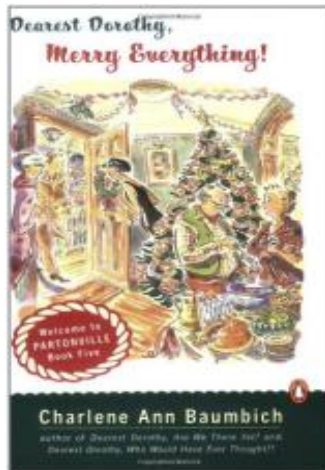


# Dearest Dorothy, Merry Everything!: Welcome to Partonville, Book 5

by Charlene Ann Baumbich

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## About the Book

*Just in time for the holidays? a Partonville Christmas story that all Dearest Dorothy fans will have on their wish list*

Through four *Dearest Dorothy* novels, Charlene Ann Baumbich has beguiled a growing legion of readers with the humorous and endearing denizens of Partonville, Illinois. Her latest heartwarming addition opens with everyone pitching in to help a local family rocked by tragedy. Meanwhile, Katie Durbin worries that her ambitious plan to revitalize Partonville's shopping district will crumble under the bullheaded doubts of a few townies --- unless a Christmas miracle (and a few of Dearest Dorothy's prayers) can help her to win those stubborn folks over.

## Discussion Guide

1. After letting her sixteen-year-old son Josh take a road trip alone, Katie nearly worries herself to death when he's late returning. Think of times in your life when you were as worried about someone not showing up as Katie was about Josh. When everything turned out okay, was it anger or relief that won out in the end? If Katie had come to you and asked your advice on whether or not to let Josh take the trip, what would you say to her?
2. Dorothy and Jacob have a wonderful time reminiscing about the contents of a few boxes still unpacked after her move. Can you think back to a time when you and a loved one went through a "rainy day" box? What long-lost treasures have you found lurking in closets or old cedar chests?
3. Partonville's citizens seem to take one step forward and two steps back where their trust in Katie Durbin is concerned. What experiences have you had being an outsider? In what ways have such experiences altered the way you

treat a newcomer to your neighborhood or office?

4. Jacob gets a bit wistful when he notices there are no young people to be found around the square. A lot of small towns wrestle with this problem and try to think of ways to encourage young people to stay. If you were on a planning commission for a small town, what strategies would you employ? What resistance to changing the status quo would you expect? Did you settle in, or even return to, your hometown? Why or why not?

5. When Pastor Delbert finishes a silent prayer, Dorothy, for a second, seems to be a mouthpiece for God. What similar experiences --- a prayer answered more obviously than usual --- can you recall? Did the answer come as a relief or as a bit unsettling?

6. Oftentimes, we get caught up in the trappings of holidays rather than in the true spirit of the season --- even ending up in a ?100 percent tizzy.? Dorothy, for example, is nervous about having to downsize her Christmas tree. What are the things you simply cannot do without during the holidays --- a favorite ornament, an heirloom decoration? Are all of these things really necessary for enjoying the holiday? Now imagine one of them being taken away. Which would be easiest to part with?

7. Several characters in this book are in the early stages of a courtship --- some in their sixties and some barely sixteen. What are the similarities in the way these new romances are playing out? What are the differences?

## Author Bio

Charlene Ann Baumbich is the author of the *Dearest Dorothy* series, *STRAY AFFECTIONS* and *DIVINE APPOINTMENTS*, as well as several nonfiction books of humor and inspiration. She is also a popular speaker, an award-winning journalist, and lives with her husband in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

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