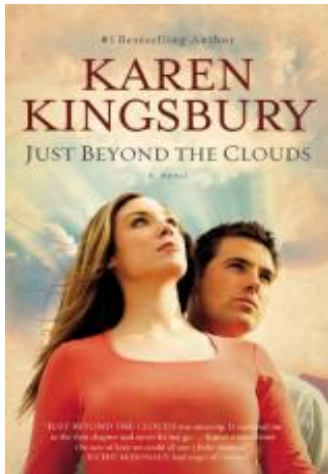


# Just Beyond the Clouds

by Karen Kingsbury

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## About the Book

An unforgettable story of two brothers and the only woman whose love can set them both free.

Still aching over his wife's death, Cody Gunner can't bear the thought of also letting go of his Down Syndrome brother, Carl Joseph. Cody wants his brother home, where he will be safe and cared for, not out on his own in a world that Cody knows all too well can be heartless and insecure. So when Carl Joseph's teacher, Elle, begins championing his independence, she finds herself at odds with Cody. But even as these two battle it out, they can't deny the instinctive connection they share, and Cody faces a crisis of the heart.

What if Elle is the one woman who can teach Cody that love is still possible? If Cody can let go of his lingering anger, he might see that sometimes the brightest hope of all lies **Just Beyond the Clouds**.

## Discussion Guide

1. Where is Cody Gunner emotionally at the start of this book? What clues lead you to that conclusion?
2. Where is Elle Dalton emotionally at the start of this book? What clues lead you to that conclusion?
3. What does Carl Joseph understand about independent living? How does he feel about reaching Goal Day?
4. Do you know anyone with Down Syndrome? What is your experience with that person, and have you ever been surprised at how much that person is capable of?
5. What do you think about independent living for people with Down Syndrome? Explain your answer.

- 6.** How does Cody feel about Carl Joseph? What causes their relationship to be strained over the course of the story?
- 7.** What are Cody's feelings about independent living at the beginning of the story? Why do you think he feels that way?
- 8.** Describe how Cody's feelings change as the story develops. What causes his change of attitude about independent living for people with Down Syndrome?
- 9.** Do Carl Joseph's feelings for Cody change during the story? Explain Carl Joseph's relationship with his brother and how it affects him.
- 10.** How is Daisy's level of independence different from Carl Joseph's? Discuss their strengths and weaknesses.
- 11.** Discuss Elle's former heartbreak. Has anyone you know had a similar experience? How did this heartache leave Elle feeling about herself?
- 12.** Cody and Elle shared a few misunderstandings over the course of the story. Explore a few of those and how they could have been avoided.
- 13.** Have you or someone you know ever experienced a troubled relationship because of a misunderstanding? Explain.
- 14.** Carl Joseph's situation was complicated by his health issues. When have you seen health issues complicate a goal for you or someone you know? Talk about it.
- 15.** Describe Mary Gunner's feelings about Carl Joseph. How difficult was it for her to accept the idea of independent living despite Carl Joseph's health issues?
- 16.** How does Mary Gunner handle her fears regarding her son? How do you handle fears regarding your children or the lives of people you love?
- 17.** Throughout the story, Elle talks about having an open hand in regards to relationships. What does this mean to you, and how can you apply it in your life?
- 18.** In what ways is Elle a perfect match for Cody? Talk about how important it is to have like interests and passions when making a decision to start a relationship.
- 19.** Fear posed a serious threat many times in this story. Explore those incidents. How should we respond to difficult situations?
- 20.** Describe a time when fear threatened to prevent you or someone you know from making an important decision. How did you or that person work through the fear, and what were the end results?

## Author Bio

Karen Kingsbury, #1 *New York Times* bestselling novelist, is America's favorite inspirational storyteller, with more than 25 million copies of her award-winning books in print. Her last dozen titles have topped bestseller lists, and many of her novels are under development as TV movies and major motion pictures. Her many *Baxter* books will be the subject of a new TV series --- "The Baxter Family" --- debuting later this year with Roma Downey, Mark Burnett and MGM Studios. Karen is also an adjunct professor of writing at Liberty University. She lives in Tennessee with her husband, Don, and their five sons, three of whom are adopted from Haiti. Their actress daughter, Kelsey, lives nearby and is married to Christian recording artist Kyle Kupecky. The couple recently welcomed their first child, Hudson.

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