

A Miraculous Story of Recovery, Healing and Hope

17-Year-Old Burn Survivor Kilee Brookbank and Her Mother, Lori Highlander, Share Their Inspiring Journey Back to An Extraordinary, Normal Life

Beautiful Scars

by Kilee Brookbank & Lori Highlander

Kilee Brookbank was a typical 16-year-old, thinking about school, soccer, her friends and her boyfriend. But her last ordinary day erupted in an explosion that consumed her house, burning 45 percent of her body and sending her to the very brink of death.

On November 10, 2014, Kilee came home from school and smelled a strange odor in the house. As she lit a scented candle, a scorching flash enveloped her in flames. Knocked unconscious in the blast, Kilee awoke to her dog, Digger, barking at her. Kilee was on fire, along with the house. She managed to escape out onto the back deck and stumble over to the home of her neighbors, who doused her with water and called 911.

Kilee spent 38 days in Shriners Hospitals for Children - Cincinnati, recovering from second- and third-degree burns and enduring multiple surgeries, as well as skin grafts, physical therapy and excruciating pain.

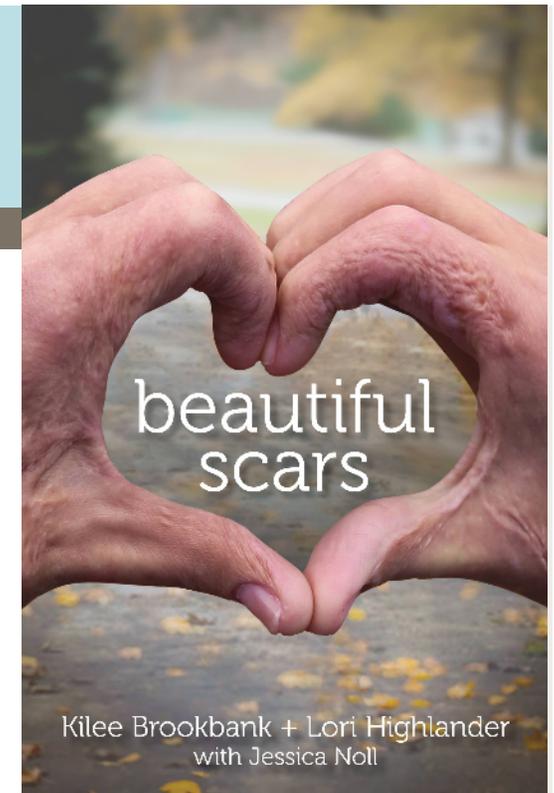
When Kilee returned home and to school, she had to find a new “normal,” redefining who she was and who she would become. She continued physical therapy—to relearn how to tie her shoes, put on makeup and even turn a doorknob—and had to wear heavy compression garments under her clothes to help the scars heal. With unwavering support from her mom and the rest of her family, Kilee faced her journey back to everyday life with determination and a positive attitude that inspired not only her community, but people around the world.

In *Beautiful Scars*, Kilee and her mom, Lori Highlander, share their story—a story that will inspire readers to push beyond their boundaries and make an impact on others along the way. Kilee says, “Throughout my recovery, I’ve tried to stay positive. I’m not a ‘burn victim’—I’m a survivor. It certainly wasn’t always easy, but now when I look back, I know that the explosion and the pain and the scars all happened in order to lead me to where I’m supposed to go in life, to find what I’m meant to do.”

Kilee and Lori share their parallel experiences of that unforgettable day, the aftermath and healing. They also reflect on what it was like to be thrust into the spotlight as the media took interest in Kilee’s story, with cameras following Kilee everywhere from physical therapy to prom. Cincinnati media documented Kilee’s recovery, and “The Doctors” TV show interviewed Kilee and her parents—surprising them with a visit from Justin Bieber.

Kilee graduates from high school this May and is considering her plans not only for college in the fall, but for her whole life: career, family and the future beyond. To help others going through similar experiences, Kilee and her family have created the Kilee Gives Back Foundation, hosting events to raise money for Shriners Hospitals for Children - Cincinnati. A portion of the proceeds from *Beautiful Scars* will benefit Shriners’ Cincinnati facility.

Beautiful Scars is a story of recovery, healing, and hope, reminding us all that we’re never powerless, never alone, and that each challenge we face helps make us the people we are meant to be.



BOOK DETAILS

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About the Authors

Kilee Brookbank is an honor student, soccer player, shoe fanatic, animal lover—and burn survivor. Severely injured when a gas leak caused her house to explode in November 2014, Kilee was hospitalized for 38 days before returning home to a life of new challenges and a new “normal.” Kilee, a member of the 2016 graduating class of Ripley-Union-Lewis-Huntington High School, is preparing for her future with strength and determination that inspire everyone she meets. She and her family created the Kilee Gives Back Foundation in 2015 to support other families through times of crisis, and Kilee is devoted to paying forward the generosity and kindness she received from her community and from around the world.

Lori Highlander is, first and foremost, proud mom to daughter Kilee and son Cameron. Lori has spent 20 years as an executive in the alcohol and drug addiction field and has witnessed first-hand the impact of information and inspiration on the healing process. In 2014, Lori’s daughter, Kilee Brookbank, was severely burned in a house explosion. Kilee’s resilience and Cameron’s strength compelled Lori to launch KiCam Projects, creating an avenue to bring light to powerful stories of survival with the goal of supporting charitable endeavors and organizations. Additionally, Lori and her family formed the Kilee Gives Back Foundation, a nonprofit inspired by the family’s personal experience. Lori lives in Georgetown, Ohio, with Kilee and Cameron; her husband, Wade; and her stepsons, Collin and Houstin.

About KiCam Projects

KiCam Projects is a publishing and production company dedicated to changing the world one great story at a time—focusing on stories of recovery, whether from addiction, injury, illness or personal struggle. Launched in late 2015, KiCam Projects is led by a small team that believes in the power of personal stories to inspire people and encourage them to grow, change and heal. KiCam donates a portion of the proceeds from its books, films and music to nonprofit organizations chosen by its collaborators.

News Tie-Ins & Core Messages

- Beautiful Scars: After 45 percent of her body was burned, Kilee Brookbank sees her scars as a symbol of her survival and strength.
- A Story of Resilience and Hope: A moment can change everything—it’s what you do with each moment that defines you.
- Graduation: One extraordinary teen’s quest for a “normal” teenage life and where that is leading her after high school
- Self-Esteem: Talking to girls and women about inner vs. outer beauty
- Learning Not to Sweat the Small Stuff: Most teenage girls worry about what dress to wear to prom or homecoming, but Kilee’s extra challenges put things into perspective.
- The Joy and Trials of Parenthood: How your strength as a parent is tested and how the bond between you and your children deepens after a tragedy
- Inspiring Others vs. Being Inspired: Did meeting Justin Bieber help Kilee become a “belieber” in herself?
- Kilee Gives Back Foundation: Raising money for Shriners Hospitals for Children - Cincinnati
- A Relatable Resource for Burn Survivors and Their Families/Caregivers
- Where Miracles Happen: Shriners Hospitals for Children - Cincinnati is one of only four such locations for children, recognized as one of the highest quality burn centers for children in the world.
- Events: 4+ city book tour planned

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