

Joanne Godoy has always loved sharing stories with her eight grandchildren and decided to pen a young adult novel that speaks to their generation



# THE FOREST

Inspired by her grandchildren, Katy author Joanne Godoy pens young adult mystery novel

Written by Cherri Northcutt

Photography by Jason Lehecka

**I**Katyite Joanne Godoy loves sharing stories with her grandchildren, and throughout her more than 25 years of writing, she has had plenty of tales to tell. Inspired by their journeys growing up over the years, she decided to put her creativity to good use, penning the young reader novel, *The Forest*. Appealing to lovers of fantasy and mystery books, the story follows the main character Misty as she wanders into a mystical forest, only to discover that she can't find her way out. The book took about a year to perfect, but is now making waves in the young adult literary world. "I started writing, then I put it away for a while," Godoy recalls. "Then one day I said, 'I'm going to take it out again.'" After that, the words came quickly.

## A Tale for Tweens and Teens

As Misty wanders lost through the forest, trying to find a path back home, she and her dog Bruno encounter many strange beings. They are joined on their path by a ghost, talking animals, and treacherous vines. Facing several obstacles along the way, they make both friends and dangerous enemies.

*The Forest* was written for readers ages 10 to 14, but Godoy learned it appeals to older teens and adults, as well. "That surprised me," she shares, explaining, "Adults enjoy the book and they see it as a teaching tool." Sunny 99.1 Radio personality Dana Tyson pointed out that the book depicts typical teenage struggles, such as freedom, fear, and selfishness. "It teaches manners and respect and how to cope with people that are against you," Godoy says.

Godoy sees a theme among teenagers today. "They need to communicate better," she says. "There's less respect for each other these days." She believes that the teen years are the hardest. "That's when they develop who they're going to be and what they want in life," Godoy shares.

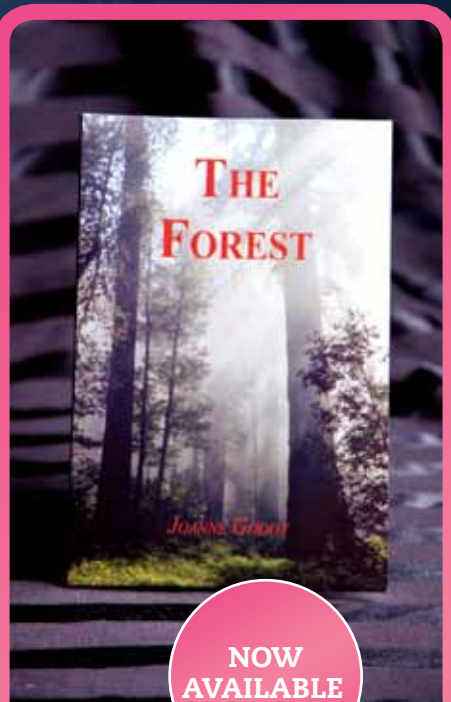
## Inspired by Her Family

Through the process of writing and publishing the book, her eight grandchildren have been an inspiration and source of encouragement and support. Her granddaughter Krysten Kuci did the illustrations for the book. Joanne's husband Rolando Godoy, along with her granddaughter Sofia, pushed for publication. "Everybody was encouraging," Godoy says.

After completing *The Forest*, she was still unsure about seeking publication for her story. She remembers taking her granddaughter Sofia to lunch to read the first draft. "I was waiting for her to say, 'I don't like it,' but she got real enthused about it and wanted to know more," Godoy remembers.

## Path to Writing

Godoy got her start writing in her hometown of Chicago, penning several poems, short stories, and magazine articles. In 1995, she published a book of poetry,



## About The Forest

When Misty goes against her mother's wishes and journeys into a magical forest, she finds herself unexpectedly lost. With her dog Bruno at her side, she begins the search for a way out. As she travels further and further along, they begin encountering a slew of mystical creatures ranging from a ghost and talking animals to treacherous vines and dangerous enemies. They also make a few friends along the way, and learn about courage, selflessness, fear, and freedom.



Author Joanne Godoy is currently working on the sequel to *The Forest*. Readers can find *The Forest* online at:

[barnesandnoble.com](http://barnesandnoble.com)  
[amazon.com](http://amazon.com)  
[superbookshop.net](http://superbookshop.net)

*Memories Are Forever.* The idea for her poetry book came to her while she was recovering from back surgery. "I couldn't do anything or go anywhere; I was stuck in my room," she recalls, adding, "So, I sat down and wrote a book."

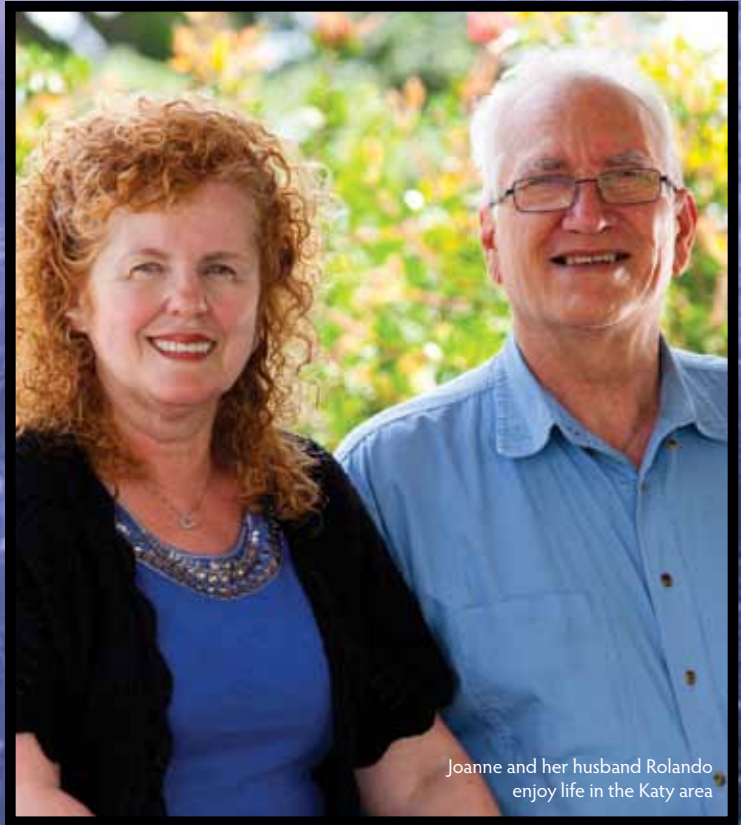
Through her recovery, Godoy found writing to be cathartic. "It helped me release my tensions and anxieties," she shares. Now, she writes regularly and encourages others interested in becoming authors to do the same. "Don't be afraid; just put your thoughts on paper every day," she advises.

### Finding The Forest

*The Forest* can be found on both barnesandnoble.com and amazon.com in paperback and downloadable e-book versions. For Godoy, research played a big role in finding the right publisher for her book. She decided to go with E-Book Time, LLC, so her book would be available for Nook and Kindle, as well as in paperback. With the emergence of electronic books, the reading experience has changed. "I think it's great," Godoy shares. "I love e-books. It's easier to get what you want and just download it."

Readers who want to read more about Misty's experiences in *The Forest* will be pleased to know Godoy has already started work on a sequel. "Everyone who reads the book can't put it down," she shares. "They want to know what happens to Misty." KM

CHERRI NORTHCUTT works in the Houston area and has enjoyed life with her family in Katy for 12 years.



Joanne and her husband Rolando enjoy life in the Katy area

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