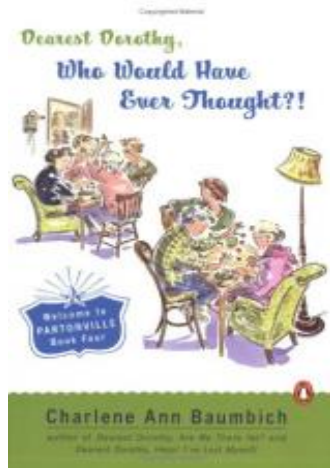

Dearest Dorothy, Who Would Have Ever Thought?!: Welcome to Partonville, Book 4

by Charlene Ann Baumbich



About the Book

A familiar chill fills the crisp air of Partonville. It's the season of food, family, houseguests, and, above all, being thankful. With the Pumpkin Festival and Centennial Plus 30 behind them, Dorothy Westra and the citizens of Partonville turn their eyes to Thanksgiving. Even with worn-out backs, new love interests, morning sickness, lofty business ventures, and the impassioned fallout of a bygone courtship, they're preparing for a Partonville-wide feast that requires everyone to pitch in. It's sure to take a lot of work and a little unselfishness, prompting Dorothy to recall that "if we extend generosity to anyone, it's the same as if we've extended it to Jesus." But is success possible without Gladys in her usual take-charge role? And with no vacancy at the motel, can poor Jessica be expected to cook, especially since she can't even hold down a saltine?

As the big day approaches, Katie Durbin (wrestling with a few unexpected houseguests of her own) is cooking up a surprise worthy of her "Development Diva" moniker. She sees the potential of a bona-fide tourist destination in Partonville. But it's a more personal sort of development that excites Katie even more: the town she once dubbed boring reveals itself as the home she never expected.

With loved ones returning for the holiday, memories both precious and dear intermingle with heavenly aromas from the piping hot Thanksgiving banquet. Everyone knows Partonville has plenty to be thankful for, including a celebration that is twofold: Happy Birthday, Dearest Dorothy --- and pass the pie!

Discussion Guide

1. Josh has mixed feelings about spending Thanksgiving with his father. He makes the very grown-up observation that life is "complicated for everybody." Do you have experience with children rotating holidays between divorced parents?

How do you feel about the way people handle it in Partonville?

2. A startup publication called *BackRoads Illinois* gives Partonville the change to get itself on the off-the-beaten-path map, so to speak. Straying from the interstate and heading off the beaten path often leads to memorable vacation moments. What interesting sights and situations might you have missed if you had stuck to the obvious route? Have you ever happened upon a town reminiscent of Partonville during your journeys? If so, what did you think about it?

3. Holidays can be a difficult time for anyone feeling lonely. What special holiday memories do you have of opening your heart or home to those less fortunate? Do you think offering people uncomfortable with "charity" a chance to participate in the festivities (like Lester) is a good way to lift their spirits? How do you feel when offered something you might consider to be charity?

4. Jessie and Arthur go through a bit of a bad patch. Do you think it's important for people to take "breaks" from one another? How do you think Vera and Herman egged on the situation? What could have been done differently that might have minimized the embarrassment everyone felt?

5. Dorothy is thrilled that Nellie Ruth has found a good-hearted man who thinks she hung the moon. Her relationship with ES is still in the early, somewhat secretive stages. Do you recall a courtship you kept secret for a little while? What romantic tactics did you employ to keep your relationship out of the spotlight? Do you wish you could have kept that "what if we get caught" spark alive? Or, better yet, do you have a secret for doing so?

6. Katie now has something in common with scores of Americans: a Turkey Disaster (but at least she remembered to remove the giblets). Do you have one of your own? Have you attended a holiday dinner where the turkey --- or what was left of it --- was the main topic of conversation? Did the cook handle her- or himself gracefully? Would you be able to laugh off your own kitchen catastrophe?

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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