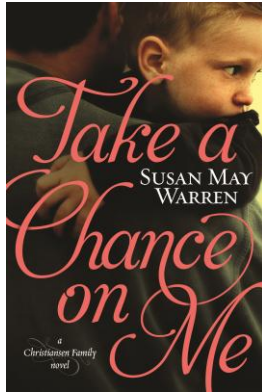


Author Q & A

Susan May Warren & *Take a Chance on Me*



1. This is the first installment in a brand new six-book series. Can you give us a bit of background on this series?

I love stories about families – watching the members interact and grow together through challenges and victories – and I conceived this series as I watched my own children begin to grow up and deal with romance and career and futures. I love Deep Haven, and it's the perfect setting for a resort, so I crafted a family, much like the families I know, who run a resort. They want to pass on their legacy to their children...but their children don't know if they want it. It's sort of a parallel theme to the legacy of faith we instill in our children. As they grow older, they need to decide whether it is their faith too. It's a saga about family and faith and what happens when those collide with real life.

2. This Christiansen Family series is set in Deep Haven, Minnesota. Tell us about this setting.

Deep Haven, Minnesota is based in a small vacation town in northern Minnesota where I spent my childhood. It's located on Lake Superior, surrounded by pine and birch and the sense of small town and home. Populated by everyone from artists to lumberjacks, it's Mitford, or perhaps Northern Exposure gone Minnesotan. Quaint, quirky and beautiful, it's the perfect place to escape for a vacation.

3. What was your inspiration for this particular book and the main character Darek Christiansen?

As I started to put together this series, I began to think about our culture and our children today. I started to take a look at the big questions we are faced with as parents – and as young people; the issues that affect us as a culture, as well as personally. I wanted these books to go beyond family drama, beyond a great romance to raise bigger questions and stir truths that we might pass along to others. This story is about our propensity in our culture to blame others for what goes wrong in our lives – and how this alienates us from each other, and ultimately, God. Darek is the oldest brother in the family; the leader and a real hero. He's a wildland firefighter and a widower who's had to give up his job to come home and run the resort and care for his young son. Darek doesn't realize he has a problem – he lives with anger on his shoulder, hating the man who killed his wife (his best friend). His real problem is that he can't forgive himself. In this first story, readers meet the family, hang out at the resort and discover that God can redeem even a heart of stone, if we take a chance on Him.

4. What lessons or truths will your readers find in the pages of this novel?

This book is for the person who feels they just can't get past the anger they have for someone else to live in joy again. It's for parents who see their children making bad choices and don't know where to turn. It's for people who believe that no one will ever really love them because of who they are, or the things they've done. It's for people who need the courage to take a second chance on love and faith and family. I'm hoping readers walk away with a sense of how much God loves them, and that yes, He can heal the angry and broken-hearted.

5. How do you expect this new series to resonate with your audience? How do you want your books to make them feel?

Great question! I love a story that brings me on an emotional journey from anger to laughter to hope. But most of all, I want readers to be wrapped up in joy, that feeling we get when watch our football team win, or when we're hands up in a convertible on a hot summer day, or digging our feet into a sandy beach, or hugging our loved one when they return home. Ah. The sense that, just for a moment, all is right in the world and everything tastes and feels delicious. I write romances, and in the end it's worth the journey to the happily ever after.

6. As a writer, what did you particularly enjoy about crafting this story?

I loved Darek's transformation. His relationship with his son is so precious, but when he truly lets go of his anger, he becomes the hero I always knew he could be. I love writing about broken heroes who find healing.

7. What advice do you have for budding novelists?

Read! Then write the book you'd like to read. ☺ But, along the way, learn the craft. In fact, a good writer never stops learning.

8. What is the best advice or encouragement that you have received?

Just keep writing. If you want to be a career novelist, you just have to keep writing.

9. In your writing career, what are you most proud of?

After over forty novels, I'm always striving to keep the stories fresh and unique; so I guess I'm proud that every book is bathed in prayer, has a message singular to that story, and has unique characters and journeys. Every story is a new adventure for me, and the reader.