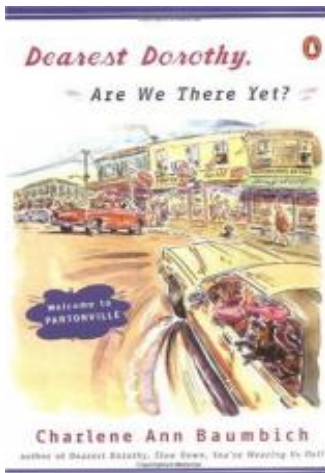


# Dearest Dorothy, Are We There Yet?: Welcome to Partonville, Book 1

by Charlene Ann Baumbich

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## About the Book

Dorothy is wrestling with a dilemma. Like a lot of sleepy towns across America, Partonville is decidedly behind the times. The old clock in the square has been stuck at 1:14 since anyone can remember, and everyone, it seems, is over the hill. What could Partonville possibly offer a young person? Over in Hethrow, though, progress is in the air. And the only thing standing between Hethrow's sprawl and the sleepy town of Partonville is Dorothy's ancestral home, Crooked Creek Farm. A developer is breathing down her neck and needs a decision soon. Should she sell the home she inherited from her mother: the home where Dorothy was conceived and born, where her three children were conceived and born, and where her precious daughter took her last breath? With no clear answer in sight, Dorothy does what she does every single day --- talks to her Lord and asks for guidance.

But guidance comes in an odd package: one Ms. Katie Durbin, a businesswoman from Chicago, arrives in Partonville --- where her mother was born and raised before moving to the city --- in order to deal with a recently departed aunt's estate. Rather than an estate, though, Katie finds a mountain of mayhem her Aunt Tess has left behind.

As Dorothy becomes acquainted with Katie and her fifteen-year-old son, Josh, she realizes that The Big Guy can throw a mean curve ball. In settling her aunt's estate, Katie comes home to herself, dealing with long-buried grief and heartache, and eventually leads Dorothy to a new and unexpected homecoming of her own.

## Discussion Guide

1. Katie finds herself regretting using her stylish wardrobe and accessories to make sure Partonvillers know she's not one of them. Can you think of a time when "putting on airs" seemed like a good idea but backfired? How important a skill is relating to people on their own terms and turf?
2. Dorothy's faith is her nearest and dearest possession. Does her fear of giving up what's familiar show a weakness in her faith?
3. As is common in small towns, the residents of Partonville gather for a meal after Tess's funeral. Do you think living in a tight-knit community fosters a healthier view of death and dying? Or do funerals and wakes make for uncomfortable and inappropriate chances to socialize?
4. Maggie Malone makes quite a stir at the Happy Hookers meeting with her new tattoo. Do you think the other women's shock and surprise might be just what fuels Maggie to try new things? If her behavior were ignored, would she be as likely to be so adventuresome?
5. Katie questions whether or not God uses unsuspecting --- and maybe nonbelieving --- bystanders in His works. Does God limit His actions to the faithful? Or is all of creation part of His plan?
6. Josh seems mesmerized by Dorothy. Is the so-called generation gap really the result of young people being "different" nowadays? Or is Dorothy's willingness to share young people's interests --- not to mention her youthful spirit and even her Internet savvy --- the key to bridging it?

## Author Bio

Charlene Ann Baumbich is the author of the *Dearest Dorothy* series, *STRAY AFFECTIONS* and *DIVINE APPOINTMENTS*, as well as several nonfiction books of humor and inspiration. She is also a popular speaker, an award-winning journalist, and lives with her husband in Glen Ellyn, Illinois.

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