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WRITER SPOTLIGHT: CINDY CHISHOLM



**Meet JRW member,
 poet, and children's
 book author**

CINDY CHISHOLM



Author Bio: *Cindy Chisholm grew up in rural North Carolina in the mid-1960s and moved to Virginia in 1973. She is a graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University where she earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology. Cindy is a published poet, has written several short stories, and has a registered Pen and Ink entitled, "The Dreamer", with the Library of Congress. Her long-awaited children's chapter book, "A Cabbit Tale", is now available at JRW's BookShop storefront.*

What was your publishing experience like as a new author?

To tell truth I am still amazed that I am a published author. I do not have a formal background in writing, such as an MFA or exposure to professional writers outside of JRW. What I do have is a love of writing, I write daily, I write about what I love, what speaks to me, and then I write some more. I read books on how to develop characters, plots, and your craft. A great book that I read early on that gave me great insight into the art of storytelling is Roy Peter Clark's book, "The Art of X-ray Reading. I highly recommend it.

Also, it is very important to have an editor that sees you, works with you, and can initiate the first-time author through the sometimes painful process of rearranging what you first put to paper. I can honestly say my editor at Belle Isle Books was amazing.

What grew your imagination to write "A Cabbit Tale"?

Without a doubt, it was the freedom to express myself as a child. When our family moved from Baltimore City to North Carolina, it was like being in another world. I explored endless woods that were more of a forest because you could never get to a clearing—just endless beauty and more adventure. It was magical. The first Thanksgiving at our new home, a stray hunting dog came out of the woods. Everyone wanted to keep her since we did not have any pets at the time. My mom named her Pilgrim. Soon after that, I decided that we should marry her to the neighbor's dog, Boe, and so we did. We had a ceremony at the edge of the tobacco fields that spread across five acres north of our property. Shortly afterward, Pilgrim became pregnant. The first time she gave birth she came home after being gone for almost a day, her belly no longer swollen. I followed her after lunch on a cool spring Sunday and discovered she had given birth in the hollow of an old hickory tree. My sister Bridget being the smallest at age four was coerced by me into crawling through the underbrush to retrieve the pups. That did not work out, and eventually, Pilgrim brought her babies home.

As our animal family grew, we kept one of Pilgrim's puppies, and my sister, Laurie, named him Whimper—by the time of her third and final litter, my father had built a bed for her in the shed. Whimper was always out of the bed crawling around on the cold cement floor crying. He became the sweetest, most loving dog I ever knew. Cats were also introduced, and we had two, Binky and Felix. I

spent most of my weekends looking for wild horses or any kind of horse. I can remember the day a white stallion appeared out of nowhere while I was inside watching cartoons. My mom yells out, "There's a horse in the yard!" I ran out the sliding glass doors, and sure as heck there it was. He raised his head high and shook his mane. I walked over slowly and before I knew it, I had grabbed the mane and holstered myself up on his bareback. He took off through the tobacco fields at a wild gallop. I was in heaven.

So, about twenty years ago I took pen to paper and imagined a family that became reunited under some challenging circumstances. My love of adventure, animals, and especially cats inspired me to write this story.

What advice would you offer new writers?

Feed your imagination. Read a story.

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