

WHEN STONE WINGS FLY BOOK CLUB KIT

LETTER TO THE COORDINATOR

Hi, fellow book lover!

With all of the incredible books available, I am honored you chose *When Stone Wings Fly* for your Book Club. As an author, one of my all-time favorite things to do is chat with readers. So if you're interested in having me visit your group via Zoom (or in-person if I'm in your area), send me a message and I'll check my schedule. You can reach me at Karen@KarenBarnettBooks.com.

The characters in this novel are near and dear to my heart, and I hope they touched yours as well. Since book club members are often excellent reviewers, please consider leaving a review on your favorite retail site, Goodreads, and/or BookBub. Reviews only take a few minutes (2-3 lines are fine), and they are a huge help to readers and authors, alike.

Blessings!

Karen Barnett



WHAT'S INSIDE

- Discussion Questions
- National Park Trivia Game
- Rosie's Fried Pies
- Fun Facts
- Interview with the Author
- Trivia Answer Key

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - PAGE 1

1. Many people have said *When Stone Wings Fly* is an intriguing title. When you first picked up the book, what did you think it meant? Did that change over the course of the story?
2. Rosie McCauley was determined to protect her family's land and yet she chose to take the offer of the lifetime lease. Why did she make this choice? Would you have made the same decision?
3. When one of Kieran's clients discovers that Kieran grew up in foster care, she says, "“Oh, child. No wonder you're so untethered.” Each of the female characters experience the loss of a home--even back to Rosie's Cherokee great-grandmother. How does that sense of place/security affect a person as they're growing up? Do you still feel a connection to the land of your birth?
4. When the story opens, Benton longs to be recognized for his work and seeks fulfillment in his job. But even though he's given the post of his dreams, he realizes his heart belongs in the Smokies with Rosie. When you look back at your lifetime dreams and goals, are there some that you sacrificed for another path? Are you satisfied with those choices?
5. Rosie and Benton lose three babies in three years. Can you imagine that level of grief? It wasn't uncommon to lose infants in this era, but do you think that knowledge made it any easier to bear? Do you think the grief is the same now, or different because we're less prepared for it?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS - PAGE 2

6. Benton and Rosie's decision to raise Mac as their own might seem unusual by today's standards. Do you think they did the right thing? How else could they have handled Lorna's situation? Should Mac have been told the truth? Kieran faces the same dilemma at the end of the story. Would you tell Granny Mac the truth at this point in her life?

7. What do you think the torn quilt represents? Does it change throughout the story?

8. Both Kieran and Rosie struggle with holding onto their desires too tightly. God calls us to open our hands so He can fill them. What things do you tend to hold too tightly? Take a look at 1 John 2:15-17. What does John say about it?

9. Which scene or character did you identify with the most? Why?

10. Read Proverbs 3:5-6. How was Zach's obsession with rules a misinterpretation of this verse? Was he really trusting God?

11. When Benton married Rosie, do you think he had any idea what lay ahead for him? How did life's challenges shape him through the novel? Who was he in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of his story? What about Rosie? How did she change?

12. Kieran's decision to dig up the stone bird was a costly one. What price did she pay for this choice? Would you have dug it up or let it be?

NATIONAL PARK TRIVIA GAME

Do you imagine yourself to be a National Park aficionado? Let's see how many of these trivia questions you can get right! Which of your book club members got the highest score? (Answer key in back).

1. Name the four presidents whose faces were carved into Mount Rushmore.

- a. Abraham Lincoln, George Washington, Dwight D. Eisenhower, John Adams
- b. Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Thomas Jefferson, John F. Kennedy
- c. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt

2. Which park was the first official national park?

- a. Yosemite
- b. Yellowstone
- c. Mesa Verde

3. In 2015, President Obama officially changed the name of the country's tallest mountain from Mt. McKinley to Denali. Which other national park is sometimes referred to by the indigenous name, "Tahoma?"

- a. Mount Lassen
- b. Mount Rainier
- c. Rocky Mountains

4. Which national park contains the deepest lake in the US?

- a. Crater Lake
- b. Olympic
- c. Yellowstone

5. Which president is known as the "Conservation President?"

- a. Abraham Lincoln
- b. Theodore Roosevelt
- c. Franklin Delano Roosevelt
- d. John F. Kennedy

NATIONAL PARK TRIVIA GAME - PAGE 2

6. Which national park holds the record for the highest atmospheric temperature recorded on earth? (56.7°C, 134°F)?

- a. Zion
- b. Everglades
- c. Joshua Tree
- d. Death Valley

7. Which site was our first national park cave?

- a. Mammoth
- b. Wind Cave
- c. Carlsbad Caverns
- d. Jewel Cave

8. Which national park made a bid to host the Olympic winter games?

- a. Yosemite
- b. Great Smoky Mountains
- c. Grand Teton
- d. Olympic

9. Which national park received the most visitors in 2021?

- a. Great Smoky Mountains
- b. Yellowstone
- c. Grand Canyon

10. Which US president also served as a national park ranger?

- a. Theodore Roosevelt
- b. Jimmy Carter
- c. Gerald Ford
- d. Barack Obama

ROSIE'S FRIED PIES

*Taken from the Farm and Home Cookbook: A
Compilation of Tested, Practical Recipes for
Practical Housekeepers.
By Mary R. Reynolds, 1924.*



Dried Apple Fried Pies (Half Moons)

Cook dried apples until they are mashed well. Sweeten to taste and season with cinnamon. Make crust like biscuit dough. Roll out and cut round with a medium size plate. Put apples on half, folding other half over as for turnover. Fry in boiling hot fat. Brown one side and then turn over. Care must be taken not to break crust while cooking. Serve warm.



There are so many recipes and variations for fried pies online that it will boggle your mind. **Here are the basics for today's cooks:** Use a pound of pie pastry or biscuit dough. Core, peel, and chop 2-3 large apples. Cook the pieces in butter with 1/4 tsp salt, 1/4 cup white sugar, 2 Tbsp brown sugar, 1 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon, until softened. Add 1 tsp water if needed. Let apples completely cool. (Hint: Or just use applesauce or canned pie filling. Shh!) Roll dough into thin, saucer-sized circles. Place a spoonful of filling in center and fold over, crimping edges. Prick with fork for venting. You can then fry them in lard or shortening until lightly browned on both sides. Many people now choose not to fry, but instead bake them in a 400° oven for 25-30 minutes.



FUN FACTS ABOUT THE WRITING OF WHEN STONE WINGS FLY

Character Names:

- I borrowed the name **Kieran** from one of my daughter's friends, and **Zach** from my good friend's son. I was looking for names that fit people in their twenties today.
- The brothers **Horace and Will** were originally named Matthew and Luke and stayed that way until the last round of edits.
- **Rosie and Benton**'s names never changed. At one point I realized that I'd had a Rose character in my previous novel, but I was too wedded to this character to change it. There's a Benton County near me that's home to a major university. I think that's probably why Benton seemed like a good name for a college professor. **Granny Mac** just landed on the page that way, and I provided the name McCauley so it would make sense. **Tipton** (Beau and Maudie) is a common name in the Smokies, though most of them lived in the Cades Cove area.
- The story of Zach and Kieran finding the forgotten cemetery comes from my own experiences of hiking in the park. I was exploring an unmarked side trail and was surprised when it opened out into a meadow dotted with crumbling headstones. It was at that moment that much of Kieran's story came together in my mind.
- Even though I'm from the other side of the country, my grandparents also lost a piece of property to a national park. My grandfather's lakeside cabin was condemned for Olympic National Park in 1937. When FDR toured the area in 1937, his motorcade drove through the town where my father lived with his parents and siblings. They all went out to wave at the president's car. My grandfather told my grandmother that he'd stand respectfully, but would *not* wave.

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR

What was the hardest part of writing *When Stone Wings Fly*?

By far, my biggest struggle was writing Lorna's character. Not only did I have to put this sweet woman through some unimaginable atrocities, but she couldn't even speak up for herself! I wanted her experiences to be a mystery that lingers throughout the plot, but it became an ongoing battle to figure out exactly when, how, and how much to reveal the truth. Since she was nonverbal, I had to find other ways of dropping clues. At times, I wished she could just walk onto the page and say, "THIS is what happened to me!"

What was the most fun part to write?

I really enjoyed writing Kieran and Zach's relationship. I've written seven historical romances, and this was my first time dabbling in the contemporary era. I enjoyed having them text each other—something my historical characters couldn't even imagine! Plus, I got to turn to my own college-aged kids and ask, "How does someone your age say _____?" You can thank them for keeping Kieran and Zach's 20-something voices somewhat authentic and not sounding like a middle-aged writer.

Did you have a favorite character?

I'd say each of them is a favorite at one point or another. I loved Rosie's grit, Benton's faithfulness, Kieran's vulnerability, and Zach's integrity. But I often find myself giddy over the more bit players in any story. Beau and Maudie were delightful to write, though—oddly enough—I'm not sure this married couple ever ended up in a scene together. Ashleigh and Nick were the best friends that everyone would love to have. And Granny Mac? She stole my heart.

INTERVIEW WITH THE AUTHOR - PAGE 2

Was it difficult writing about dementia?

Yes and no. My grandmother struggled with dementia, and it was painful to watch. It's a merciless disease that just takes and takes and takes. But writing Granny Mac's story helped me to redeem some of the moments I'd had with my grandma, too. My grandmother was incredibly sassy, and even as she suffered she still delivered classic zingers. When Granny Mac said the director didn't "know her head from her elbow," it felt like something my own grandmother would have said—but probably with more colorful word choices.

A few weeks after I turned in the manuscript, my father passed away. It was then that my brothers and I became aware that our mother was in the early stages of dementia. Either he'd been compensating for her or it became more pronounced with grief. Possibly both. It breaks my heart to watch her have to fight this battle, too.

This is your fourth national park novel. How many more do you plan to write?

That depends. How many more do you want to read? If readers continue to purchase books in good numbers, I think it's likely that my publisher will want to keep producing them. So be sure to recommend them to your friends! I'm currently working on a project set at Redwoods National and State Parks, but I have some firm story ideas for Zion and Glacier. I'd love to write about Denali, Bryce, Acadia, Crater Lake, Rocky Mountain . . . Need I go on? I'm always open to recommendations. It was a reader who first suggested Great Smoky Mountains to me!

ABOUT KAREN BARNETT

KAREN BARNETT is the award-winning author of eight novels, including *When Stone Wings Fly* and The Vintage National Parks Novels. Before becoming a novelist, she worked as a ranger naturalist and outdoor educator at Mount Rainier National Park and Oregon's Silver Falls State Park. When not writing, Karen enjoys photography, hiking, public speaking, and decorating crazy birthday cakes. She lives in Oregon with her family.



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NATIONAL PARK TRIVIA ANSWERS

Answer Key

- 1.c. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln, and Theodore Roosevelt.
- 2.b. Yellowstone National Park, established 1872. Yosemite was protected in 1864 but didn't become a national park until 1890.
- 3.b. Mount Rainier is also known as Tahoma, Taquoma, Tacobet, and several other indigenous names.
4. a. At 1,943 feet (592 meters), Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States and one of the deepest in the world.
- 5.b. Theodore Roosevelt. He doubled the number of national park sites during his time in office.
- 6.d. Death Valley National Park, set the world record of 56.7°C, (134°F) in 1913.
- 7.b. Wind Cave National Park in South Dakota became the country's eighth national park in 1903.
- 8.a. Yosemite made a bid to host the Winter Games in 1932. The bid was awarded to Lake Placid instead.
- 9.a. Great Smoky Mountains National Park received 14.1 million visitors in 2021.
- 10.c. President Gerald Ford served as a seasonal park ranger at Yellowstone National Park in the summer of 1936.