enhanced the sales of tissues big-time. So in a word, between us we are helping the economy.”
—Maxine B.

Karen KINGSBURY



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Sunset

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To Donald, my prince charming

Can it be that we are celebrating our twentieth anniversary? I still see you as you were then, on that sunny July morning in front of our friends and family—love in your eyes and hope in your smile. You have marked these two decades with a sort of faith I never could've found on my own. From the early weeks of our marriage you believed God could do the impossible, and now . . . well, here we are. Impossible things have happened, and I thank God every day that among them he led Prince Charming to me. The years have flown by lightning fast—the births of our three babies, the moves from California to Arizona and finally to Washington, the adoption of our three Haitian sons, and the journey of seeing our oldest graduate this year. You and I hear songs now and then about the speed of life, and we look at each other with tears in our eyes. Yes, life really is a mist that appears for a little while. Only a little while. But today, when the vapors still shine brightly, while the voices of our children still fill our home, let's hang on to every minute. That way, when the sunset of our years is upon us, we will have a million hours of memories to sort through, a million reasons to smile again. I love you, Donald. . . . You are my best friend, the one I lean on, the one whose stalwart faith is still the rock of our home. Yesterday I was that girl in my early twenties with a heart full of dreams, and God knew exactly the man who would take my hand and lead me toward them. Thank you for never wavering. I love you always and forever.

To Kelsey, my precious daughter

You are nineteen now, a young woman, and my heart soars with joy when I see all that you are, all you've become. We prayed that through the teenage years you would stay true to who you are, to your great faith in our Lord and Savior, and to the promise to keep yourself pure for God and for the young man He has waiting for you somewhere. Here, as you enter adulthood, we celebrate that God has answered our prayers, that you remain that one-in-a-million girl. Whether God leads you into a season of dancing or singing or acting, whether He takes you to a local stage or one far off, I know that these coming years will find you shining brightly for Him. And I know that our home will be a little less bright without you here. I am grateful you're not rushing off just yet! The days of you and Tyler filling our house with song are too few as it is. But wherever God leads, know that you take a piece of home with you, and we will be cheering you on, believing that you will be that bright light for Christ you've always been. I love you, sweetheart. I couldn't be more proud.

To Tyler, my lasting song

What a transition you've made, my precious oldest son. You've gone from the young middle school boy with stars in his eyes to a dedicated young man who now stands taller than his daddy. God has allowed you the lead role in a number of plays, and each time I've seen you grow not only in your ability to act and sing but in your faith as well. When I look at you today, I can see the man you're becoming, one who is kind and loving, loyal and true. But one who is also strong in his convictions and purpose—much like your dad. You're sixteen now, and I see you noticing the girls around you, sorting through their character traits and trying to understand the way females think and act. It'll be a lifelong course, honey, but I'm so glad you're sharing your thoughts with me along the way. "I'm not sure about her," you'll say. "She doesn't believe like I do." I smile to myself, once more seeing your father in you. God knows all these things, Ty. . . . Stay close to Him, and He'll lead you to the right girl when the time is right. Until then, keep shining for Him. However your dreams unfold, I'll be in the front row to watch it happen. Hold on to Jesus, Ty. I love you.

To Sean, my happy sunshine

Just yesterday you showed me a perfect score on your science test, and you and I shared a smile. Of all our kids, your A's mean the most because you work the hardest for them. But here's what makes your dad and me so very grateful: you try harder with every passing semester. You want to succeed, because you believe what we've always told you—to whom much has been given, much will be expected. And, Sean, we have been given so much. I know that among the great plans God has for your life, He has many, many more years of education.

You are a very smart and gifted young teenager, and it warms my heart that the same intense effort you give on the soccer field and basketball floor you also give in the classroom. Wherever God leads you in the years to come, we'll be cheering from the sidelines, Sean. I pray that God will use your great joy and positive spirit to always make a difference in the lives around you. You're a precious gift, Son. Keep smiling and keep seeking God's best for your life. Make sure the bar's set high—not only at track practice. I love you, honey.

To Josh, my tenderhearted perfectionist

Every so often when you're out there conquering the athletic world around you, I pray that you'll never lose the kindness that was innately yours as a young child. And then something happens like what happened recently. There we were at one of Kelsey and Tyler's plays, and it came time for the raffle drawing. The number was announced, and you held the winning ticket.

But instead of rushing up for your prize, you handed it discreetly to Brooke, our friends' young daughter. She gave you a quick smile and raced to the stage waving the ticket, fully thrilled to take the prize basket. Here's the best part—you wouldn't have told us. If Brooke's mom hadn't mentioned it, we never would've known. And so I smile when I see you win race after race, game after game, because I know that not only are you still the kind boy you were when you first came home to us, but you have learned to be kind with humility. How great a privilege it is to call you our son, Josh. I love you always.

To EJ, my chosen one

How wonderful this past season has been with you, EJ. It's as if you are finally coming into your own, entertaining us with jokes and silly songs and opening up to us about your thoughts and dreams. We have always treasured your sweet nature and deep loyalty to our family, but watching you now, your dad and I are brimming with excitement over the direction your life is taking. We had a family meeting the other night, one of those talk sessions you kids sometimes tease us about. The subject was a reminder that sitting around the dinner table each night are the very best friends you'll ever have—your sister and brothers. You're a wonderful brother, EJ! Every day, every season, just give 100 percent, okay? Because God has great plans for you, and we want to be the first to congratulate you as you discover those plans. Thanks for your giving heart, EJ. I love you so.

To Austin, my miracle boy

Yesterday you did something that reminded me again of your special heart. You came through the door, a smile stretched across your face, your hands behind your back. You walked up to me, your eyes sparkling; then you held out a bouquet of dandelions. "Here, Mom. I picked these for you!" Your joy was untainted, the gift beautiful in your sight. And it was indeed! You had used one dandelion stem tied around the others so the other yellow buds stayed together. I held them to my nose and took a long sniff, and then I hugged you tight and said, "They're the most beautiful flowers ever!" You grinned, thrilled with yourself for having done such a fine job and for making me so happy. With that you ran off to the kitchen, ready for a snack and a time of homework. I looked at the dandelions in my hands, and I blinked back tears. Then I set them down beside my keyboard and grabbed my phone, and before they could wilt even a little I took a picture of them. And in my heart I hoped that no one would ever tell you that dandelions are weeds. Thank you for your great love, Austin. . . . You are so special to us. I know that eleven years ago when

you faced emergency heart surgery at just three weeks old, God spared you for a reason. Keep being that strong soldier for God, buddy. I love you always.

And to God Almighty, the Author of life,
who has—for now—blessed me with these.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I can hardly believe I've come to the end of a fourteen-book journey with the Baxter family and Tyndale House Publishers. I can only say that I have the utmost respect for the wonderfully talented and loving people I've worked with at Tyndale and that each of you will always remain my friend. Thank you for an incredible experience with the Baxters. I am convinced that somehow the Baxter family will remain in our hearts and minds, and there will be more stories about them in the future.

Also thanks to my amazing agent, Rick Christian, president of Alive Communications. Rick, you've always believed only the best for me. When we talk about the highest possible goals, you see them as doable, reachable. You are a brilliant manager of my career, and I thank God for you. But even with all you do for my ministry of writing, I am doubly grateful for your prayers. The fact that you and Debbie pray for me and my family keeps me confident every morning that God will continue to breathe life into the stories in my heart. Thank you for being a friend, a godly example, and so much more than a brilliant agent.

A special thank-you to my husband, who puts up with me on deadline and doesn't mind driving through Taco Bell after a basketball game if I've been editing all day. This wild ride wouldn't be possible without you, Donald. Your love keeps me writing; your prayers keep me believing that God has a plan in this ministry of fiction. And thanks for the hours you put in working with the guest-book entries on my Web site. I look forward to that time every day when you read through them, sharing them with me and releasing them to the public, praying for the prayer requests. Thank you, honey, and thanks to all my kids, who pull together, bringing me iced green tea and understanding about my sometimes crazy schedule. I love that you know you're still first, before any deadline.

Thank you also to my mom, Anne Kingsbury, and to my sisters, Tricia, Sue, and Lynne. Mom, you are amazing as my assistant—working day and night sorting through the mail from my reader friends. I appreciate you more than you'll ever know.

Tricia, you are the best executive assistant I could ever hope to have. I treasure your loyalty and honesty, the way you include me on every decision and exciting Web site change. My site has been a different place since you stepped in, and along the way the readers have numerous ways to grow in their faith, so much more than a story with this Life-Changing Fiction. Please know that I pray for God's blessings on you always for your dedication to helping me in this season of writing. And aren't we having such a good time too? God works all things to the good!

Sue, I believe you should've been a counselor! From your home far from mine, you get batches of reader letters every day, and you diligently answer them using God's wisdom and His Word. When readers get a response from "Karen's sister Susan," I hope they know how carefully you've prayed for them and for the response you give. Thank you for truly loving what you do, Sue. You're gifted with people, and I'm blessed to have you aboard.

Thanks also to my forever friends and family, the ones who rushed to our side this past year as we lost my dad. Your love has been a tangible source of comfort, pulling us through and making us know how very blessed we are to have you in our lives.

And the greatest thanks to God. The gift is Yours. I pray I might use it for years to come in a way that will bring You honor and glory.



CHAPTER ONE

JOHN BAXTER HAD DREADED this day with everything in him, but the knock at the door told him the time had come. It was the last Tuesday in January—Christmas far behind them and long past time to take this step. He'd made the decision months ago, and now he needed to follow through with it.

“Coming . . .” He walked from the kitchen to the front door and opened it.

“John.” Verne Pick nodded. He was a friend from church whose kids were involved with CKT, and he had a reputation for being one of the best, most thorough Realtors in Bloomington. His expression told John that he knew this was going to be a rough day. “You ready?”

John steeled himself. “I am.” He opened the heavy wooden door and welcomed the man inside. “Let’s move to the kitchen table.”

He had brewed a pot of coffee and poured cups for both of them. They made small talk, and after a few minutes, Verne pulled a folder from his briefcase. “We have a standard questionnaire we need to deal with first.”

John blinked, and a memory came over him. When Elizabeth died, it had taken every bit of his strength to walk through the planning of her service. But he remembered this one detail: the young woman from the funeral home who helped him with the process had presented every question couched in concern, as if she wanted to apologize for each step of the ordeal. That's exactly how Verne was now, his brow raised as he waited for a response.

John motioned to the two closest chairs. "Let's get the questions out of the way."

"Okay." Verne opened the folder and took out the document on top. He drew a long breath. "I guess we better talk about the fire first. It's bound to come up."

"Right. Just a minute." John went to the next room and found a folder on the desk. He brought it back and set it on the table in front of his friend. "The garage has been completely redone, and all the repair work was signed off on. Everything's in the folder."

"Good." Verne lifted his chin and sniffed a few times. "No smell of smoke?"

"Not at all."

"The place is really something." Verne's smile was tentative. "Should have it sold by summer, I'm guessing."

"Yes." A bittersweet sense of pride welled in John's chest. "It's a great house. Held up well through the years, even with the fire."

Verne settled in over the paperwork. "I've got some of this filled out already. Let's do the basics first." He lifted his gaze, pen poised over the top sheet. "Number of bedrooms?"

John pictured them the way they'd looked twenty years ago. He and Elizabeth in the large room at one side of the house upstairs. Brooke and Kari across from each other at the south end of the hall, Luke in the next bedroom on the left, and Ashley and Erin sharing a room at the north end. He pushed away the memory. "Five." He took a quick sip of coffee. "Five bedrooms."

The interview wore on, each question stirring another set of memories and reasons why he couldn't believe he was selling the

place. When they reached the end of the document, Verne bit his lower lip. “The tour comes next. I need to measure each room, get an official square footage.”

“The tour?” John looked toward the stove, and he could almost see Elizabeth standing near the kettle. “*John’ll give you the tour,*” she would say when company came over. “*He’s so proud of the place—I like to let him do it.*”

“Sure.” John gave his friend a smile. “Let’s start in the living room.”

They worked their way from one part of the house to the next, and as they went, Verne pulled out his measuring tape and captured the length of the walls.

John remained quiet. He wasn’t seeing his friend taking matter-of-fact measurements of the house he so loved. He was seeing Elizabeth rocking their babies, Ashley learning to walk, Brooke bringing in a bird with a broken wing, and Kari screaming because she thought it might attack her. He could hear the piano, filling the house with hour after hour of not-quite-perfect songs during the years when the kids took lessons, and he could see the grandkids gathered around their tree each Christmas.

Whatever the square footage of the house, it couldn’t possibly measure what these walls had seen or the memories housed here.

They finished the final room, and Verne closed the folder. “Well, that’s about it. Just one more thing and I can get back to the office and list it.” He walked toward the front of the house. “I’ll get what I need from the car.”

John followed him into the entryway, and when he was alone, he slumped against the doorframe. For a heartbeat, he felt like he was no longer attached to his body. What was he doing, selling the house? Certainly one of his kids should’ve wanted it, right? He had six of them in the area, after all. But John had already asked each of them.

Brooke and Peter liked the house they lived in because it was easy for Hayley and comfortable. “We have our own memories

here,” Brooke had told him. “The Baxter place would be much too big for us.”

Kari had felt the same way about having her own memories. Ryan had designed the log house they lived in, and it had a sort of rugged lodge feel both Kari and Ryan loved.

Ashley had been a possibility at first. She had told him a number of times that she would love to raise the boys here, where she’d grown up. But she wasn’t painting enough to bring in regular money, and the mortgage on the house would be far beyond what Landon could afford, especially with their growing boys.

Once John had even considered calling Dayne, because it would’ve been nothing for him to loan Ashley and Landon the money—maybe at a lower rate or for a longer period of time. But Ashley had begged him not to. “I don’t want Dayne to think of us like that, using him for his money.”

John could’ve argued with her, but there was no point, really. Ashley was right; the situation would have been awkward.

As for his other kids, Luke and Reagan needed to be close to Indianapolis for Luke’s job, and things were still very shaky between them. They’d found a nearby church, and John was encouraging them to get counseling at a local center. There was no way they’d be interested in moving again.

Last there were Erin and Sam. At first, when Erin called to announce that they were moving back to Indiana, John thought he had his answer, a way to keep the house in the family. But Sam worked long days, and Erin was busy with the kids. Upkeep on a house with acreage was more than they were willing to take on even for the sake of nostalgia. So they were out.

John wandered into the front room and peered through the window at Verne. Way down at the end of the driveway, his friend had taken a large For Sale sign from the back of his car. John’s heart swelled with frustration and futility as he watched Verne position the sign not far from the road. The Baxter house . . . for sale. John gritted his teeth and looked away. This was where he’d wanted to

live out the rest of his days, so maybe he was wrong. Maybe this was all a mistake. He looked out the window again and narrowed his eyes.

No, there was no mistake in what he was doing. Living in this house into his twilight years meant sharing it with Elizabeth, and since she wasn't here, the house could go. It had to. He and Elaine Denning were moving ahead with their plans to marry, and they needed a new place to begin their life together and—

The echo of a mallet against a stake resonated deep within him. It was barely loud enough to hear, but John knew the sound. He took a few steps closer to the window as Verne hammered the sign into the ground.

Why, God? Isn't there some way to save the place?

In response there was only the sound of another blow, another strike of the mallet.

John winced as Verne finished the job. Yes, his years in the Baxter house were over. The time had come to move on, and with God's help, that's what John would do. He gripped the windowsill and breathed in deeply the familiar smell of his home. He would survive letting go of this place because he had no other choice.

Even if it all but killed him to say good-bye.



Ashley Baxter Blake flung open the bathroom window, braced herself against the sink, and stared at the mirror. Her hands trembled and her heart raced as she glanced at the clock on the bathroom counter—9:31 a.m. *Okay, here goes. . .* She marked the second hand and stared at the mirror again. The next minute was bound to drag, and Ashley couldn't make it go faster by watching the clock.

How could she have lied to herself for so long? She leaned closer, studying her look. Her makeup didn't cover the dark circles under her eyes. She was dizzy and weary, drained from another morning of dry heaves, and no amount of fresh air staved off the nausea.

Through Christmas she had given herself a dozen reasons why she might be late—busyness and excitement during the holidays, running after Cole and Devin almost constantly, and the heartache of missing baby Sarah. It could take a year after losing a baby before her body found its normal routine of cycles. That's what her doctor had told her. A year. It hadn't been nearly that.

But she'd had just one period in the last four months, and finally Ashley had done what she thought about doing weeks ago. She bought a test, and now in less than a minute she'd know the truth. Not that she needed the test at this point. She touched her fingers gently to her abdomen. It wasn't exactly bulging, but it was slightly rounded and firm, the way she'd always felt when she was in her first few months of pregnancy.

The difference was that other times she had been ecstatic about maybe being pregnant, ready to rush to the drugstore for a test the moment she suspected she was a day or so late. Even in the weeks after losing Sarah, she and Landon had wanted nothing more than to try for another child. But somewhere along the journey of letting go of her daughter, Ashley had realized something deep within her.

She couldn't lose another baby.

By God's grace and with Landon by her side she'd survived losing Sarah, but another child? Ashley wasn't sure she'd survive. The sound of her too-fast heartbeat echoed against her temples, and she blinked at her image in the mirror. Standing here on the verge of having her answer, there was only one way to describe the way Ashley felt. She was terrified.

Her strange and new fears were impacting every area of her life—even her relationship with Landon. By now she should've told him about her suspicions, but she'd kept the possibility to herself. Every time she considered telling him, she stopped herself. If she told Landon, then she'd need to visit a doctor and go through the same steps as last time—the tests and ultimately the ultrasound. And that meant she had to be ready to handle the news

that something could be wrong again. News she couldn't face. Not yet anyway.

Besides, if she told Landon too soon, he'd get his hopes up and then if . . . if something was wrong, they'd both be crushed. Almost as if by saying something, she would instantly open the two of them to all the grim possibilities. Whereas by keeping her concerns to herself, she could avoid giving Landon a false sense of hope, avoid the doctor appointments and most of all the dreaded ultrasound.

Ashley squinted at the test window. Was it her imagination or was a line forming down the center? The line that would confirm she was carrying another child? She closed her eyes and breathed in sharp through her nose. *I can't do it again, God. I can't lose another baby. Please walk me through this.*

Losing Sarah was the most wrenching pain she'd ever been through. Yes, she and Landon had found the miracle in Sarah's brief life, and they would treasure forever the few hours they shared with her. But since then, she couldn't walk past Sarah's nursery without aching from the loss, couldn't drive in the direction of the cemetery without seeing her painting, the one of her mother holding Sarah in a field of flowers in heaven.

She leaned hard against the bathroom countertop, her arms shaking. The doctor had said a repeat diagnosis of anencephaly wasn't likely, but it was possible.

Landon must've known she was worried about having future children, because he'd brought up the subject only once since Christmas. "Do you think about it, Ash . . . having another baby?"

"At first. But lately I try not to." Her voice had been kind, gentle. But fear put a sudden grip on her throat. "I couldn't do it again. Go through what we went through with Sarah."

Landon touched her cheek, her forehead. "My grandpa always told me God never gives us more than we can handle."

"I know." Ashley smiled, and in that instant she could see Sarah in her arms, feel that warm little body against her chest.

She swallowed, trying to find the words. But they both dropped the subject.

Since then she'd talked briefly with Landon about her fears of having more children. But the truth was, somewhere along the days of pain and grief Ashley had formed a mind-set: better not to have more children than to face the possibility of losing another baby.

The thing was, in her life God had sometimes given her things that He must've known she'd survive, and she had indeed come through on the other side. God had always brought her closer to Himself through the process. But she was weary of the heartache, tired of the path of pain God sometimes led her down. If she was pregnant now, she would fight the fear of loss every morning, every hour between now and the birth of her baby. So maybe she hadn't been crazy to deny the evidence of her body for this long. She simply wasn't ready to face the sorrow that might be around the next corner.

More than a minute had passed, so whatever was in the test window would be visible by now. Ashley picked up the stick and looked at the two straight lines, both dark and pronounced, and the answer was instantly in front of her. No doubt whatsoever—she was pregnant. Fear tap-danced across the moment, but it was joined by an unexpected partner: the flicker of hope and joy. She was pregnant, and for now, no matter what might lie ahead, a brand-new life was growing inside her. The news was terrifying and thrilling at the same time.

Now it was merely a matter of finding the courage to tell Landon.

A WORD FROM KAREN KINGSBURY

DEAR FRIENDS,

And so we reach the end of an era, the final pages of a time in my life and yours when we have journeyed alongside the Baxter family. Together we have walked with them through trials and tragedies and triumphs, and we have watched God demonstrate His redemptive love time and time and time again. You are my friends, and I thank you for taking this marvelous adventure with me and with the Baxters.

First I must tell you that I'm not ready to say good-bye to the Baxter family. Here's the good news: you'll find them lurking in the background of my next series, which will involve a new family, but will be set—at least in part—in Bloomington! So make sure you visit my Web site often for details as they come about!

Maybe one day down the road I'll write about the Baxters as main characters again. I'd love to tell the story of Elizabeth and John's early days, and I would treasure the chance to check in with these fictional friends years from now to see how they're doing. God will make it all clear as time passes.

I must tell you, the loss of writing the last book in the Baxter family series didn't really hit me until I wrote about Hayley's pink bicycle. Most of you know that Hayley experienced a near drowning several years back, and medical experts did not think she would ever see, let alone walk or ride a bike. But in the book *Rejoice*, God convinced John Baxter to believe in life as long as God granted it. John's way of affirming Hayley's life was to buy her a pink bicycle and park it in his garage for the day when Hayley would be able to ride it again, so he could say he was first to believe it was possible.

As I was writing that scene, watching God's miraculous healing of Hayley come full circle, the closure overwhelmed me, and I truly wept for the fact that I had to end this saga with the Baxters. I've loved everything about writing these books—first the Redemption series, then the Firstborn series, and finally the Sunrise series. I tried to use *Sunset* to bring about closure for every aspect of the thirteen previous books. In every case, the message was the same.

God's redemption.

I pray that you will continue to go back to these books and share them with your friends and family. God has used these stories to do amazing things in the lives of readers. If you're one of those, please visit my Web site and drop me an e-mail. I'd love to hear how reading about the Baxter family has made a difference in your life. Definitely sign up for my monthly newsletter so you'll be the first to know what happens next.

As I've said before, I might start a Baxter update for those who want to know how these characters are doing now that we've reached the end of the series. Maybe a blog from Ashley's point of view or from Katy's or Dayne's or John Baxter's. In the meantime, I'll release new books, other Life-Changing Fiction titles that are already forming in my head and heart. These stories and my new series are so strong in my mind that I can't wait to share them with you.

That brings me to the most important part of this letter. You've watched as the Baxter family leaned on God for strength and wisdom, love and support. If you don't yet know the personal love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ, if this is the first time you're hearing about God and His powerful salvation, His plans for your life, please visit a Bible-believing church in your area and talk to the pastor about Jesus. You need to spend time in God's Word—the Bible—in order to know what the Lord wants from you and what He is offering. If you can't find or afford a Bible, please let me know. I'll send you one. Simply write *Bible* in the subject line.

If this book changed your life or led you into or back into a relationship with Jesus, please write to me and put *New Life* in the

subject line. I'll be sure to read that letter and pray for you as you journey toward a deeper walk with our Lord.

Either way, I hope you take a minute and visit my Web site at www.KarenKingsbury.com. There you can see what books are coming up or connect with other readers and book clubs. You can leave prayer requests or take on the responsibility of praying for people. Readers often tell me they haven't found a purpose or meaning to their faith. Maybe they're on the go a lot or their circumstances keep them homebound. Remember, prayer is a very important ministry. It was prayer that turned things around for Dayne and Luke and little Hayley and so many other characters in this series. Your prayers—either in the midst of a busy day or as the main focus if you're homebound—could be crucial in the life of someone else. Visit the prayer link on my Web site and make a commitment to pray for the soldiers and hurting people who have left requests there.

In addition, I have two new pages on my Web site—one for active military heroes and another for fallen military heroes. If you know someone serving our country and you'd like to honor them, please click the appropriate links on the side of the home page and submit their photo, name, rank, and how people can pray for them. We can include more details if you have someone you'd like to honor on the Fallen Military Heroes page. The importance in our current war is not who is wrong or right, because war is complicated. However, the duty we all share is to honor and respect and admire our troops. They are heroes, and they deserve our utmost support and constant prayers.

On a personal note, my family is doing well, learning how to live without the constant joyful presence of my dad, who passed away a year ago. Life here at our house is a wonderful adventure of laughter and precious memories. This book releases on Austin's eleventh birthday, and at the other end of the age spectrum, Kelsey has graduated from high school and is in her first year of college—locally, so our time with her is ongoing for now. Something we're grateful for. The boys are moving quickly through middle school and on to high

SUNSET

school, and Tyler is in his sophomore year at our Christian school. As always, I can feel the days moving too fast, and there's nothing I can do to slow the ride. But I am enjoying every minute, trying to remember the lessons from the Baxter family. I pray that this leaves you looking for new beginnings in life and believing that God will give you a beautiful sunset to mark your lasts.

Thanks so much again. I pray for you, my friends, and I am grateful for the time you spend praying for me and my family.

Until next time, blessings in His amazing light and grace,

Karen Kingsbury

www.KarenKingsbury.com

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Use these questions for individual reflection or for discussion with a book club or other small group.

1. What does a sunset represent to you? Tell about a time when you stayed outdoors and watched a sunset from beginning to end.
2. What area in your life do you most hope will have a brilliant ending? What steps would you need to take to do what you can to make sure that ending happens someday?
3. Describe the relationship between Landon's grandparents Andrew and Effie Westra. What do you think goes into having a long-lasting, beautiful love like theirs?
4. Landon desired to be like his grandfather. What character traits did Landon have that his grandfather also had?
5. Time and again with the Baxter family, love is shown to succeed despite trials. How can you love the people in your life better based on the lessons you saw acted out among the Baxters?
6. Were you surprised at Ashley's ultrasound results? Tell about a time when you thought you had all the answers, but God gave you a surprise instead.
7. What do you think God was trying to teach Ashley in *Sunset*? What has He tried to teach you with the unexpected events of your life?
8. Describe how Katy and Dayne felt, their Hollywood days behind them, as they set out to serve Bloomington with