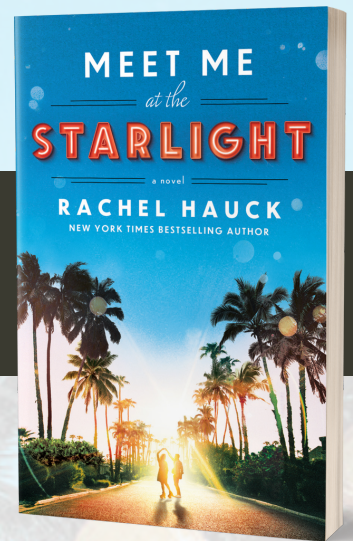


BOOK CLUB GUIDE



FROM THE AUTHOR



Dear Book Club Coordinator,

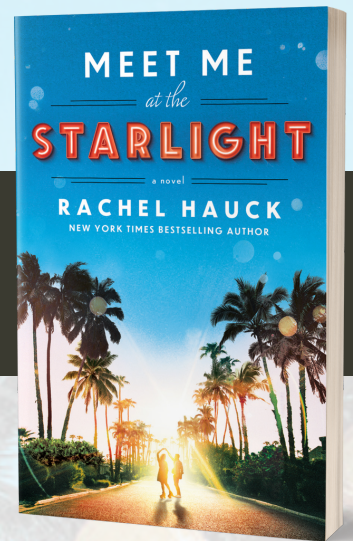
What an honor to be considered for your book club, especially when there are so many good books to choose from. *Meet Me at the Starlight* is a multigenerational story of redemption and hope, of standing firm against adversity.

When I first came up with the name “Starlight,” I tried to imagine what sort of venue it might be. A diner? A theater? Some kind of historic building? Then a friend suggested a roller-skating rink and the Starlight was born.

The story follows Tuesday, the owner of the Starlight, through the 1930s and ’40s and into the ’60s. She takes a stand against the husband she loves, who tries to use the rink for more nefarious ventures. In 1987, we meet Matt, Tuesday’s grandson and accidental movie star, as well as Harlow, another unwitting character of fame. As one of the most beautiful faces of the ’80s, her modeling career is derailed when food becomes comfort for her broken heart. The fictional town, Sea Blue Beach, was founded by a prince (you knew I had to work in royalty!) and is set on the North Florida coast, offering the reader its own unique point of view.

The Starlight is the heart of Sea Blue Beach. It stands for everything we believe in— community, faith, and endurance. When its existence is threatened by modernization, the entire town must decide its fate. Tuesday, Matt, and Harlow walk their unique journeys of healing and faith together, discovering unknown truths about themselves and others. I love these characters and am already missing the Starlight. I’m ready to break out my old skates and hit the rink.





Tuesday is always admonishing Harlow to give roller-skating a try, but she declares time and time again that she cannot skate. Rolling over the floor is one of the best ways to think and process. I experienced that sensation anew over the Christmas holiday, when my husband and I went roller-skating with our nieces and nephews. I didn't want to get off the floor. I'd finally found my old, peaceful roller-skating groove.

Meet Me at the Starlight has a cast of lively secondary characters, as well as a few twists and surprises before the end. I think you'll find a piece of yourself between the lines.

I'd love to join your book club virtually or in person. For virtual, reach out through the "[Request Author Teleconference](#)" form on the Open Book website. If you're in the coastal Central Florida area, and your book club is reading *Meet Me at the Starlight*, contact me at rachel@rachelhauck.com.

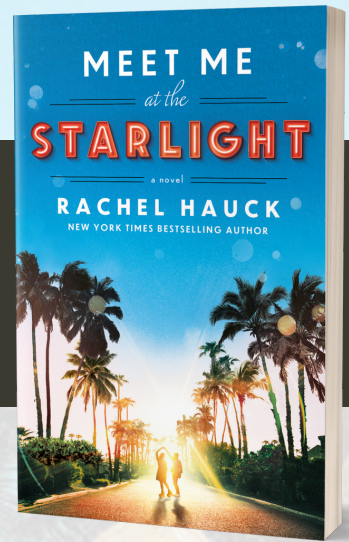
Blessings,

Rachel
RachelHauck.com

→
Rachel Hauck in college
dressed as a flashdance
roller-derby queen



Q & A WITH RACHEL HAUCK



Meet Me at the Starlight is set in 1987 and in the 1930s. What made you choose those timeframes as the best to tell this particular story?

Rachel Hauck: I wanted a nostalgic feel for this story, which is provided with the twentieth-century setting. As we move into the twenty-first century, there's a growing romance about the '60s, '70s, and '80s. I graduated college and entered the workforce in the eighties, so it was fun to look back at that decade. My grandparents married in the 1930s, and I've always been fascinated with the decade of the Depression, gangsters, art deco, craftsman homes, and the Golden Age of Hollywood.

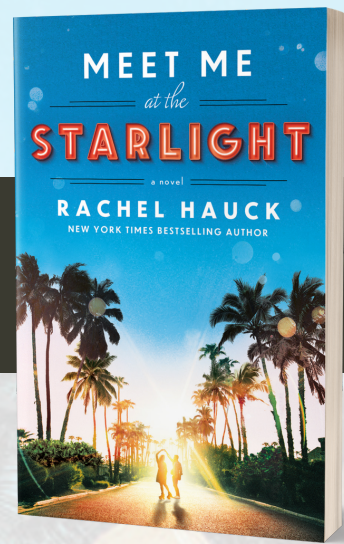
Harlow Hayes is the classic 1980's beauty—tall with blond hair and blue eyes—but as the story opens, her career is in freefall. What happened to set these events in motion?

RH: Harlow has been in my heart for over five years. I've always been fascinated with culture, pop culture, and how we define *beautiful* or *good*. I wanted to explore the life of a model who gained weight by way of a broken heart and lost her career. Harlow presented a lot of questions for me about the human condition: Why do we use food as comfort? Why do we care about how much someone weighs? Can we be content with ourselves no matter what our exterior looks like, good or bad? Why did she sabotage her career instead of doubling down with her work? Harlow's character also explores how children can become the conduit for a parent's lost dream.

Matt Knight is the ultimate 1980's bad-boy actor. Were there any real-life actors who were inspirational in creating Matt?

RH: Matt was modeled in part by the Brat Pack of the '80s. It seemed to be the era of young, party-hardy actors. But his bad-boy ways are more against himself than others. He carries a burden that he needs to confront.





We first meet Tuesday Knight in the 1930's storyline. What are the challenges she faces as a young woman, and how do those shape her life and personality?

RH: Tuesday was such a joy to write. She was the ultimate strong woman. An illegitimate child left by her mother to be raised by her grandparents, she turned lemons into lemonade. But she also captured the heart of the most handsome man in town, Leroy, a WWI vet who gave her the family she wanted. But Leroy's chosen career after the war causes a lot of heartache for Tuesday. Yet she never gives up. She also let him know how she felt! I loved her humble gumption.

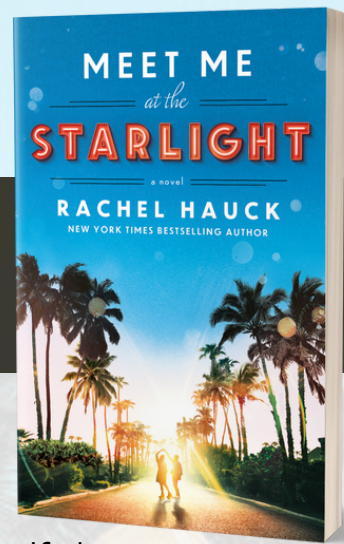
What fun elements and what challenges do the coastal Florida setting and the culture of the Starlight present to the story?

RH: Great question. I used a bit of literary license to create a thriving Sea Blue Beach in the early 1930s. While small, coastal towns existed, the real growth came after WWII. In the 1980s, the North Florida Panhandle was booming with business, which I used to cause trouble for my protagonists.

What are you most excited for readers to experience as they pick up this romance between Matt and Harlow?

RH: This is a textured and layered story set in a time when the world was changing, when roller-skating was a national pastime, and as we go through the '80s, a new millennium is on the horizon. Matt and Harlow's story, along with Tuesday and Leroy's, remind us how much love is always at the core of our hearts. Family is the fabric of our society. Love is worth our effort.





What aspect of this story did you enjoy writing the most?

RH: I really enjoyed Matt and Harlow’s story. She’s a beautiful yet self-deprecating, wounded “It Girl” looking to heal and get her life on track again. Her approach to life, to Matt, to the skating rink, the Starlight, was practical yet humorous. Matt was passionate and impulsive, a fighter with a tender heart. As flawed as he was, he saw Harlow for her true self, which made him the ultimate hero.

However, I can’t overlook Tuesday! She was a scene-stealer. In my first draft, she was so strong that it made Matt and Harlow almost feel secondary. I really loved her strength and faithfulness to her marriage vows, her sons, to Sea Blue Beach, and ultimately herself. She didn’t let the actions of others dictate her character.

As a romance reader yourself, are there any romance tropes in this book that you think readers will find especially entertaining?

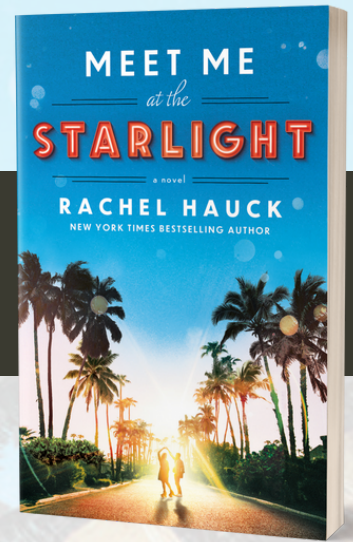
RH: Matt and Harlow definitely fall into the friends-to-lovers trope, as well as a bit of that “royal” feel, since they are both famous.

What are you working on next?

RH: I’m going back to North Florida and the fictional town of Sea Blue Beach for a 2024 setting. I’m still working out the details, but it will involve a reporter, a champion prizefighter and the mysterious fun of a carnival.

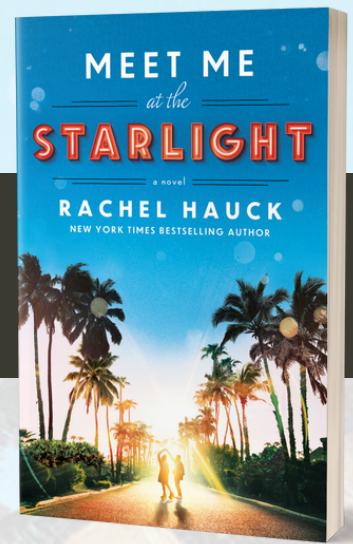


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



1. When the story opens, we see Tuesday at war in her heart because of her husband's career. What do you think of her response to him? Do you consider her strong?
2. In today's culture, we talk a lot about strong women. Who did you feel was stronger in this story: Harlow or Tuesday? Discuss qualities of a strong woman. Who in your life represents strength?
3. Harlow crumbled when her heart was broken. Have you ever faced a broken heart or a huge disappointment? How did you come through it?
4. Why do you think it took Harlow time to stand up to Xander? Have you ever been in a relationship that tangled up your thinking and emotions? How did you free yourself?
5. Matt did something he wasn't proud of, and fifteen years later, and he still hates himself for what he did. He doesn't recognize some aspects of his life reflect his feelings about himself and the past. How can we let go of those things that hold us back?





6. Were you surprised when Booker showed up at the end? What do you think about his reconciliation with Matt? Forgiving ourselves, as well as forgiving others, is a key to health and life. Do you have something you need to forgive in yourself or someone else?

7. What does the Starlight represent in the story? To you?

8. Did you roller-skate as a kid? What was your favorite roller-skating moment? Your favorite song? Is your hometown rink still in operation? Did you ever do the Hokey Pokey while on skates?

9. If you could tell yourself “learn to skate” about an issue in your life, what would it be? What steps could you take moving forward to see it realized?

10. The character Immanuel sets up on the beach to speak truth to Harlow. Did you recognize His truth? What truth has Immanuel spoken into your life?



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