

## Developing a series

How does an author get a series off the ground? How do they find the hook that connects multiple love stories? **Jill Shalvis**, author of the Lucky Harbor series, tells the Popular Romance Project where she found her inspiration for the first three books.

### A conversation with Jill Shalvis

#### How do you develop a series?

**Jill Shalvis:** Well, I'm doing this small town, contemporary sexy series called *Lucky Harbor*. And it kind of started as a fluke; I wanted to write a book about three estranged sisters. I have three daughters and at the time I proposed the story, they were fighting in—every day and driving me crazy. So I thought, “I need to write stories about three sisters who, at the end of the day, love each other, and it works out.” Because at that time, I couldn't envision a happy-ever-after for my teenagers. So I proposed a story about three estranged sisters who hadn't grown up together; they all had separate fathers, same mother; and they'd all grown up separately. And the mother dies and leaves them this falling-off-its-axis beach inn in the Pacific Northwest. So they come from all parts of the country and they don't particularly like each other and they're stuck because they can't sell this inn because it needs to be fixed up. So they get stuck together for the summer fixing up this inn. And I was going to write it all one book, each sister in the same—all three sisters in the same book and my editor said, “You know, we really need three books. Each sister needs her own love story.” So that's how

that started. So I gave each of the sisters their own love story, and *Lucky Harbor* went out and it became kind of popular. And so my editor said, “Can you write three more *Lucky Harbors*?”

So I came up with another idea, three strangers stuck late at night in a snowstorm at the small café in Lucky Harbor. The power goes out, they can't get out, they can't drive and all they have are each other and a chocolate cake. That's all that's left; it's late at night. So these three strangers, it's an ER nurse who had just gotten off shift and a stranger who had just drove into town, and then a waitress. So these three women are stuck all night with just this chocolate cake and they start talking and they realize that they're not happy in their lives. So they become “the Chocaholics” and they agree to meet over chocolate and fix their lives.

So each one of them gets a story and that—those are the books that are out this summer: *Lucky in Love*, *At Last*, and *Forever in a Day*.

What series do you read? What connects the books in the series?

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