Beautiful Creatures (Beautiful Creatures, 1)

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FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. Struggling to conceal her supernatural ability, a curse that has haunted her family for generations, Lena moves to Gatlin County's infamous plantation and inexplicably draws the attention of Ethan, who has been haunted by dreams of an unknown girl.

Ethan Wate is struggling to hide his apathy for his high school "in" crowd in small town Gatlin, South Carolina, until he meets the determinedly "out" Lena Duchannes, the girl of his dreams (literally--she has been in his nightmares for months). What follows is a smart, modern fantasy--a tale of star-crossed lovers and a dark, dangerous secret. Beautiful Creatures is a delicious southern Gothic that charms you from the first page, drawing you into a dark world of magic and mystery until you emerge gasping and blinking, wondering what happened to the last few hours (and how many more you're willing to give up). To tell too much of the plot would spoil the thrill of discovery, and believe me, you will want to uncover the secrets of this richly imagined dark fantasy on your own. --Daphne Durham

Amazon Exclusive Interview with Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl, Authors of Beautiful Creatures

What does your writing process look like? Is it tough to write a book together? Did you ever have any knock-down drag-out fights over a plot point or character trait? Margie: The best way to describe our writing process is like a running stitch. We don't write separate chapters, or characters. We pass the draft back and forth constantly, and we actually write over each other's work, until we get to the point where we truly don't know who has written what.

Kami: By the end of the book, we don't even know. The classic example is when I said, "Marg, I really hate that line. It has to go." And she said, "Cut it. You wrote it."

Margie: I think we were friends for so long before we were writing partners that there was an unusual amount of trust from the start.

Kami: It's about respect. And it helps that we can't remember when who wrote the bad line.

Margie: We save our big fights for the important things, like the lack of ice in my house or how cold our office is. And why none of my YouTube videos are as popular as the one of Kami's three-fingered typing...okay, that one is understandable, given the page count for "Beautiful Creatures."

Kami: What can I say? I was saving the other seven fingers for the sequel.

What kinds of books do you like to read?

Kami: I read almost exclusively Young Adult fiction, with some Middle Grade fiction thrown in for good measure. As a Reading Specialist, I work with children and teens in grades K-12, so basically I read what they read.

Margie: When I write it comes from the same place as when I read: wanting to hang out with fictional characters in fictional worlds. I identify more as a reader than a writer; I just have to write it first so I can read it.

What books/authors have inspired you?

Kami: "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee, "A Good Man is Hard to Find & Other Stories" by Flannery O'Connor, "Fahrenheit 451" by Ray Bradbury and "The Witching Hour" by Anne Rice. I also love Pablo Neruda.

Margie: I think Harper Lee is the greatest writer alive today. Eudora Welty is my other Southern writer kindred; I was obsessed with her in grad school. Susan Cooper and Diana Wynne Jones made me love fantasy, and my favorite poets are Emily Dickinson (at Amherst College, I even lived on her street) and Stevie Smith.

Did you set out to write fiction for young adults? Why?

Kami: We actually wrote "Beautiful Creatures" on a dare from some of the teen readers in our lives.

Margie: Not so much readers as bosses.

Kami: Looking back, we wrote it sort of like the serialized fiction of Charles Dickens, turning in pages to our teen readers every week.

Margie: And by week she means day.

Kami: When we were getting texts in the middle of the night from teens demanding more pages, we knew we had to finish.

Margie: As it says in our acknowledgements, their asking what happened next changed what happened next. Teens are so authentic. That's probably why we love YA. Even when it's fantasy, it's the emotional truth.

A lot of us voracious readers like to cast a book after reading it. Did you guys have a shared view of who your characters are? Did each of you take a different character to develop, or did you share every aspect?

Kami: We've never cast our characters, but we definitely know what they look like. Sometimes we see actors in magazines and say, "Lena just wore that!"

Margie: We create all our characters together, but after a point they became as real as any of the other people we know. We forget they're not.

Kami: I never thought of it like that. I guess we do spend all our time talking about imaginary people. Margie: So long as it's not to them...

Did you always plan to start the book with Ethan's story? Why?

Kami: We knew before we started that we wanted to write from a boy's point of view. Margie and I both have brothers--six, between us--so it wasn't a stretch. It's an interesting experience to fall in love with the guy telling the story rather than the guy the story is about.

Margie: We do kind of love Ethan, so we wanted there to be more to him than just the boy from boy meets girl.

Kami: He's the guy who stands by you at all costs and accepts you for who you are, even if you aren't guite sure who that is.

What is on your nightstand now?

Kami: I have a huge stack, but here are ones at the top: "Mama Dip's Kitchen," a cookbook by Mildred Council, "The Demon's Lexicon" by Sarah Rees Brennan, "Shadowed Summer" by Saundra Mitchell, "Rampant" by Diana Peterfreund, and an Advanced Reader Copy of "Sisters Red" by Jackson Pearce.

Margie: I have Robin McKinley's "Beauty." Maggie Stiefvater's "Ballad." Kristen Cashore's "Fire." Libba Bray's "Going Bovine." and "Everything Is Fine" by AnnDee Ellis. And now I'm mad because I know a) Kami stole my "Rampant" and b) didn't tell me she has "Sisters Red"!

What is your idea of comfort reading?

Kami: If given the choice, I'll always reach for a paranormal romance or an urban fantasy. I also re-read my favorite books over and over.

Margie: It's all comfort reading to me. I sleep with books in my bed. Like a dog, only without the shedding and the smelling.

Have you written the next book already? What's next for Lena and Ethan? Margie: We are revising the next book now. I don't want to give too much away, but summer in Gatlin isn't always a vacation.

Kami: I would describe book two as intense and emotional. For Ethan and Lena, the stakes are even higher.

Margie: That's true. Book two involves true love, broken hearts, the Seventeenth Moon, and cream-of-grief casseroles...

Kami: Gatlin at it's finest!

Kami Garcia is a teacher and reading specialist with an MA in education, and leads book groups for children and teenagers. Margaret Stohl has an MA in English and studied creative writing under poet George MacBeth at the University of East Anglia, Norwich. They both live in Los Angeles, California, with their families. Beautiful Creatures is their debut novel.

Other Books

Constantine: Distorted Illusions, Constantine is not your average bad boy... John Constantine is, and has always been, a magician of the highest caliber—who doesn't need additional training from any highbrow magician, thank you very much. Sensing an opportunity for independence, Constantine falsely accepts an apprenticeship in the United States to instead become the lead singer of his best friend's punk band, Mucous Membrane. When the band begins to dabble in magic, a complicated spell gets out of hand...and the disastrous consequences might be more than Constantine can handle. Join #1 New York

Times bestselling author Kami Garcia (Beautiful Creatures) and artist Isaac Goodhart in the most thrilling magical team-up of the year!

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