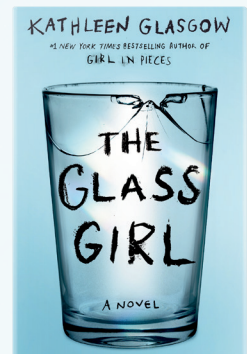




## IN CONVERSATION WITH **KATHLEEN GLASGOW** AUTHOR OF *GIRL IN PIECES*

**You're known for writing deeply emotional stories that resonate with both teens and adults. What draws you to these topics?**

When I took my first fiction writing class as a teenager, the instructor said, "Write what you know." So I did. The things I write about in my books—self-harm, depression, addiction, loneliness—are things that I've experienced in my own life, so it's natural that I'd be drawn to characters and stories that are similar. What I didn't realize until after I'd published *Girl in Pieces* was exactly how many readers shared those experiences and wanted to read about them.



**Bella uses alcohol to dull the pressures she faces in her life. What do you think pushes her toward addiction?**

In writing about addiction in a young person, it's important to remember they don't have a toolbox to deal with heavy things (Bella struggles with anxiety, her parents' bitter divorce, a breakup, grief from her grandmother's death). She learned her coping mechanism from her grandmother, who began drinking with Bella (innocently) when Bella was eleven. Bella learned early that alcohol soothed her. No one expects to become an addict. Addiction is stealthy that way. Bella hasn't learned another way to cope with her emotional stress.

**Is Bella inspired by anyone you know or have met in real life?**

Bella isn't directly inspired by anyone I know, though I've been in recovery for almost seventeen years now. Like Bella, I had my first drink very early, and like Bella, I immediately felt like I was "home." Over the years, I've met many people struggling with addiction. I've lost people. I've watched people work hard to maintain recovery and build a new life. All of them are amazing.

**Your books touch on heavy topics but always manage to hold a layer of hope. How do you find the light in the dark when writing these stories?**

I believe in hope. I have to. Don't we all? Because I write for teens, I think it's important to "leave a light on" for them at the end of a book. Many of my readers experience the same struggles as my characters, but unlike my characters, they have to write their own story. And they're unfinished! Teens are first drafts! They're wild and beautiful and chaotic and full of heartbreak and possibility. If they can see my characters make even the tiniest, most tentative steps toward a better place, it might help them do that, too, as they continue to figure out the story of their own life.