

Cathy Cassidy – A deliciously sweet series



For most people, chocolate and marshmallows will conjure up the image of a yummy dessert, but to Cathy Cassidy they're ingredients for a fantastic book series. 'The Chocolate Box Girls,' will grow to include five volumes. Two are currently on the shelves and the third is due to be published on 7 June 2012.

With sixteen books to her name, Cathy has created a number of additional characters and storylines outside of the beloved stepsisters featured in the Chocolate Box series. The endless queue that trailed around Waterstones yesterday only highlighted the loyalty of her devoted fan base.

The 50-year-old author has been writing since the age of 8, when she created her first picture book for her younger brother. In later years she was the agony aunt for 'Shout,' magazine and fiction editor for 'Jackie.'

Despite her success and passion for writing, she never specifically decided to write children's books. "After years of writing short stories and working as a journalist in the teen market, when I started writing books they happened to be teen and pre-teen books, it's just the natural voice for me."

In addition to her love of writing, Cathy says she's "addicted to daydreaming and inventing stories," which makes her job the perfect profession. She says, "it doesn't even feel like work in a way."

While Cathy feels no author or book has specifically inspired her, she is grateful to a couple of her colleagues. "Jacqueline Wilson opened the market up and made it possible

to write that real-life, coming of age genre, which I'm very grateful for. I'm grateful, as well, for J.K. Rowling for making it so cool for kids to read."

Cathy may not write about the wizarding world that made J.K. Rowling a household name, but she does have her own magical world inhabited by her own cast of characters. "I like to write about feelings and emotions, about kids in real life situations, growing up and coming across different problems and trying to solve them."

She does all of this fabulous writing, at home, in her garden. She, her husband, and her two teenage children live in a cottage in the Galloway Hills. "I've got a very pretty writing shed and it's all full of my favourite things." With her laptop in tow, Cathy says realistically, she can write anywhere, but in a perfect world, "I like there to be peace and quiet because that lets me make room for the daydreaming, make room for the story really."



As the daydreaming carries on and Cathy's books continue to fill shelves, mothers have begun to ask if they can expect their own series from the 'Chocolate Box Girls,' creator. "At the moment probably not and that's because I'm so content really. I love the voice and the market that I write for at the moment, it's perfect. But you never know what might happen, never say never."

But there are things Cathy hopes will happen. "TV producers please contact me now!" she replied when asked if she would consider a film or TV series. In addition to her own desire to make movie (or television) magic, she says her readers have been asking for a film or television version of the books as well. "I got one classic e-mail from two girls who have already chosen their dresses for the premiere, for the red carpet."



While the 'Chocolate Box Girls,' are not yet gracing big or small screens, they are gracing new pages. The third instalment in the series will be released at the beginning of June and "Summer's Dream," will be Cathy's favourite book yet. "My particular favourite is always the newest book. Whenever a book turns up on a books shelf, as a real life proper book, and other people can read it as well, to me that's the point when it suddenly becomes real. I always, even after 8 years, get a big kick out of that."

Cathy's friendly demeanour and enthusiasm for her characters and fans suggest that really, she gets a kick out the whole process. From start to finish she loves what she does, and that adoration has brought readers back, time and again.

Find out more about Cathy Cassidy's past, present and future in this exclusive Edinburgh Reporter interview: