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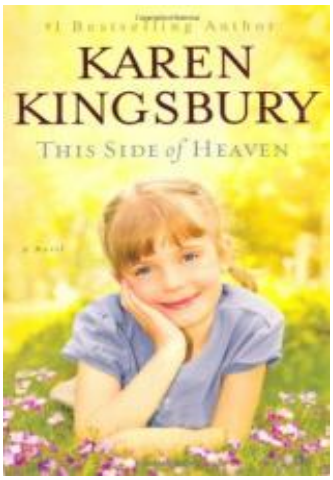
This Side of Heaven

by Karen Kingsbury



About the Book

Annie Warren never talked much about her oldest son, Brad. Years of failures and bad choices created heartbreaking separation between mother and son. But one dramatic night, a terrible tragedy reveals things about her grown boy that Annie never suspected. He was a good friend, an honest worker, and a hero. Most of all, Annie learns that Brad has an 8-year-old daughter, Savanah.

Meanwhile, in New York City, Fran Ito is a single mother who lives on the streets, lost in a nightmare of drugs and illegal activity. She has no idea what to do with her daughter, Savanah, until she gets word of a financial settlement --- one that might belong to her little girl. Spinning a web of deceit and desperation, Fran connives to get the money --- one way or another.
A story of family secrets, broken relationships, and a love strong enough to span the miles and the years of loss --- **This Side of Heaven**.

Discussion Guide

1. Talk about Annie?s relationship with her son prior to his death. What was her opinion of him, and why?

2. Nate plays a lesser role in this story. What was his relationship with Josh, and how did it differ from Annie?s relationship with him?

3. Talk about a time when you or someone you know has been tempted to value the people in your life based on performance or perfection. What was the outcome of that attitude?

4. How do you define success in the lives of the people you love? How important is it to tell the people you love that you?re proud of them?

5. Have you ever experienced a loss that made you doubt God or feel angry toward God? Explain.

6. Annie was struck by the song at Josh?s funeral, ?Great Is Thy Faithfulness.? Have you ever doubted God?s faithfulness? Talk about that time.

7. Lamentations talks about God?s mercies being new every morning. How was that true for Annie? How has it been true in your life?

8. Explain the emotions Annie went through as she made the series of discoveries about Josh after his death. When have you or someone you know been wrong about the way you viewed someone you love? How was the discovery made of that person?s real character?

9. Maria Cameron made many poor choices in her life. What were some of those choices? Talk about how those choices can affect people in real life.

10. What common theme seemed to dominate Maria?s life? How can greed get in the way of loving the people God has placed around us?

11. Thomas Flynn was a good and godly attorney. Why do you think so many attorneys have a bad reputation? Talk about a situation that may have tainted your view of lawyers.

12. Why is it important that we have people of integrity in the field of law? Tell about a situation where a lawyer of great virtue made a difference.

13. The sign on Thomas Flynn?s desk reads, ?In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose,? a Scripture found in Romans 8:28. How have you seen that verse apply in your life and the lives of those you love?

14. Tell about a time when you doubted the promise in Romans 8:28. How did that situation resolve, and if it hasn?t, how might you find a way to apply that Scripture to your life?

15. Josh prayed daily for the chance to meet his daughter, Savannah. At the same time, Savannah prayed that she would meet her daddy. Neither of those prayers seemed to be answered this side of heaven. Talk about a time when your prayers weren?t answered the way you wanted. How can we see God in moments like that?

16. Becky Wheaton had regrets about her relationship with Josh. Explain Annie?s advice to Becky. Tell about a time when you or someone you know had regrets about a relationship. What are some ways to handle that type of situation?

17. Annie was willing to fight to the end to protect Josh?s settlement. Why was this? Do you think Annie was a greedy person? Why or why not?

18. Cody Gunner wasn?t sure about going to Annie with the story of his last conversation with Josh. Tell about a time

when someone came to you with life-changing news. What did Cody?s admission mean to Annie?

19. Annie?s prayers that she would have time with Savannah were answered very dramatically. Talk about that. Whom are you praying for right now? What can you focus on so that you?ll be encouraged to continue to pray? Tell about a time when a prayer in your life was answered after someone spent time praying for you.

20. Many different types of love are illustrated in this book. Talk about a few of them, and explain what types of love are illustrated in your life.

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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Publication Date: January 6, 2009
Paperback: 352 pages
Publisher: Center Street
ISBN-10: 1599956780
ISBN-13: 9781599956787