

Interview: Mary Cunningham, Author

1. First things first, tell us all about your book(s). Tell us what the cover blurb DOESN'T say.

Answer: Something the cover blurb doesn't say, huh? Okay. Here goes. A recurring dream I'd had for over 20 years about a mysterious attic gave me the idea for the stories. I was re-telling the dream, and about halfway through I realized that the attic that had haunted me for two decades was in the home of my childhood friend, Cynthia. We had played in the attic from the time we'd learned to crawl up the steps. After my revelation, the dreams stopped and the writing began.

All four books represent family members and their stories that have been passed down for generations. Twelve-year-old best friends, Cynthia and Augusta Lee (Gus), the time-traveling duo, travel back to the early 1900's and beyond, solving mysteries, meeting ancestors and discovering that, when you get in trouble, it's good to have your best friend by your side.

Cynthia's Attic: The Missing Locket, The Magic Medallion, Curse of the Bayou and The Magician's Castle (DEC 2009)

2. Why do you write young reader fantasy/fiction? What drew you to write that type of book?

Answer: I love thinking back to the carefree days of my childhood. *Cynthia's Attic* was written with an overwhelming desire to relive and relate the joy and innocence of growing up in Southern Indiana. My dad nurtured my love of fantasy. If he wasn't reading a bedtime story, he was making up one of his own. He was a journalist for almost forty years and an amazing writer. I'm also interested in genealogy, so it was quite natural to combine fantasy and history.

3. Tell us a little about yourself. How long have you been writing?

Answer: I live in the beautiful mountains of West Georgia with my husband. We're the parents of three grown children, and have a sixteen-year-old granddaughter. I've been writing most of my life. I began writing poetry (not good!) then moved on to memoirs. I also have a co-written, humorous lifestyle book titled, "WOOF" (Women Only Over Fifty) DEC 2008.

When I'm not chained to my computer, I enjoy playing golf, swimming, taking walks, and *pi routin*. Not sure that's spelled right, but it's Cajun for *wandering about*, taking in the sights without a specific itinerary.

4. What kind of writing rituals do you have? Do you schedule time, when the mood strikes?

Answer: I wake up and have coffee. Turn on my computer. Have another cup of coffee. Open my e-mails. Hit delete 75 times, or so. Have another cup of coffee...well, you get the idea. I try to write every day. I don't like to force it, though. If the words aren't flowing, I do something else and then go back to it. I love writing when my brain

is working so fast, my fingers can barely keep up. I guess my only ritual is that (oh, this is going to sound really weird) I must have my shower and be dressed before I can write. I have a friend who writes in her jammies. Not me! Don't get me wrong. I don't have to be in black dress slacks and white cashmere sweater! Jeans and a T-Shirt will do quite nicely. Just so I'm dressed.

5. Where do you find your inspiration?

Answer: For a writer, I'm the most unobservant person in the world! So, I can't say that it's from life study. My inspiration comes from family stories and my own imagination. I love writing "outside the box." For instance, halfway through book two, *Cynthia's Attic: The Magic Medallion*, I realized that a cave guide had snuck into the story. Hmm...who is this mysterious character? Of course, I knew who he was! I wasn't sure, at that point exactly what role he was going to play. But, writing about my dad, as an eighteen-year-old, was one of my favorite storylines. Just like cave guide, Jake, my dad was the most honest, caring person I've ever known.

6. Tell us something about you that's NOT in your author bio.

MC: I'm a sports fanatic. In fact, if one of my husband's friends has a sports trivia question, he refers them to me. My dad not only instilled my love of writing, he also gave me a passion for sports. One of my favorite short stories, *Ghost Light*, is about Jake, an 11-year-old Hoosier growing up in a basketball loving family. The biggest problem for Jake? He's short and fears he'll never live up to his Grandpa Max who was a star on the high school basketball team until he gets an unexpected *visit* from his grandmother. Echelon Press published *ghost light* as an ebook.

I'm also a huge NASCAR fan! Love watching drivers make all those left-hand turns! I also enjoy pro football and watching the *Tiger Woods Golf Tour* (also known as the PGA!).

7. Where can we find your book(s)?

MC: My books are available through just about any online bookstore and can also be downloaded on Fictionwise and Amazon Kindle.

[Quake](#) (Echelon Imprint) (*The Magician's Castle* is available to preorder)

[Amazon](#)

[Fictionwise](#)

[Ghost Light](#) (Kindle)

My website also has links Barnes & Noble, and other online books stores, along with independent bookstore listings and Book Sense:

My Website: www.marycunninghambooks.com