

Beginning Q&A – Frequency Asked Questions

1. What is the author’s background?

Cheryl is a true ‘melting pot’ Canadian. Her maternal grandfather was a teenage immigrant from England who came to northern Ontario and cleared land as an early settler and farmer, while her maternal grandmother was native Canadian Inuit/Cree who grew up in the Mosinee region of Ontario prior to spending her preteen years on a reserve. Her paternal grandparents were European immigrants (Ukrainian/Polish background), who settled in the Niagara region.

Educationally, Cheryl holds an Honors degree in Child Psychology, and a Masters of Health Sciences in Speech-Language Pathology. She worked with preschoolers/school-age/teens for 20 years, then founded and ran a successful client-centered home health care agency for 7 years prior to leaving health care. She then began focusing full time on writing.

Cheryl believes in the balanced development of our youth, and feels this can include not only the relaying of values through stories, but also the importance of imaginative play and the encouragement of creativity. She has also travelled extensively throughout Canada, and feels very strongly that all Canadians can be very proud of their land, its diversity, and their heritage; hence the decision to use this as a backdrop for her first novel.

2. Why did the author decide to become a writer of children’s books?

Cheryl has always loved the world of the imaginary. Since she was a little girl, she has enjoyed story-telling, listening to others spin their tales, and anything creative, including drawing, painting, music and writing. While she began her career in the health care sector, she immediately focused on children, and has always incorporated creativity and stories into her work and business.

When she made the decision to sell her home-health care business in 2013, Cheryl enthusiastically set to work in completing her first novel. Cheryl has been telling her two children short bed-time stories that she made up ‘on the spot’ every night since they were very little, and a few years ago Melissa had asked her mom to make up a ‘longer story’ for her; this is where Habitan began.

When her daughter first asked Cheryl to write a story just for her, Cheryl really wanted to deliver! It has now become her hope that other young readers of the book will enjoy the fantasy, and all of the twists and turns along the way. Hopefully they will also pick up on the positive messages and values within the story, as well as feel inspired to follow their own creativity, their own dreams.

Cheryl also enjoys a good sci-fi or adult mystery novel, and is concurrently working on her first adult novel while completing the second book in the Habitan Series.

3. Where does the author get her ideas?

Cheryl feels very blessed, for while she does not follow a set 'schedule' for writing, whenever she does decide to sit down and write, the story flows easily. *"It is as if the book is just pouring out of me; sometimes I can barely keep up with the pace,"* Cheryl says. Cheryl also keeps a notebook handy, and will quickly jot down new story or character ideas whenever inspiration strikes. She also loves to share her ideas with her family and friends, and enjoys the excitement of a group discussion.

Cheryl also admits to dreaming about her characters. *"They often come to argue with me in my dreams,"* she admits. *"I often picture various characters sitting on the edge of the bed, one leg swinging impatiently, while they rant and argue their own motivations and story development to me."*

4. Are any of the characters in your book(s) based on people you know?

The answer is both yes and no. *"Certainly, I doubt any of my characters could exist without me drawing on past experience and the personalities and behaviors of people around me,"* Cheryl acknowledges. As to specific characters, Cheryl will only say that *"Some characters are more a mixture of inspiration with someone I know, while others are completely fictional. My strongest characters, I think, are based on my perception of people around me, and perhaps more importantly, on my reaction to their behavior and personality."*

"For example, the character of the deformed 'Mayatis' men in Habitan was loosely based on a negative encounter I had with a man who appeared to be experiencing road rage a few years ago; I was so distressed by this encounter that his image stuck with me, and I fully admit I saw him as a monster of sorts," Cheryl says.

5. Do you write adult novels?

Yes. Cheryl not only loves fantasy novels for children and teens, but she also enjoys a good sci-fi or adult mystery novel. She is concurrently working on her first adult novel, and hopes to find a niche in the adult sci-fi/mystery genre as well as youth fantasy (she is completing this new adult book the same time as she is completing the second book in the Habitan Series). She promises an exciting adult sci-fi adventure, with many plot twists and unexpected events. While she cannot reveal the title and theme just yet, she is very excited to complete the story and reveal more about it, so please watch or follow her site for an upcoming announcement on this new book.

6. Do you ever get writers block?

The answer is honestly no. *"I think I am both blessed, as well as perhaps not too strict on myself,"* Cheryl says. Her writing style is to write on those days that she feels

inspired, and not to worry when she does not. *“I think I am very fortunate that when I do decide to sit down and write, the story just flows. That being said, I have some days that I can write for eight hours, and other days I only write for two hours or less. I don’t obsess about it; I just write when I need to write, until that surge of inspiration is done,”* she says.

7. How can I find out where you next appearance will be, and when the next book will come out?

Check our website for updates on upcoming appearances and book series progress. As well, inquiries for interviews, readings or appearances can be made through our feedback/contact the author section.

8. When will Habitan II be released?

The author is well on her way into writing the 2nd book, and she promises it includes several twists and surprises! The book is expected to be done and ready for release in winter 2015/16.

9. How many books will there be in the Habitan Series?

Cheryl already has the outline and plot for four books, but also adds, *“There could be a few more; the characters will tell me when it is done.”*

10. What is the main message of the Habitan books?

Believe in yourself, be brave, hold true to your own values and beliefs, stand up for what is right; listen to your inner voice. Don’t be a bystander; be an activist! The book also profiles the Canadian landscape, our vast beautiful country, multicultural values, and positive Canadian spirit.

11. What books did you read as a child, and as an adult?

Cheryl’s first true memory of a passion for a particular book was the thrill of reading the Narnia series by C.S. Lewis as a young child, after which she began to consume many other fantasy and adventure series as quickly as possible. As she moved into her later teens and young adulthood, she became obsessed with sci-fi and adult fantasy genres, including Ray Bradbury, H.G Wells, Isaac Asimov, and others. She also went through a long passion for Steven Kings books in her 20s and 30s, for she connected with these stories in terms of their themes of morality, bravery, ‘taking a stand’, as well as the ongoing theme throughout all of these different genres and books of facing difficult life choices. She is a big fan of authors who focus not just plot, but also character development.