



Simon and Schuster releases Beauty of the Broken

Tawni Waters, creative writing teacher at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, just had her first novel published with major publishing company Simon and Schuster in late-September.

Simon and Schuster is a publishing house based out of New York that is a part of CBS Corp. Its titles have received 55 Pulitzer Prizes, among other awards.

Waters said she originally submitted a different story that got rejected by her agent, and only decided to send in *Beauty of the Broken* after a friend urged her to.

“I think what I said to [my agent] was, ‘OK, I have this lesbian coming-of-age thing, but it sucks,’” she said laughing. “That was my cover letter to him. So I did not expect this to happen.”

However, much to her surprise, the agent liked the book, and soon after, they signed a publishing deal.

The novel falls under the young adult fiction category, same as books such as *The Hunger Games* and *The Fault in Our Stars*.

Beauty of the Broken is about a girl named Mara who discovers her love for another girl while living with her conservative and abusive family.

“I really, really wanted to write something about the battle between love and dogma,” Waters said. “I just wanted to talk about what happens when people care so much more about their dogma than human beings that they are willing to hurt other people.”

The feedback she’s received has, for the most part, been very positive.

Book review website goodreads members gave mostly all five-star ratings and a few gave three stars.

“I’m getting letters every day from people telling me that my book changed their life, and that’s a humbling and really, really beautiful experience,” Waters said.

However, the few who did not like the book as much mainly expressed their disappointment with a tragic ending.

“I know the ending is sad, something really heartbreaking does happen, but for me, it’s always been a powerful, hopeful ending,” Waters said. “This horrible thing that happens at the end is a catalyst for her to find her strength and stand up and say, ‘I’m leaving’ ... for me, that’s a huge turning point in a person’s life when they go from a victim to saying, ‘no more.’”

Out of the 15 years Waters has worked and reworked her novel, the ending is the only part she hasn’t changed throughout the entire process, she said.

Now she is working on her next piece, which will be called *The Air She Breathes*.

The story is about a girl who loses her mother to a fire she accidentally started and later discovers she is pregnant while on a motorcycle journey to take her mother’s ashes to their favorite beach.

“It’s really a meditation on motherhood, I would say. But it’s still a [young adult] novel,” Waters said.

Waters’ book can be purchased at any major bookstore or online.

Between teaching classes and writing, the author will be traveling for the *Beauty of the Broken* book tour.

Charity Yodis can be reached by email at cyodis@westvalleyview.com (<mailto:cyodis@westvalleyview.com>) or on Twitter @ckyodis.

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