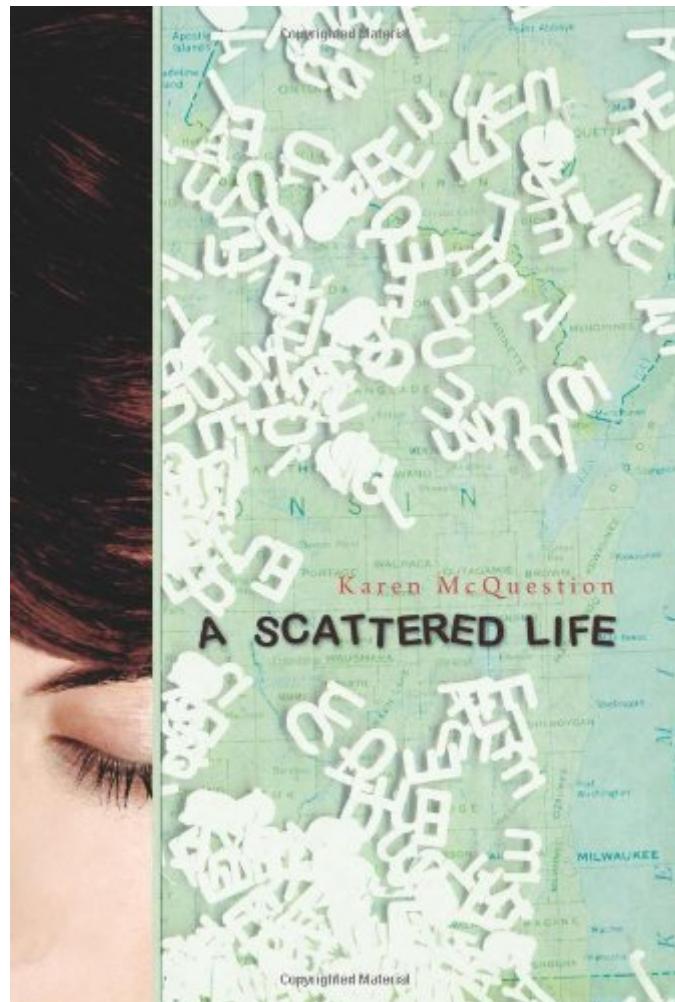


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A Scattered Life



Synopsis

Most people have everything they need to be happy. • The words latched onto some part of Skyla's brain. She repeated the phrase to herself while she rang up books and stocked shelves. It had a certain resonance to it, but she doubted it was true. Free-spirit Skyla Plinka has found the love and stability she always wanted in her reliable husband Thomas. Settling into her new family and roles as wife and mother, life in rural Wisconsin is satisfying, but can't seem to quell Skyla's growing sense of restlessness. Her only reprieve is her growing friendship with neighbor Roxanne, who has five kids (and counting) and a life in constant disarray — but also a life filled with laughter and love. Much to the dismay of her intrusive mother-in-law, Audrey, Skyla takes a part-time job at the local bookstore and slowly begins to rediscover her voice, independence and confidence. Throughout one pivotal year in the life of Skyla, Audrey and Roxanne, all three very different women will learn what it means to love unconditionally. With the storytelling ingenuity of Anne Tyler, the writing talent of Jodi Picoult, and the subtlety of Alice Munro, McQuestion offers a satisfying debut that proves she is a gifted portraitist, a natural storyteller and an author to watch.

Book Information

File Size: 2085 KB

Print Length: 267 pages

Publisher: Lake Union Publishing (June 28, 2010)

Publication Date: August 10, 2010

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B003EJDGBO

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #8,196 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #40 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Women's Fiction > Friendship #72 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Contemporary Fiction > American #97 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Literary Fiction > Romance

Customer Reviews

Three women living a small-town life in Wisconsin. Karen McQuestion's novel is narrated by these three voices. The first, Skyla Plinska, a former free-spirit, now firmly seeded into a middle-class life with her level-headed husband and their well-behaved daughter. The second is Skyla's mother-in-law, Audrey. Audrey has spent her life caring for her now three grown-up sons and husband, but always longing for a daughter. Will Skyla fill this void? The third is Roxy, Skyla's new neighbor and friend. Roxy is totally obsessed with her five sons and longs for more children, particularly a daughter. Karen McQuestion draws us into the life of these three women in an engaging and easy fashion. The story line is entertaining and touching on many different levels, as each of the characters are fleshed out and their personalities and quirks revealed. I am very much looking forward to the movie adaptation of this novel. Thanks for a great read, Karen.

In this nice, but unremarkable, story set in small-town Wisconsin, the lives of three women are followed for about a year. Skyla, after a childhood of moving around the country with her father, has settled down with Thomas and has a six-year-old daughter; Audrey is Thomas' mother and is obsessed with keeping order in her and others' lives; and Roxanne, who exudes friendliness, has just moved in next door to Skyla with her five children and a clearly messy and chaotic life in full display. Skyla with her long-repressed artistic side is immediately attracted to the free-spirited Roxanne, much to the dismay of Audrey. But things change for these women. Skyla takes a job in a nearly defunct book store and virtually single-handedly turns it around. Leaving her daughter Nora to be cared for by Roxanne after school distresses Audrey no end, which she intends to do something about. However, the unexpected intervenes in both Roxanne's and Audrey's lives. Especially, Skyla and Audrey are forced to question stances that they have taken in their lives. It is a book that has the intent of exploring personal growth, understanding others, and learning what is important. The book is not without its appeal but lacks depth and breadth. The characters are not fully developed; they seldom rise beyond being stereotypes. After a couple of events, the story just fizzles out. The book is easily read, but just does not really try for much. Nonetheless, it is a fairly pleasant and heartwarming story, though tragedy does stalk.

I wasn't sure what to expect from an independently published novel, but figured for \$1.99 (less than a cup of coffee at Starbucks!) I could take a chance. I am so glad that I did. This is a remarkable book. It is beautifully written, well paced, with characters who seem real. It easily ranks with books published by the big houses, and is in fact considerably better than many books I have read (and I read quite a lot). I hope that Ms. McQuestion is picked up by the big publishing houses as she has a

true gift. I would love to recommend this book to several people, but as they don't own Kindles they won't be able to read the book. That is a shame, as her books could and should have a wide audience. I will certainly be trying out McQuestion's other books available on Kindle.

I stopped trying to get into this story after a few chapters. I wanted to like the book because the story seemed interesting. But for me, a book has to have two things to keep me interested: excellent character development and beautiful writing. I love several books where plot seems to be an after thought, but because the characters leap from the pages, I'm entranced. I can't keep plugging along with a book just to find out what happens. I couldn't find a flow with the writing style and found myself having to reread paragraphs because my mind would wander away from the story. There is something simplistic about her characters, which made them seem like basic stereotypes right away, and that's boring.

What a book ... I cannot explain how great it was to read "A Scattered Life" and how it touched my heart. Right from the very beginning I was captured by the characters portrayed, and how it made me feel like they were part of my own life. I immediately could place myself in each of the family settings and felt like I became part of their families and friends. The book is exciting, funny, sad, and also made me shed some tears. I have read many books since getting my Kindle, and I have to admit ... this author's books take the lead! And, the price is right. I have read all three of this author's books: "A Scattered Life", "Easily Amused" and "Lies I Told My Children". All are great, and I can't wait until her next book becomes available, which I'm hoping is right around the corner. If you haven't read any of Karen's books, don't wait. You, too, will be amazed how wonderful her books are to read. Karen McQuestion is now my favorite author, and I will be having withdrawal until her next book is released.

This was a compelling, heartwarming, thought-provoking read. The characters are real -- complicated and flawed but still likable, even those who do unlikable things. (I want to move to this small town and become friends with the main character!) There are twists that kept me reading well past my bedtime... I was sad when the book ended. I hope the author gets picked up by a big publishing house, because I think this book could stand with any of the bestsellers in women's fiction. And then I could say that I read her when she was selling her novels for \$1.99 on Kindle.

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