The Biography of Kami Garcia & Margaret Stohl

Kami Garcia


BEAUTIFUL CREATURES has been published in 50 countries and translated in 39 languages. The Beautiful Creatures movie based on the novel, released in theaters on February 14, 2013, from Warner Brothers, directed by Richard
LaGravenese and starring: Viola Davis, Jeremy Irons, Emma Thompson, Emmy Rossum, Alice Englert, and Alden Ehrenrich.

BEAUTIFUL CREATURES was a finalist for the ALA’s William C. Morris Debut Award in 2010, a SCIBA Award Finalist in 2010, a New York Public Library’s “Books for the Teen Age” selection, and a YALSA “Teen Top Ten” Pick. BEAUTIFUL CREATURES was named Amazon’s #1 Teen Book of 2009, and #5 on the Editor’s Top 100 List.

Kami was a 2012 recipient of the Bold Ink Award, and her short story “Red Run” was featured in The Guardian, after it was selected for the UK’s National Short Story Month in 2012. She is a member of PEN West, Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, the Horror Writers Association, and works with WriteGirl, a creative writing and mentoring non-profit organization for girls. Kami has participated in the LA Times Festival of Books, Texas Book Festival, the Paris Book Fair, Roma Cinemafest in Rome, ALA’s Annual Conference, Decatur Book Festival, Austin Teen Book Festival, Southern Book Festival, and Comic-Con International. Kami was a founding member of the Young Adult Capitol Bookfest in Charleston, SC, and continues as a Director of Programming for the festival. She was also a founding member of the Smart Chicks Tour.

Kami grew up outside of Washington DC, wore lots of black, and spent hours writing poetry in spiral notebooks. As a girl with Southern roots, she has always been fascinated by the paranormal and believes in lots of things “normal” people don’t. She’s very superstitious and would never sleep in a room with the number
“13? on the door. When she is not writing, Kami can usually be found watching disaster movies, listening to Soundgarden, or drinking Diet Coke.

With an MA in education, Kami taught in the Washington DC area until she moved to Los Angeles, where she was a teacher & Reading Specialist for 14 years. In addition to teaching, Kami was a professional artist and led fantasy book groups for children and teens. She lives in Los Angeles with her husband, son, daughter, and their dogs Spike and Oz (named after characters from Buffy the Vampire Slayer).
Margaret Stohl is the author of *Icons*, the first book in the Icons series, forthcoming from Little, Brown in spring 2013, as well as the coauthor of the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Publishers Weekly*, *Los Angeles Times*, IndieBound, and internationally bestselling Beautiful Creatures Novels (with Kami Garcia.)

Including *Beautiful Creatures* (2009), *Beautiful Darkness* (2010), and *Beautiful Chaos* (October 2011)—along with *Dream Dark*, a Beautiful Creatures story available exclusively online (August 2011)—the Beautiful Creatures Novels have been translated into twenty-eight languages, published in thirty-nine countries, and optioned for film by Warner Brothers.
Beautiful Creatures was an ALA William C. Morris YA Debut Award finalist in 2010, as well as a SCIBA award finalist, an NYPL Book for the Teen Age, and a YALSA Teens’ Top Ten pick. Beautiful Creatures was named the Amazon Editors’ Picks #1 Teen Best Book of the Year and #5 Best Book of the Year overall for 2009.

Margaret is a veteran of the video-game industry, and after working with Activision (now Activision Blizzard) and Westwood Studios (now Electronic Arts), Margaret became a cofounder of 7 Studios with her husband, Lewis Peterson. She has previously been nominated for Most Innovative Game Design at the Game Developers Conference.

A graduate of Amherst College, where she won the Knox Prize for English Literature, Margaret earned a master’s degree in English from Stanford University and completed coursework for a doctorate in American Studies at Yale University. Margaret was a teaching assistant in Romantic Poetry at Stanford and in Film Studies at Yale. She attended the Creative Writing program of the University of East Anglia, where she was mentored by the Scottish poet George MacBeth.

Margaret loves traveling the world with her daughters, who are épée fencers, and living in Santa Monica, California, with her husband and two bad beagles.
Summary of Beautiful Creatures

Sixteen-year-old Ethan Wate lives in Gatlin, S.C., but dislikes his small town and would like to move away. He lives with his father and a housekeeper/grandmother to Ethan; his mother has passed away.

On the first day of his sophomore year of high school, Ethan again has a dream about falling through trees with a girl whose face he can't see. This dream has been recurring for months, and it troubles Ethan because in the dream he loves the girl he is falling with, though he does not know who she is. When Ethan wakes, he finds a new song by an unknown artist on his iPod. The song is called "Sixteen Moons," and the lyrics seem eerie to Ethan. When he checks his music player later, the song is missing.

When Ethan arrives at school, he hears about a new girl in town, Lena Duchannes. Lena is ignored by most of the students because she wears long dresses and is not interested in popular pursuits like trying out for the cheerleading squad. Ethan hears Lena playing the song "Sixteen Moons" on her viola in orchestra, which unsettles him. Ethan drives away from school to clear his mind, and he hears "Sixteen Moons" playing over his car radio. As Ethan drives, he nearly runs over Lena. When he stops his car, he suddenly realizes that Lena is the girl who appears in his nightmares. Lena accepts a ride home from Ethan, which marks the start of their friendship.
In English class the next day, Ethan begins to hear Lena communicating with him telepathically. The girls in class insult Lena's reclusive uncle, Macon Ravenwood, and Lena's anger affects the classroom, shattering the glass in the windows. Lena runs home to Ravenwood Manor, and Ethan follows her. Lena is crying in a garden full of lemon trees, and she begins to talk with Ethan. She says that sometimes unexplainable things happen around her. Suddenly, Ethan touches an old locket that is sitting on the ground, and he begins to see a vision of the past. In the vision, a girl named Genevieve is watching her mother's plantation, Greenbrier, burn down. This happens during the time period surrounding the Civil War. Lena is interested in Ethan's vision, but she cryptically warns him that her life is complicated and that he should not try to interact with her again.

Ethan keeps the old locket with him and asks his three great aunts, known as the Sisters, about it. The Sisters tell him that the locket comes from the year when General Sherman burned every plantation in Gatlin, except for Ravenwood Manor. The Sisters identify the two sets of initials, which are carved into the locket, as belonging to an ancestor of Lena's — Genevieve Duchannes — and an ancestor of Ethan's named Ethan Carter Wate. In church, Ethan touches the locket and has another vision of Genevieve Duchannes talking with her fiancé, Ethan Carter Wate. That night, Ethan has another dream of Lena slipping away from him, and he dreams he was drowning and wakes up soaking wet.

After Lena misses a day of school, Ethan visits her house and meets her Uncle Macon Ravenwood, a man who no one in Gatlin has seen for years. Macon
does not want to give Ethan additional information about the locket, and Ethan notices that the interior of Ravenwood Manor seems to be magical, because the interior decoration can change and entire meals can appear and vanish, seemingly according to Macon's will.

That night, Lena comes to Ethan's house and sneaks into his room to explain her unusual family. She says that all the people in her family are Casters (spell casters) who have special powers. Despite this revelation, Ethan's attraction to Lena grows, and he asks her to go on a movie date with him. They hold hands at the movie theater, which sparks rumors about Ethan and Lena at their high school.

Ethan soon meets Lena's older cousin Ridley, a seductively dressed and very persuasive girl. Ridley invites Ethan to the Gathering, a holiday dinner held by Lena's extended family every year. Ridley reveals that in five months, Lena will turn 16, and on 16th birthdays, all members of the Duchannes family are Claimed as either Light Casters or Dark Casters. After the dinner, Ethan sits in Lena's bedroom as Lena explains that Ridley is a Siren, a Dark Caster with the ability to persuade people to do anything she wants. Lena is afraid that she will become evil as Ridley is and be claimed as Dark on her upcoming birthday. Ethan assures her that will not happen, and he kisses Lena for the first time.

That night, Ethan wakes up and sees that his housekeeper, Amma, leaving the house. Ethan follows Amma to her own home, where he watches as she goes out to the swamp and meets Lena's uncle, Macon Ravenwood. Macon is upset that
Amma has not stopped Ethan from meeting with Lena, as it could be dangerous for both teenagers. Amma and Macon have questions they want to ask the ghosts of Amma's relatives, whom she refers to as the Greats. The ghosts are uncommunicative, and Macon and Amma are unaware of Ethan's presence at their meeting.

The next day, Lena and Ethan skip school and touch the locket again. This time, they see a vision of Genevieve Duchannes tending Ethan Carter Wate's bullet wound just before he dies. They go to the Gatlin County Library to get information from Marian Ashcroft, a librarian who was Ethan's mother's best friend. At the library, they have one more vision of Genevieve trying to bring Ethan Carter Wate back to life by using a magical text called the Book of Moons. Marian Ashcroft reveals herself to be a Keeper, a mortal who knows about the Light and Dark Casters and keeps a record of their doings. There is a secret part of the Gatlin Library known as the Caster Library, and Lena thinks this place may contain the Book of Moons. However, in order to search for the book, Lena and Ethan must wait for the Caster Library to open, according to its own magical schedule.

On Halloween night, Ethan wakes up from a vision that Lena is in trouble. He drives to Ravenwood Manor and goes inside to find Lena lying on a table, with most of her family members standing around her. Lena is in pain, and her family is reciting a Latin chant to stop a spiritual attack on Lena by a Dark Caster named Sarafine. Ethan's presence seems to break the spell, and Macon's mother,
Arelia, concludes that Ethan's love is the only force that can protect Lena from the schemes of Sarafine.

On Thanksgiving, Amma invites Lena to Thanksgiving dinner with the Wate family. Amma uses magic to suspend time so she and Lena can talk to each other while the family sits by, frozen and unaware. Ethan can overhear their conversation, as Amma tells Lena that Sarafine is actually her mother.

Ethan and Lena go to the Caster Library. In the library, they touch Genevieve's locket again and discover the source of the curse on the Duchannes family of Casters. Genevieve used the Book of Moons to work dark magic and bring Ethan Carter Wate back to life, and the Book gained the power to choose which of the Duchannes children would go Dark or Light in the future. In the library, Lena faints and is again spiritually attacked by Sarafine, but she wakes up when Ethan kisses her. Ethan and Lena need to find the Book of Moons, and they think it might have been buried with Genevieve. They go to Genevieve's grave and dig up the book. Then they study it to see if they can find a way to keep Lena from becoming Dark.

At Gatlin High's winter formal, some of the girls ruin Lena's dress by pouring liquid soap on her and Ethan. Lena's cousin Ridley arrives at the formal and takes revenge for Lena's humiliation by mentally turning on the sprinkler system in the school. The water ruins the dresses of all the girls who were mean to Lena, causing chaos. The mothers of the mean girls believe Lena is responsible for the incident, and they sign a petition to have Lena expelled from school. The
school principal holds a hearing and is about to expel Lena when Macon arrives to protest the hearing. Lena is allowed to return to school.

Over Christmas break, Ethan discovers that his reclusive father, Mitchell Wate, has not been working on his novel for the past several months. He has been sitting in his study, grieving for his dead wife. In Mitchell's study, Ethan and Lena notice that several books are open to certain pages, and the pages refuse to be turned. Some magical influence is spelling out a code in the books, and the message tells Lena, Claim yourself. Lena and Ethan continue to search through the Book of Moons, looking for a magical option that will allow Lena to choose her own fate.

The day of Lena's 16th birthday, Ethan goes to Ravenwood Manor to see her. Her extended family of Light Casters is with her. Lena is surprised when her Dark Caster cousin Ridley comes to the house with Ethan's best friend, Link, and several other students from the high school. Ridley has put a verbal spell on the students who used to be mean to Lena so that they will treat her nicely on her birthday. Other students are setting up a big party for Lena in the field outside of Ravenwood. Macon forbids Lena to attend the party because of the potential dangers, but Lena sneaks out to enjoy the festivities anyway. Lena and Ethan dance together and finally say that they love each other.

Ethan has to leave the party when he hears that his father, Mitchell, is standing on the balcony of a local museum, and appears as if he is going to jump. Ridley has nearly persuaded Mitchell to take his own life, but Link convinces her
to release Mitchell from her spell. Ridley reveals that this was a plot to lure Ethan away from Lena, since his love is her main protection from Sarafine. Ethan and Link head back to Ravenwood Manor and meet Link's mother, Mrs. Lincoln, on the way. Ethan discovers that the woman is not Mrs. Lincoln, but the Dark Caster Sarafine in disguise.

Sarafine tells Lena that she will be able to Claim her own self for the Dark or Light at midnight. Lena's choice is a complicated one: If she chooses to go Dark, all the Light Casters in her family will die, but she would be able to have a physical relationship with Ethan, something that was barred to them. If she chooses to go Light, all the Dark Casters in her family will die, including Uncle Macon. Ethan is unable to get into Ravenwood Manor to get the help of the other Light Casters, so runs to the Caster Library to get help from Marian, who is able to let him into Ravenwood Manor through the Library tunnels. After gathering the Light Casters, Ethan runs to find Lena in the woods, but instead meets Sarafine, who stabs him in the stomach with a knife.

From Lena's point of view, midnight strikes, and Lena uses her power over nature to block out the moon at midnight, which keeps her from being claimed at all, either for Dark or Light. She sees Sarafine stab Ethan, so with the help of Amma, who arrives with the Book of Moons, she decides to recite a spell to bring Ethan back to life. This works, but with the terrible consequence of the Book needing to take the life of Uncle Macon in order to save Ethan. In the days after
Macon's death, Ethan hears a new song called "Seventeen Moons" playing on his iPod, and he knows that the fight between Light and Dark Casters is not yet over.