

Appendix 1: Introducing Meg Cabot and the *Abandon* Trilogy

Meggin Patricia Cabot was born on the 1st February 1967 in the United States, in Bloomington, Indiana. Worldwide known as Meg Cabot, the author of the famous *Princess Diaries* series, she has become one of the most famous American writers of the 21st century. Over the years Cabot has made her own name, writing more than 80 books, both her adult and teenage novels including multiple #1 New York Times bestsellers and selling more than 25 million copies all around the world.

Growing up and graduating in her birth town, Cabot decided to get a bachelor's degree in fine arts from Indiana University. After that she moved to Grenoble, France and Carmel, California, before she finally settled down in New York City with the desire to become an illustrator. However, she started her career as an assistant residence hall director at New York University. There she met her husband, financial writer and poet Benjamin D. Egnatz and married him April 1, 1993.

Working at the university for more than ten years really inspired her to start writing her *Princess Diaries* series, the novels that have brought her the fame. After the first book appeared in October 2000, the journey of Mia Thermopolis, the flighty young princess became so loved by both child and young adult readers that, as a sign of its popularity, the series spent 38 weeks on the New York Times Children's Series Best Sellers List and was sold to publishers in 37 foreign countries. Not long after the series was bought by Walt Disney and turned into two hit movies entitled *The Princess Diaries* and *The Princess Diaries 2: Royal Engagement* starring well-known actresses such as Anne Hathaway and Julie Andrews. Cabot herself talked about being extremely proud of her series as she had got multiple letters from her fans thanking her for helping them overcome their dislike of reading.

Not only is the *Princess Diaries* endlessly liked by readers, but her dynamic life inspired *Heather Wells*, the *Mediator* series and its continuation the *1-800-Where-R-You?* series (which has been reprinted under the title *Vanished* and was made into the *Lifetime* series called *Missing*), the *All-American Girl* series, *Avalon High* series (again another sequence of novels bought by Disney and showed on big screens), *Boy Next Door* series etc. The first piece of her trilogy with strong mythological and philosophical roots, *Abandon* (*Abandon*, *Underworld* and *Awaken*) was

published in 2011, the following two books appeared in 2012 and 2013. The trilogy follows Pierce's story, the modern twin of the ancient Persephone, daughter of Demeter and Queen of the Underworld, starting from the moment she first met John – personifying Hades – as a child until the day of her becoming an adult and taking her place on the throne of the kingdom of the dead.

The trilogy deals with the phenomenon of death, illustrated as a journey of self-search and self-finding. When Pierce first meets John in a cemetery, she is only a seven-year-old kid trying to help a dead bird. John sees some kind of light in the girl, a positivity he misses from his life, and as a gift, he resurrects the animal, but with his actions, he connects himself to Pierce for an eternity. The first book shows this strange relationship between John and Pierce based on love and hate, fear and solitude. The 15-year-old Pierce dying in her pool makes it possible for the two young people to meet again in the Underworld. However, Pierce is not able to accept her own death yet, nor John's hospitality and escapes from her own fate by tricking the boy and running away. The next chapters follow her own battle with her unconsciousness as Pierce tries to ignore John's memory, but they return from time to time as the girl seems to like to get herself in trouble and risk her own well-being and John feels the need to appear for Pierce. The sexual tension between them is undeniable. John's feelings are clear from the start and as Pierce begins to uncover his human-like sides, she herself falls for this dark, tall and mysterious man. The first book ends with the appearance of the great evils, the army of the Furies, and Pierce must return to the place she never wanted to see again: the Underworld.

The second book follows the first one with Pierce's life between somewhere Heaven and Hell as she tries everything to fit in and find something lovely in the kingdom of darkness while she has to fight the Furies who are about to do anything they can to destroy John and end his reign. Between family, friendship and love, Pierce needs to mature herself and find the right balance between her dreams and her reality. Not only as a girlfriend, daughter or cousin, but also as a ruler, she must realize that the world can be a very dark place and people need to fight if they want to keep the freedom of their souls.

The last part of the trilogy is the tautest point of the war between the forces of good and evil. Putting aside all kind of humanism, Pierce and his group want to efface the furies once and forever, but the outcome gets risky when the enemy succeeds in hurting not only the mortal ones but the divinities as well. Now Pierce must put away all her fears if she wants to save the love of her life and the world she lives in and needs to learn how to become greater than the immortals.

On her website, the author shared the exciting news of the possibility of making a movie or a series based on Pierce's and John's journey. Happy readers agree that Cabot's trilogy is a smart way of reusing Greek mythology in a trendy environment. Her awards received since the start of her writing career (the New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, the American Library Association Quick Pick for Reluctant Readers, the Tennessee Volunteer State TASL Book Award, the Book Sense Pick, the Evergreen Young Adult Book Award, the IRA/CBC Young Adult Choice, and many others) prove that her style is able to catch the attention of the youth and entertain and educate them at the same time, making her worthy of the fame she gets every day. (<https://www.megcabot.com>)