

*The Secrets  
of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea:  
The Story of Annaliese Easterling  
and Throckmorton, Her Simply  
Remarkable Sock Monkey*

Written by Eileen Beha

Illustrated by Sarah Jane Wright

*“After years of silence and secrets,  
something’s afoot at  
Eastcliff-by-the-Sea ...”*

### ABOUT THE BOOK

Once in a fine house on a high cliff above a frozen sea, Throckmorton S. Monkey heard the frenzied barks of the family dogs announcing the approach of a stranger. So begins the story of *The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea*.

Throckmorton is everything a sock monkey is supposed to be: loving, loyal, and a very good listener. And he’s never – not even once! – stopped smiling. Yet Throckmorton has been long forgotten by his keeper, Annaliese Easterling, and he seems doomed to live out his days lost and lonely among other abandoned stuffed animals. But then one day Great-Grandmama Easterling sends engraved invitations to forty-nine sock monkeys to attend her 90th birthday party along with their human keepers. Throckmorton is thrilled! The arrival of his invitation brings Annaliese back to him, and Throckmorton vows to do something so remarkable, so amazing, she will never want to be separated from him again. As she and her brothers, Evan and Teddy, search for the Easterling family’s missing sock monkeys, clues emerge about the mysterious appearance of the their mother. By story’s end, Throckmorton will find a way to achieve the impossible. How? Simply by being himself.

## BEFORE READING

Examine the front and back covers and spine of the book with your students. Write down or make a chart of the children's predictions. Ask the same questions again when you finish reading the book and compare the responses.

1. What do you think this book will be about?
2. Who is the author?
3. Might some of the illustrated objects on the front cover be clues? What might they mean?
4. What is the book's subtitle? Who is Throckmorton? What is Annaliese's last name?
5. What do you think is happening in the scene illustrated on the back cover?
6. In what ways might a hand-sewn sock monkey become "remarkable"?

## DISCUSSION POINTS

Use large group, small group, and pair/share partners to actively involve students in discussions about plot, character, theme and point of view.

1. Why do you think Judge Easterling (Annaliese, Evan and Teddy's father) has forbidden the children from talking or asking about their long-lost mother?
2. Great-Grandmama wants for Annaliese to someday give her mother Ebenezer the Lighthouse Keeper, the sock monkey who has the diamond ring sewn into his heart. What do you believe are her reasons for doing so?
3. When Throckmorton is lost and buried in a snow bank, did you think that he would be found? Were you surprised that it was Donald the Great Dane who rescues him?
4. When did you first realize that Miss Chickadee Finch, the singer in the Bird Land Big Band, is Olivia, the mother of Annaliese, Evan and Teddy? What were the clues?

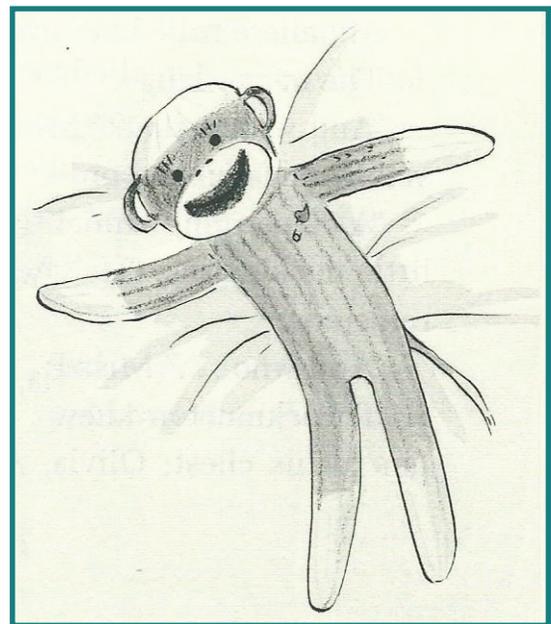


illustration © Sarah Jane Wright



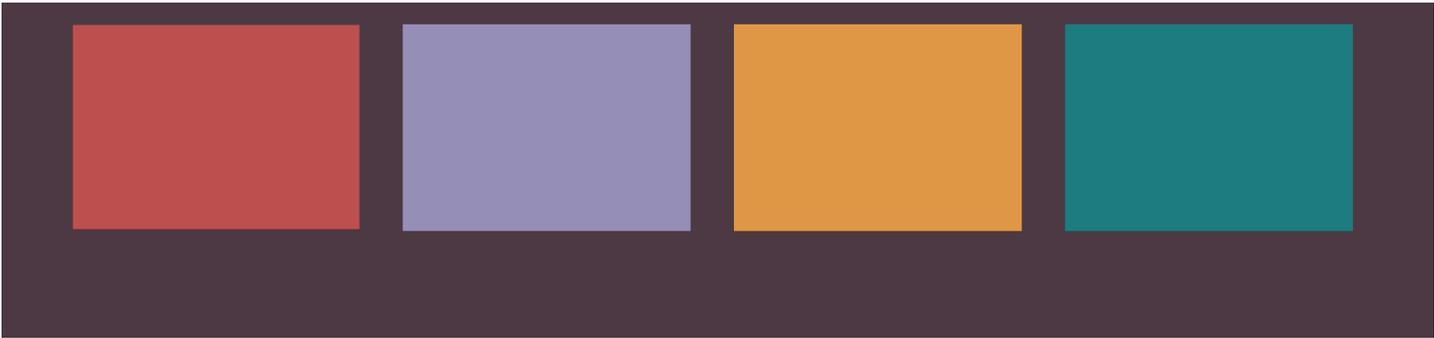
### DISCUSSION POINTS (continued)

5. There are many characters in the book. Which character (human or sock monkey) seems most like you? Which character did you like the most and which did you like the least, and why? Which sock monkey would you like for your very own?
6. Were you surprised by the way the story ended? If so, why? If not, why not?
7. Describe how Annaliese must have felt when she discovered the torn and wounded sock monkeys in the ballroom after the party. How would you have coped with the same situation?
8. How would this story have been different if it had been written from Annaliese's point of view, or from the viewpoint of her nanny, Miss Pine?
9. Does *The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea* remind you of any other books you have read? If so, which ones and why? If not, what makes it unique?
10. Do the pen-and-ink inside drawings enhance or detract from the story? Choose an illustration and explain your reasons.

### ANTICIPATORY SET

Use a Jeopardy-style "game" at the beginning of the lesson to engage students' attention and focus their learning. Examples appear below.

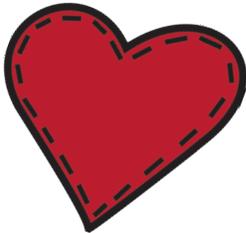
1. Maine ..... In what U.S. state is the Eastcliff-by-the-Sea estate located?
2. Fisherman ..... What kind of work does the father of Madge, the lazy maid, do for a living?
3. Bailey ..... What is the name of the Easterling family's bloodhound?
4. Great Dane ..... What breed of dog is Donald?
5. Forty-nine ..... How many sock monkeys were invited to Great-Grandmama's 90th birthday party ball?
6. Loving, loyal, very good listeners, and ..... How are all sock monkeys expected to be?  
to never – not even once! – stop smiling.
7. Nadine, Nora and Nell Ann ..... What are the names of Annaliese's triplet cousins?
8. Sherlock Holmes, a pirate ..... What costumes did Evan and Teddy wear to Great-Grandmama's birthday party?
9. Clydesdales ..... What breed of horses are raised in the Eastcliff stable?
10. The leader of the Bird Land Big Band ..... Who is Joe Crane?



**MATCHING**

Match the sock monkey with the member of the Easterling family who is its keeper.

Throckmorton S. Monkey	Evan Michael Easterling
Captain Eugene S. Monkey	Judge Ellis Easterling
Miss Beatrice S. Monkey	Great-Uncle George Easterling
Sir Rudyard S. Monkey	Ethel Constance Easterling
Ebenezer the Lighthouse Keeper	Theodore Vincent Easterling
Dame Lorraine S. Monkey	Great-Uncle Angus Easterling
Miss Ida S. Monkey	Mrs. Margaret Easterling
Miss Ernestine S. Monkey	Annaliese Elizabeth Easterling



**ACTIVITIES**

1. Have you ever had a stuffed toy that you would talk to? What kinds of things would you tell them about? Do you think it was possible that the toy friend was really listening in some way?
  - ❖ Choose a partner to be a stuffed toy and create an imaginary conversation between you and your toy, and then switch roles and you be the toy.
2. Our families are not always parents and brothers and sisters. They can include many others who support us, help us, care about us, and listen to us. Make a list of those who you think could be part of Annaliese’s “family.” Then, make a list of people who are not directly related to you, but who are like family to you.
  - ❖ Draw, color, or otherwise create and decorate Annaliese’s or your family tree.
3. How are Throckmorton and the other sock monkeys made real to the reader? What details does the author include to describe the sock monkeys’ personalities?
  - ❖ Create a portrait of your favorite sock monkey from the book.



## ESSAYS OR JOURNAL-WRITING

1. Miss Pine, the nanny, gave Annaliese and her twin brothers, Evan and Teddy, a writing assignment to describe something that they were very proud of doing, or something they regret. Miss Pine gave Great-Grandmama Annaliese's story to read. Write an essay about something that you are very proud of doing or about something that you regret doing.
2. There are a lot of secrets in *The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea*. Name the secret that you found to be the most interesting and write an essay about why you think this secret was being kept.
3. The Easterling sock monkeys are sometimes frustrated because their human keepers cannot understand what sock monkeys know, feel, or want to say to them. Has this ever happened to you? Describe the situation: what you wanted to say, to whom, why, and how or if you were able to communicate.
4. In the chapter titled "A Surprise Inside," Annaliese is sewing her first sock monkey, with the guidance of Great-Grandmama. Annaliese makes a mistake and Great-Grandmama tells her how to fix it. "Pull out the threads and stitch it again." Can you think of a time when you were learning something new to you, and someone taught you how to fix a mistake you had made? Write an essay about what you were learning that was new, who was encouraging and helping you to learn, and how the whole experience made you feel.
5. Great-Grandmama sewed precious jewels into each sock monkey's red felt heart. Yet, on page 190, she tells her descendants, "Everything you need to lead a rich and happy life already resides inside your sock monkey's heart. Love ... and loyalty ..." What are the most important qualities to store in our hearts in order to be good friends to others?

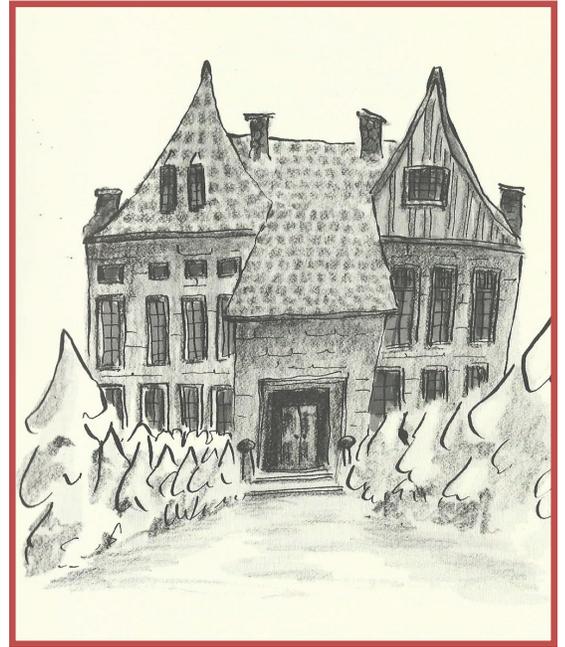
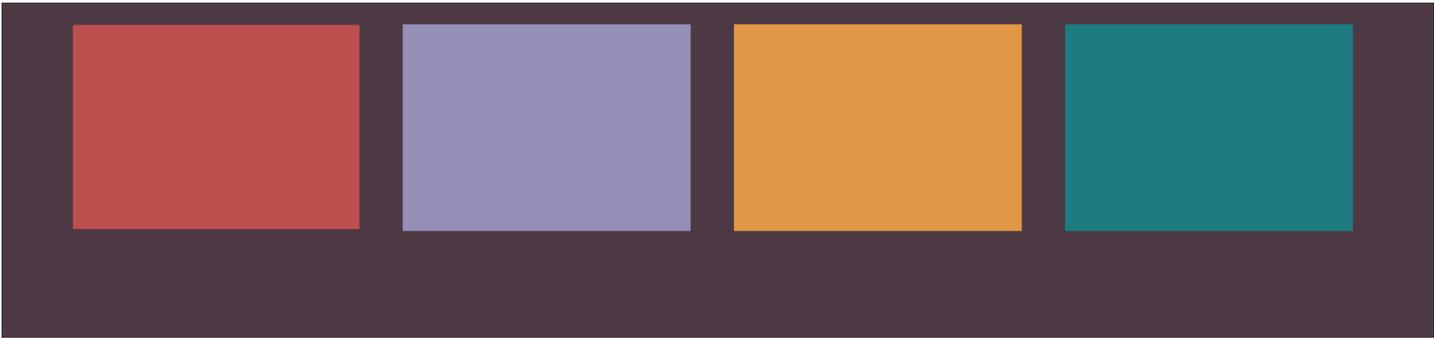


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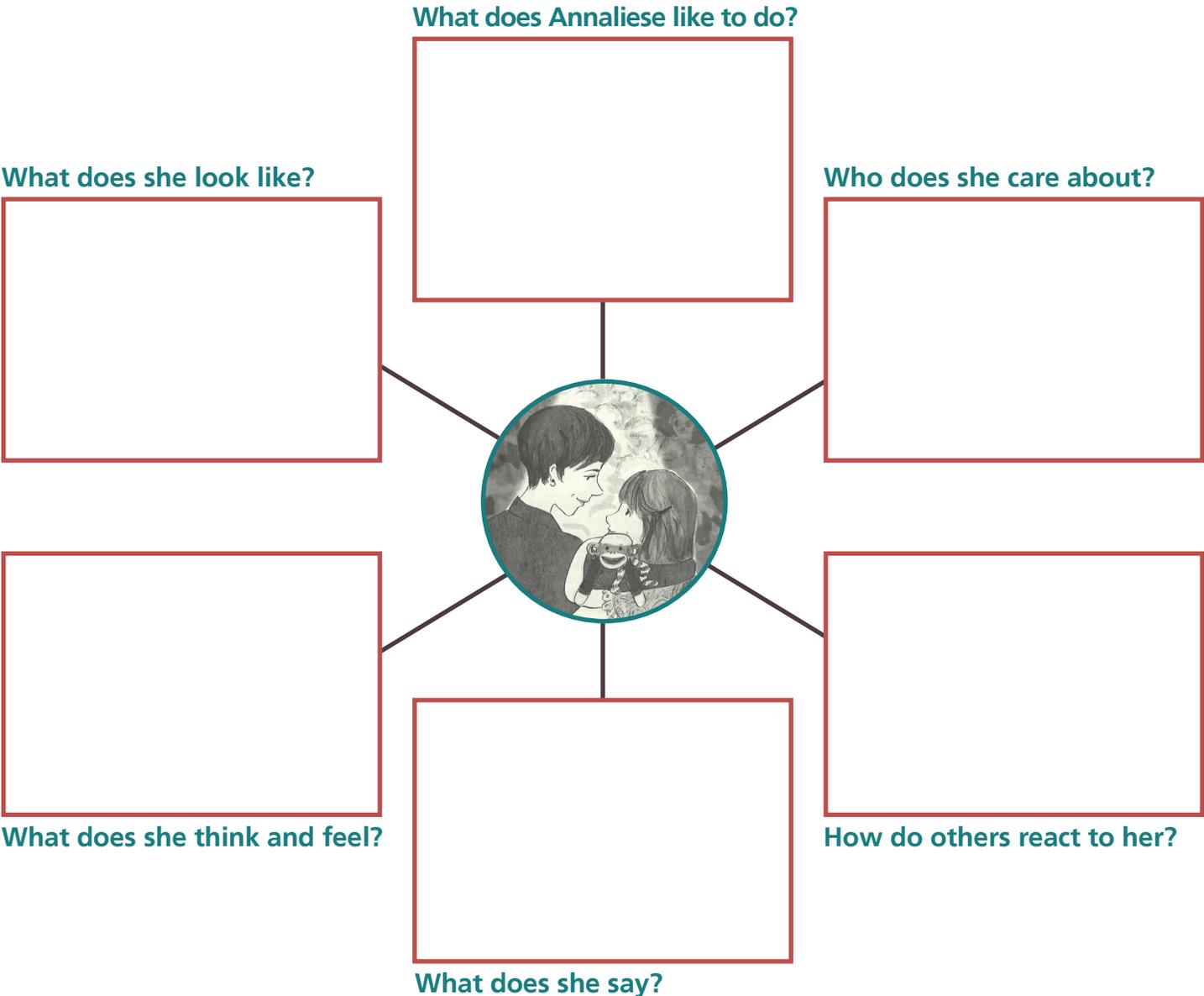
## VOCABULARY FOR DISCUSSION

odoriferous (page 1)	churlish (page 70)	swoon (page 176)
ornately (page 9)	sans (page 94)	deceit (page 205)
swashbuckling (page 19)	cacophany (page 121)	rogue (page 248)
abandonment (page 56)	humiliating (page 167)	formidable (page 262)



**CREATE A CHARACTER WEB**

Author Eileen Beha reveals the story’s main character, Annaliese, to the reader in different ways. Look back through *The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea* to find information that will complete the character web.



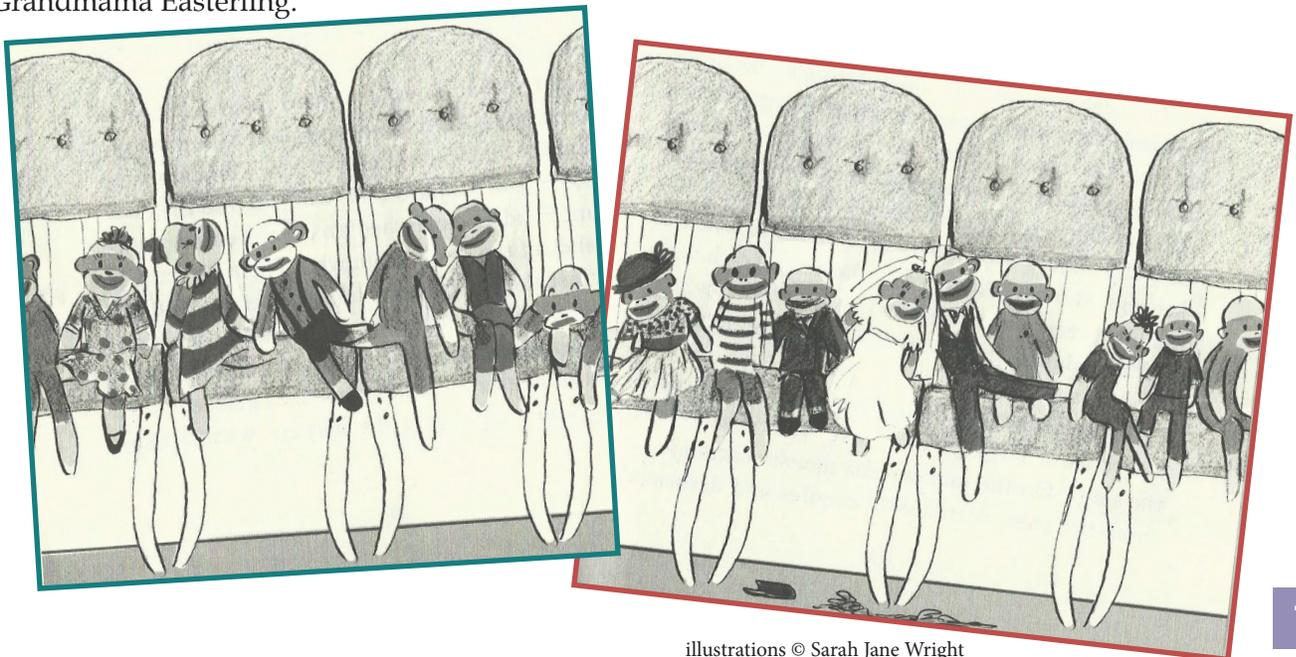


## READERS' THEATER

Dialogue from scenes in which characters make a discovery, make a decision, or are in conflict with others provide “scripts” for readers’ theater performances in your classroom. Many resources are available online, but a very fine one is provided by Random House in its BookNotes Educators Guide for *The Penderwicks: A Summer Tale of Four Sisters, Two Rabbits and a Very Interesting Boy* by Jeanne Birdsall.

Examples of scenes suitable for adaptation as student scripts:

1. **Scarlet Letters:** In the presence of Annaliese, Evan, Teddy, and Miss Laurel Pine, Judge Easterling opens the red envelope addressed to Throckmorton S. Monkey.
2. **Buried Alive:** In the Eastcliff attic Evan, Teddy, Annaliese and Bailey the Bloodhound discover the missing sock monkeys.
3. **An Uninvited Guest:** Miss Pine and Great-Grandmama Easterling have a heated exchange about Annaliese’s well-being.
4. **Birth of the Blues:** While Annaliese sleeps, Throckmorton, Sir Rudyard, Captain Eugene, and Miss Beatrice discuss Annaliese’s mother, Olivia.
5. **Tea Party:** Annaliese experiences an unpleasant tea party with Nadine, Nora and Nell Ann that fuels her desire to create a costume.
6. **Silence and Secrets:** Seated next to Throckmorton at the party, Ebenezer the Lighthouse Keeper reveals a conversation that he overheard between Miss Chickadee Finch, the singer, and Great-Grandmama Easterling.



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## EXTEND THE LEARNING

- ❖ Research the rich history of Clydesdale horses. Get started by checking out: [www.clydesdalehorsesociety.com](http://www.clydesdalehorsesociety.com)
- ❖ Make a hand-sewn sock monkey with the Original Rockford Red Heel Socks and kits available for order online: [www.foxsox.com](http://www.foxsox.com)
- ❖ Explore the legends of Venus and Cupid by reading about Greek and Roman mythology in your school's media center or at your local library.
- ❖ Dig for sources: Was there really a historic event called The St. Valentine's Day Massacre?
- ❖ Do you like music? Research the Big Band style of music, including Swing, of the 1930's and 1940's.
- ❖ Develop a set of questions that you would like to ask the author. With your teacher's and parent's permission, email your questions to Eileen Beha: [tango@eileenbeha.com](mailto:tango@eileenbeha.com) and you will receive a timely response that you may share with your classmates.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Eileen Beha is the author of two novels for middle-grade readers, *The Secrets of Eastcliff-by-the-Sea* and *Tango: The Tale of an Island Dog*. A former middle-school principal, Eileen received an MFA in creative writing from Hamline University. She also holds a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of Wisconsin. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband and an amazing dog named Daisy. [www.eileenbeha.com](http://www.eileenbeha.com)