

Irish author finds roots, wings in Florence

Though Ireland is known for its storytelling, it was Florence that provided the muse and the means for Dublin, Ireland author Yvonne Morris to publish her first children's book, "The Bear in the Bookstore."

Her book is a unique collaboration not just of her words and the images created by Irish illustrator Jess de la Cour, but also two Florence businesses: Books 'n' Bears and Port Hole Publishing.

Morris' experience in Susan Foster's bookstore provided the inspiration for the main character, "Webster T. Bear," and Ellen Traylor provided the publishing power.

"This has been an exciting project from the beginning," said Traylor, owner of Port Hole Publishing. "Not only because it is such a meaningful book for kids, but also because the story was inspired by Yvonne's visit to Books 'n' Bears, the shop of a fellow Florence book dealer."

"The Bear in the Bookstore — Webster Finds a Friend" is a Learn-To-Grow Book which explores the universal questions of love and the need to belong, all through the eyes of a Teddy bear named Webster. With whimsical and colorful illustrations by de la Cour, The Bear in the Bookstore is a literary tapestry for children that includes discussion aids and a glossary to inspire conversation and interaction with parents.

"I am very excited to be a part of this extraordinary literary event," said Morris, who will be featured during a special book reading and signing being hosted by Books 'n' Bears on Sunday, Sept. 27, following her appearance at the Florence Festival of Books the day prior, Saturday, Sept. 26, at the Florence Events Center, where she will also be a featured reader.

"It's impressive that a community comes together in such a positive way to bring the world of books and writers together in Florence," she said. Foster agrees.

"There are many different kinds of bookstore customer. Port Hole Books, Periwinkle Station and Books 'n' Bears are three that work very well together by each having a different focus," she said. "This makes Old Town Florence a destination for book lovers and their friends."

Recognition for this unique collaboration has reached well beyond Florence and across the ocean to Ireland, where "The Bear in the Bookstore" was featured earlier this month in the Lifestyle section of Cork's daily newspaper, The Evening Echo.

"To see that the book is being celebrated all the way in Ireland, Yvonne's home country, with great news coverage is especially exciting," said Traylor, who worked closely with Morris to bring the book to publication in time for the book festival and upcoming holiday season.

"I am particularly delighted with the collaboration between Ellen at Port Hole Publishing and Susan from Books 'n' Bears," said Morris, who will be at the Florence Festival of Books all day Sept. 26. "Being able to launch my children's storybook during the weekend of the festival, and then have a special reading at the bookstore the next day, is something I am really looking forward to."



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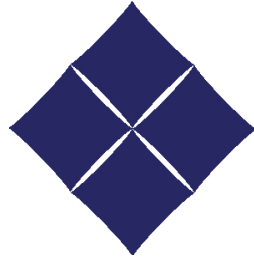
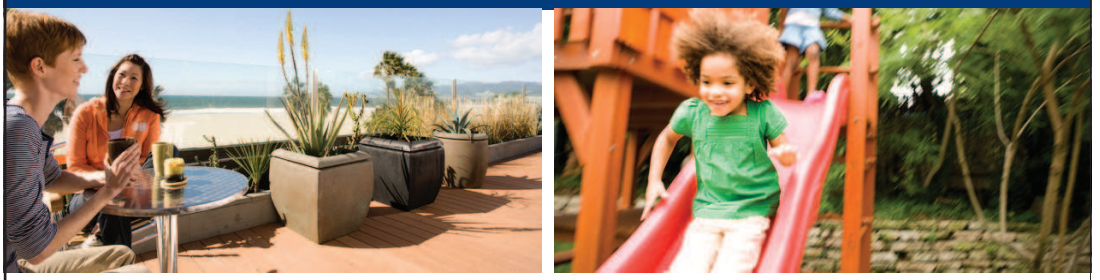
Irish author Yvonne Morris holds her new children's book, which was inspired by a visit to Florence bookstore Books 'n' Bears and published through Port Hole Books, also in Florence.

"It's an exciting time for all of us."

Morris will be at the FEC during the Florence Festival of Books from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26, and will be featured in the Readers' Corner.

Her book signing and reading at Books 'n' Bears, 1255 Bay St., in Old Town, will be Sunday, Sept. 27, from 2 to 4 p.m.

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