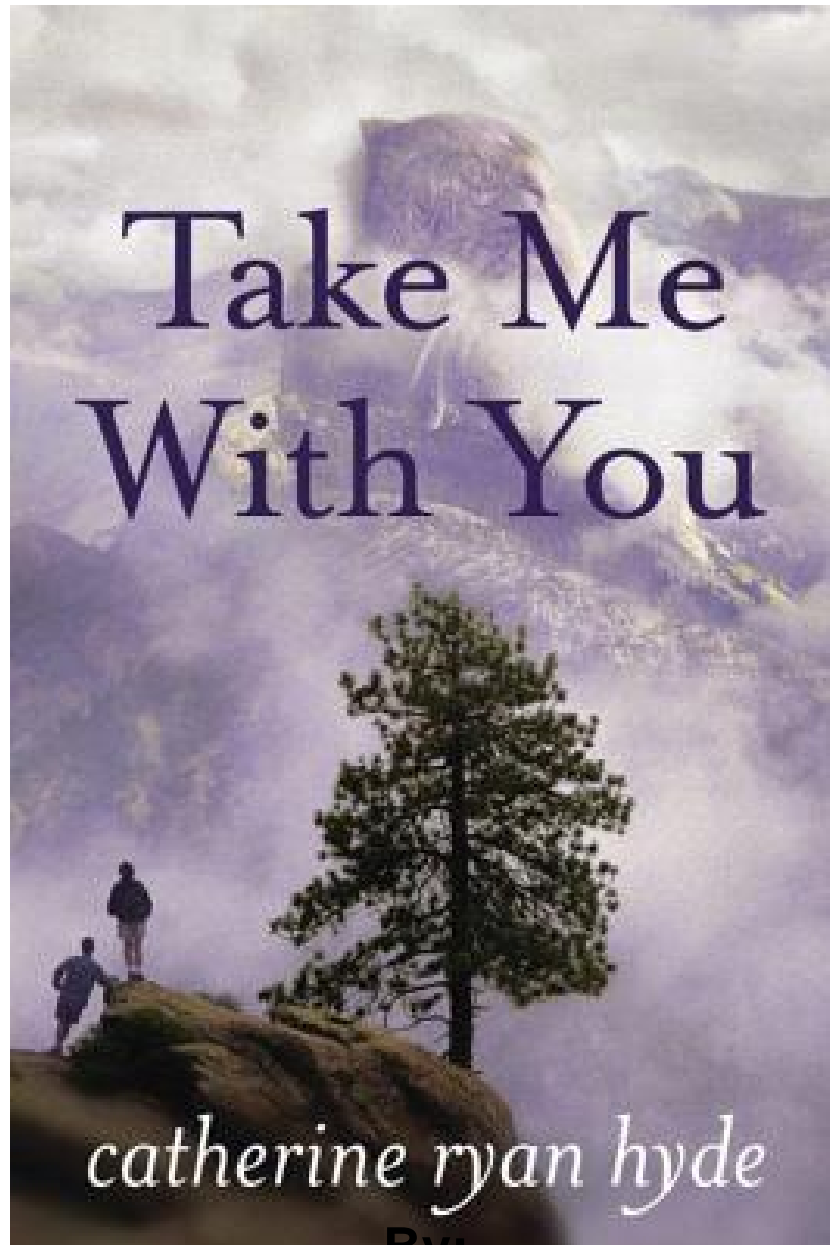


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By:
Catherine Ryan Hyde

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What people Say:

Arah-Lynda

Okay so when I first stumbled across this as a deal on Amazon and read the blurb I was more inclined to pass it by than to pick it up. I honestly did not think I was ready to deal with a burned out teacher and recovering alcoholic who is still dealing with the tragic loss of his son. This did not exactly sound like uplifting fare, but after reading a couple of reviews on goodreads that raved about it, I bit the bullet so to speak and grabbed it.

Thank you Goodreads!

This story is so fantastic

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Thank you Goodreads!

This story is so fantastic and while yes, it does feature a burnt out school teacher who is a recovering alcoholic dealing with the loss of his son, it is so not about that, while still being about just that. Confused? What I am trying to say is that while the book does not focus on these elements, over the course of the story, amidst the trips to the national parks, culminating in Yellowstone, other life events are reflected back to the reader through the eyes of the man who is all of these things.

August Schroeder spends his summers on the road in America visiting the various national parks and outdoor nature reserves of this great land. This year he plans to go to Yellowstone, a place that both he and his late son Phillip wanted to visit. On the way, with his feisty little dog Woody as co-pilot, the RV breaks down and August fears that the cost of the repair will prohibit him from reaching Yellowstone this year. Little does he know that the mechanic who is making the repairs has problems of his own, problems that involve the care of his two sons Seth and Henry. A deal is soon struck between the two men and August, with his trusty dog Woody, together with Seth and Henry head out on the road to visit Yellowstone with other stops planned enroute.

And it is on this trip that the story soars. Seth is a very serious lad who takes his own responsibility for the things that happen around him way too seriously for his age. He is so cautious and concerned about how his own behaviour is affecting August, he can scarce relax and enjoy the bounties of the trip. Henry is another responsibility that Seth takes upon himself. Henry is quiet and shy, making himself as small as humanly possible, while still actually being with them. Point

of fact is Henry does not speak at all, except perhaps maybe just to Seth but August has not seen any sign of that either. Â

In an effort to get these boys to relax and enjoy natureâ€™s awesome bounty without coming across as preachy or overbearing August adapts a gentle, friendly, non confrontational approach that is ever mindful of the responsibility he has accepted. Â Â As Seth and Henry begin to unwind and become more comfortable with him and begin to actively participate in the adventure, the tables slowly turn and August finds himself gaining as much sound practical advice as he is giving. Â He also learns a great deal more about their home lives and how it was that their father was prepared to make the unheard of deal with August that he has. Â

Never preachy or maudlin and without even a hint of saccharine this camping trip builds a foundation on which the boys will build the rest of their lives while providing August with enough emotional sustenance to see him safely to shore. Â

Mike Patterson

Got caught in my throat more than once in this story. Thank you for making me feel human. If you have another that touches me like this did, I'll be reading it soon. Hopefully many more. Like August, I want to savor every minute of this journey you've put together. It's even more impressive that you make August and the boys real feeling beings and not standardized males.

Dale Harcombe

Four and a half stars.

I fell in love in this book. Not just with Seth and younger brother Henry, but with August and felt for him in his grief at the death of his son. Woody, August's little Jack Russell won his way into my heart too. From the first page I knew this book would hook me right in. It is simply but powerfully written and shows clearly that it is often the family that suffers along with the alcoholic. This is perhaps not a book where the reader will be wowed by the beautiful prose. I

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The story is told simply and honestly. There were some passages filled with wisdom like this from a relatively minor character, Emory. "I've see a lot of people walk a lot of roads. Some not so happy. And it makes them what they are. So if you run around putting a pillow under people to cushion their fall! well, I'm just not sure it's quite the favor we think it is." And this from August, the recovering alcoholic. "I drove when I'd been drinking too. But I never got into an accident. And now who the hell am I to act like I'm better than her (his ex-wife) because she was sitting at a red light when someone ran it? And I wasn't? That's luck. That's not to my credit. We're responsible for everything. Everything we do. Not just when it backfires on us." I could have quoted plenty of others.

This book relies on involving the emotions and it sure did with me. I laughed, I was teary at times and at other times downright angry. To begin with I struggled to believe a man would hand his children over so readily to someone they had just met and expect him to care for them during the summer. But then I have never been as desperate as Wes. Once you accept this fact on which the plot hinges, the rest falls into place. For me, the only part where I lost concentration a little was later in the book with the emphasis on climbing, and just a couple of things I thought could have been resolved a little better at the end. Still, well worth reading if you like a book that tugs at the emotions, makes you think and has well drawn characters that you will care about. I will definitely be seeking out more books by this author.

Elaine

The main character of this book is August, a man of a certain age, a science teacher who is taking an RV trip. Just those two facts – the science and the RV meant that throughout this read I had Walter White in my head and read all of August’s dialogue in Walter’s voice.

But, to be serious, this is the second book that I have read by the author lately and, like *Where We Belong*, the main theme of this book is a friendship between the generations. Similarly, we have a man who is intrinsically good,

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But, to be serious, this is the second book that I have read by the author lately and, like *Where We Belong*, the main theme of this book is a friendship between the generations. Similarly, we have a man who is intrinsically good, doing the right thing for other people, even though he may have serious doubts about the wisdom of what he is doing.

Oh, and there is also another cute dog – this time a Jack Russell called Woody.

August, a recovering alcoholic, is mourning the death of his son Phillip two years ago, and as a memorial to him is taking an RV trip from California to Yellowstone Park. What he hasn’t bargained for is being – coerced – into taking along two young children, Seth and Henry. He unwittingly becomes a role model for the boys and, in turn, we see him learning how to move forward in his mourning of his son. I really enjoyed reading about their road trip, the scenery and places they visited. I really felt quite envious of everything they saw and experienced.

The book also studies – risk. It encourages you to live life to the full because you never know what is around the corner, and if your passions run to activities that could be risky then to take calculated risks; enjoy the moment as safely as possible. I have a fear of heights, but I was still intrigued by the climbing section of the book. I read some of it wincing.

It is a very uplifting, feel good read with nice characters that you cannot help liking. A couple of times I did think the book was about to stray into – twee territory – but the author managed to turn it round, so it didn’t get sickly sweet, just a darn good read.

Thanks to the publishers for the copy in return for an honest review.

Carole

If you're the type that enjoys character rich stories, and you haven't read a book by Catherine Ryan Hyde, then I suggest you start right here.

I have never been disappointed in her work.

This is the story of a teacher named August who travels each summer in his RV. He meets up with 2 young boys, Seth and Henry who end up traveling with him. The 3 of them share a summer of camping, and learn quite a lot from each other.

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It is a heartwarming story, that had me choked up a few times. I always feel so attached to her characters. Nothing overly dramatic happens in this book, but it doesn't need to. The characters alone create a book to love.