

Cherie Curtis short bio

Cherie Curtis (aka Cheryse Durrant) squandered much of her childhood chatting to imaginary creatures and superheroes, amongst the Herefords and eucalypts of a small farm in central southern Queensland. At the age of five, she penned her first story on her aunt's bedroom wall and was devastated when it didn't attract favourable reviews. Cheryse studied a BA in Journalism and worked for more than 15 years in the print industry before trading in her notepad. The shortlisted Queensland Arts Council Regional Writer Award recipient now teaches creative writing to the young and young-at-heart.

The first of her *Heart Hunters* novels, *The Blood She Betrayed*, was published by Clan Destine Press in 2013 and shortlisted in the 2014 ARRA Awards (speculative fiction category). The novel is popular with youngsters because of its local Australian settings, distinct characters, and action-packed twists.

Her picture book, *My Big Bear Story*, published by Creative Regions, is now used in schools and counselling rooms across Queensland and was featured at a global conference at Prague in May, 2016. Her short story, *Pool of Rathorne*, originally knocked out interstate and overseas competition to win the Bundaberg Writers Club Biennial Short Story Competition back in 2007 before she turned it into a novella, now published by Ormiston Press.

Mrs Curtis lives with her geeky husband Shane and tenacious tortoiseshell Scamp, the vicious but mottled ruler of their shabby chic house and most likely gatekeeper to other feline worlds. They recently traded their beach house of 15 years for the creative warmth of Toowoomba fires and Highfields coffee shops.

Cherie Curtis longer bio

Raised amongst the Herefords and eucalypts of a central southern Queensland cattle farm, Cheryse Durrant squandered much of her childhood chatting to imaginary characters, creatures and superheroes. The aspiring writer was five when she penned her first prose on an aunt's bedroom wall in Toowoomba, creating unfavourable reviews with most of the family.

As a youngster, she devoured John Christopher, Patricia Wrightson and Jane Austen and designed and printed her own newspapers and magazines. At boarding school, she discovered Tolkien and Eddings and – thanks to her trusty typewriter Travis - won her first major story competition, an Arts Council/Writers Train initiative, which enabled her to meet Thea Astley, Thomas Keneally and Tim Winton – and gain \$200 worth of books for her school, St Saviour's College (and in those days, that was a lot of books).

Cherie completed her BA in Journalism and Communications at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba and subsequently worked for more than 15 years in the print industry. She spent seven years with the Western Star at Roma and another seven years working for the NewsMail, Bundaberg's daily newspaper. Both newspapers are owned by APN.

Cherie has worked on many satisfying projects, including Bundaberg Regional Council's recycling program featuring Reggie the Regenerator turtle and his recycling savvy family. Cherie even invented the tagline, "It's rubbish if you don't recycle," which is now used in all the region's recycling advertising campaigns.

For the past few years, Cherie has juggled her writing commitments with the fun of working as a receptionist at the quirky Orange Moose Dental surgery in Bundaberg. She made many friends during that time and misses making coffee for their many patients. Cherie is now based in Toowoomba and teaches creative writing full-time... except when she's hanging with friends and family, preferably at coffee shops, the library or Picnic Point.

The first of Durrant's *Heart Hunters* novels, *The Blood She Betrayed*, was published by Clan Destine Press in 2013 and shortlisted in the 2014 ARRA Awards (speculative fiction category). The novel is popular with youngsters because of its strong, individual heroes and action-packed scenes. Settings include Gatton McDonalds, the Brisbane watch house, the Myer Centre and the State Library of New South Wales. There's also a cameo with Bundy Rum. Her *Heart Hunters* series has been publicly endorsed by LJ Smith, author of *The Vampire Diaries*, who says: "Shahkara is one of the most engaging strong female role models I've seen in a long time. This girl can handle herself! *The Blood She Betrayed* is full of ingenious twists and turns." LJ Smith is eagerly awaiting the next two books in the *Heart Hunters* series.

My Big Bear Story is Cherie's first picture book and has been widely used in schools and counsellings rooms across Queensland and was featured at a global conference at Prague in May, 2016.

The 'almost grown up' lives near Toowoomba with her geeky husband Shane and tenacious tortoiseshell Scamp, the vicious but mottled ruler of their shabby chic house (and most likely gatekeeper to other feline worlds).

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