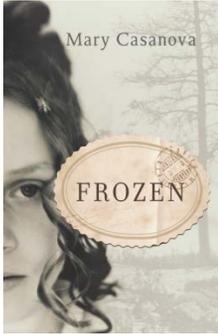


Mary Casanova

author of books for young people



Frozen

by Mary Casanova

A young woman's struggle to speak for herself – no matter the risks

Sixteen-year-old Sadie Rose hasn't spoken in eleven years – ever since she was found in a snowbank the night her mother died under strange circumstances. *Frozen* is a suspenseful, moving testimonial to the power of family and memory and the extraordinary strength of a young woman who has lost her voice in nearly every way, but is determined to find it again.

Interview Q&A with Mary Casanova

Q. *What surprised you while you were writing Frozen?*

A. When I set off to discover Sadie Rose's story, I hadn't intended to weave her quest for identity into the backdrop of a budding environmentalist fighting against a powerful industrialist. Though I'd always been fascinated by the real battle between Earnest Oberholtzer and E.W. Backus, it wasn't something I intended to write about. As they started to step onto the stage, I had to allow them into the story. I was at first hesitant, as it wasn't the story I'd intended--but then, I think stories that course through a writer's veins need to be allowed to go where they will. I had to let go and see where the story wanted to take me.) Once part of the plot, I had to keep these characters in their place. Men, you know, always trying to take over control. Ha! This was, I kept reminding myself, Sadie Rose's story and journey.

Q. *Who was your favorite character in the book?*

A. I had fun discovering Caveman and Bigby. Caveman was inspired by a man named Catamaran who showed up at Kettle Falls from England, roamed around barefoot much of the time, and lived in a hovel in the ground.

When I started to think about who might have been the prankster who stood up the corpse of Sadie Rose's mother, a slightly dim-witted yet endearing man named Bigby appeared. Not until I wrote the scene at his hunting shack did I discover more of his backstory.

Mary Casanova

author of books for young people

But favorite? Sadie Rose, for sure. And every single one of the other characters. They become very real in my imagination.

Q. *Did you model Sadie Rose's grandparents after people you know?*

A. Both sets of my grandparents came from Scandinavian backgrounds. I model Aasta and Hans after my Grandma Fanny and Grandpa Eric, except that my grandma was more like sweet-dough in her build than tall and lanky, like Aasta. They were understated, very skilled and insightful people, and going to their remote cabin by boat every summer instilled in me a deep love of the north.

Q. *When you based this book on places near where you live, did you find yourself looking at those places with a new or deeper appreciation? Has it changed your feelings about your home?*

A. At first, I fictionalized the names of Ranier, Int'l Falls, and Rainy Lake, worrying that I'd feel too tethered to history to allow my story enough dramatic freedom. However, after I finished the first draft, I'd clearly written about this region's history and setting in a way that was quite reflective of life here at the turn of the century. I decided to ground the story in this specific region.

Writing historical fiction does allow me to step deeply into a time period, and stepping back in time where I live was a very rich experience. I'd long been fascinated by this region's history, but writing about it is almost like time-travel and living in that era.

Q. *Did you start out to write Frozen for a young adult reader?*

A. One of the reasons I kept putting off writing this novel was that I wasn't sure who it was for. Prostitution is a taboo subject. And here I was envisioning a young woman grappling with her mother's past of working in a brothel. Was it for young adults or adults? I finally decided to simply write the book and see what it wanted to be. So much of writing is about listening to the emerging story. I finally decided to get out of the way.

My editor thought it should be for adults. The marketing crew thought it should be marketed for YA readers. I'm seeing now that this book is a true cross-over, finding plenty of readers among adults and teens, males and females.

Q. *Did any part of the book cause you consternation?*

Mary Casanova

author of books for young people

A. I originally envisioned letting the flashbacks unfold as they are now constructed, but at one point I received advice from esteemed adult novelists at a workshop in Key West to start with the flashback and let it roll all out at the beginning. I should have trusted my instincts. It's a reminder how we are all so vulnerable as writers; even though I have plenty of books to my credit, I didn't follow my gut on this one. Before sending it to the U of M Press, I reconstructed the story by metering out the flashbacks throughout.

Q. Would you write another book for young adult readers?

A. Absolutely! I'm getting requests from readers for a sequel to FROZEN. If I continued with her journey where the story now ends, I'd be following her into life still during the Prohibition, but now she would be 19 years old.

Would that make it a YA book or a novel for adults? Should I let that stop me? And if you think a sequel is a good idea, let me know. I may need another armful of courage!

Thanks for reading and discussing FROZEN. With so many great books out there these days, I'm honored.

Also, if you haven't seen the book trailer, you can watch on the [Frozen](#) page on my website. Finally, please visit my Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mary.casanova.fan.page.