

***The Best Summer of Our Lives*
by Rachel Hauck**

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***NYT Bestselling Author Presents a
Nostalgic and Heartfelt Exploration of
Female Friendship***

“In true Rachel Hauck fashion, *The Best Summer of Our Lives* blends faith and hope into a story about the seasons of life, the seasons of friendship, and the seasons of love. A journey that will warm your heart and make you yearn to reconnect with old friends.”

—**Lisa Wingate**, *NYT* bestselling author
of *The Book of Lost Friends*

Minneapolis, Minn.—With over 1.3 million copies sold, author Rachel Hauck is one of the biggest names in Inspirational Fiction. A Carol and Christy Award winner, Hauck is also the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Wallstreet Journal* bestselling author of over 30 moving novels, earning her a *Romantic Times* Lifetime Achievement award. Her latest release, *The Best Summer of Our Lives*, is the culmination of all of Hauck’s talents—perfectly capturing all the romance, heartache, and hope of the best summer ever.

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Twenty years ago, the summer of ’77 was supposed to be the best summer of Summer Wilde’s life. She and her best friends, Spring, Autumn, and Snow—the Four Seasons—had big plans.

But those plans never had a chance. After a teenage prank gone awry, the Seasons found themselves on a bus to Tumbleweed, “Nowhere,” Oklahoma, to spend eight weeks as camp counselors. All four of them arrived with hidden secrets and buried fears, and those two months changed their friendships and their lives.

Now, thirty-something, Summer is at a crossroads. When her latest girl band leaves her in a motel outside Tulsa, she is forced to face the shadows of her past. Returning to the place where everything changed, she soon learns Tumbleweed is more than a town she never wanted to see again. It’s a place for healing, for reconciling the past with the present, and for finally listening to love’s voice.



About the Author

Rachel Hauck is an award-winning *New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *Wall Street Journal* bestselling author. She is a double RITA finalist, and a Christy and Carol Award winner. Her book *Once Upon a Prince*, first in the ROYAL WEDDING SERIES, was filmed for an Original Hallmark movie. A retired member of the American Christian Fiction Writers Executive Board, she teaches workshops and leads worship at the annual conference. Rachel lives in sunny central Florida with her husband and ornery cat. Learn more at RachelHauck.com.

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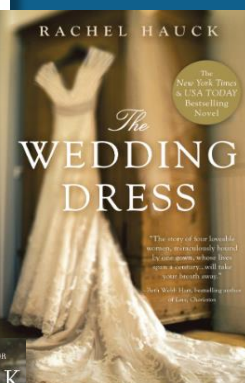
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Also by Hauck:



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PRAISE for *The Best Summer of our Lives*

“Rachel Hauck sets the gold standard in inspirational fiction. *The Best Summer of Our Lives* is a nostalgic novel of friendship, romance, and the choices that define a life.”

—**Brenda Novak**, *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author

“Hauck [shows] how friendship, tragedy, love, and forgiveness can form and shape both lives and futures. Rachel Hauck fans will savor this sparkling story full of depth [and] heart!”

—**Lauren K. Denton**, *USA Today* bestselling author of *The Hideaway* and *A Place to Land*

“Absolutely magical. Beautiful prose, deeply moving. I laughed and cried and fell in love with Hauck’s story of four best friends finding their way back to each other. Maybe Hauck’s best book yet (and that’s saying a lot!).”

—**Susan May Warren**, *USA Today* bestselling author

PRAISE for Hauck’s Previous Novels

“Hauck deftly weaves together an unforgettable story of hope and the durability of true love. Hauck’s moving, faith-based novel will appeal to a broad audience.”

★ —**Booklist**, starred review of *The Wedding Chapel*

“Accomplished Hauck demonstrates genre finesse as she blends inspirational romance with a cinematic style of storytelling, bringing empathic characters to life as they cope with challenging decisions in this spellbinding, lovely novel.”

—**Booklist** on *The Memory House*



Author Interview with Rachel Hauck *The Best Summer of Our Lives*

Can you please tell us a little bit about your new novel *The Best Summer of Our Lives*?

RH: When Summer Wilde’s music career crumbles, she returns to the place where secrets, wounds, and fears destroyed her closest friendships. It will take a reckoning with her past and the friends she lost to help her gain the closure she needs to move forward.

What do readers need to know about each of the four girls—Summer, Spring, Autumn, and Snow?

RH: At eighteen, on the verge of a new independence and going off to college, they have big plans. They are very much like their seasonal names. Summer is passionate and bold. Autumn is the beauty of fall and somewhat caught between summer and winter. Snow is winter—simple, yet calculating, with an inner passion. Spring is beauty and grace, the one everyone wants to be. They are like all of us at eighteen—naïve, yet wise. Insecure, yet full of hope.

Some major themes that *The Best Summer of Our Lives* addresses are friendship, secrets, and forgiveness. How do we see these play out in the lives of your female protagonists?

RH: The four girls are challenged from the get-go when they end up as camp counselors in a remote Oklahoma town. Still, they really believe in themselves. Their friendship endured junior and senior high. How could an unexpected adventure as counselors change them? But secrets confront the truths they’ve known and believed, and their friendship is tested beyond anything they could imagine.

This novel is arguably a bit different than other books you’ve written recently. Can you share what inspired the idea for this story?

RH: I was a teenager in the summer of ’70 and have wanted to explore that time in history. The original title was *The Summer of ’77*, and I knew the story would be about four friends right after high school. One day, while taking a walk, Summer Wilde’s character joined me! The rest of them, aka the Four Seasons, came along on subsequent walks. The title changed as the story developed into the idea of the four friends wanting “the best summer” of their lives. My husband gave me the idea for the girls’ camp setting, which anchored the story for me.

Which character would you say you relate to the most—Summer, Spring, Autumn, or Snow?

RH: There's a little bit of me in all the girls, but by the end of the book, I wanted to be Summer—well, the woman she allowed herself to become. She was very real to me, and I could feel her heart.

You've said before that you truly believe in the power of story. Can you tell us a bit about what you mean and how this belief has impacted your writing over the years?

RH: Everything in life is a story. We all have a story. When we meet new friends, we ask, "What's your story?" When the disciples told Jesus, "We don't get it," He replied, "Let me tell you a story."

A story is the only entertainment medium where the reader can slip between the lines and join the journey with the characters. Stories stick with us long after the last page. I've had readers tell me how a story inspired them to seek healing in a relationship. Others say they've been inspired to talk to God. I think stories help us to see ourselves more clearly because as we find the good in the characters, we find the good in ourselves.

What is one of your favorite things about writing contemporary fiction?

RH: I love the versatility of contemporary fiction. The "rules" are more fluid, and the storyteller can explore a variety of subjects and characters. I love creating one-off characters from time to time who can tell a unique part of the story, or take the plunge, like with *The Best Summer of Our Lives*, and write an ensemble cast. Once I get into the process, the characters become my friends, and if I had one of Bert's chalk drawings from *Mary Poppins*, I'd jump in and go on the journey with them.

What lessons do you hope readers gain by picking up *The Best Summer of Our Lives*?

RH: I hope readers are inspired to pursue friendships that may have faded. To forgive new and old offenses. It's hard to face the pain that often comes with misunderstanding and hurts, but it's worth it for healing and closure. I'm a strong believer in God's love protecting our hearts. *The Best Summer of Our Lives* is about how the unexpected is often better than the expected. I also would love for readers to pause and remember a special summer or moment in their lives.

Can you share what you're working on next?

RH: It's top secret, but I suppose I can tell. It'll be our little secret. I'm working on a story about a beautiful old skating rink called the Starlight. The timeframe will alternate between the 1930s and '40s and 1980s, with three main protagonists. It's a story of healing and restoration.

How can readers connect with you?

RH: Visit me at rachelhauck.com. Please sign up for my newsletter for unique content and up-to-date information on books.