

The Story Behind *Shy Town Girls*

Do you miss *Sex & the City*? Need a summer beach read? Check out the first two books in the four-part novel series *Shy Town Girls*, co-authored by Melissa Giovagnoli Wilson, Katie Leimkuehler and Jennifer Yih. Follow the lives of four young, well-educated women living in a brownstone in Chicago's glitzy Gold Coast as they conquer the city with open minds, oblivious to the ways of the world. The first book, by Ms. Yih, was released in November 2012 and the second, written by Ms. Leimkuehler, releases this month. Each woman writes one novel in the series while the other ladies edit that book, and they'll all collaborate on the fourth novel to be released next year.

Aside from writing the novels, the authors also interview inspiring women from Chicago and beyond, posting the Q&As on their blog. Ms. Leimkuehler even interviewed our very own Sherren Leigh recently.

As for the books, the authors sat down and outlined the entire series together. According to Ms. Leimkuehler, "the collaborative experience was helpful for brainstorming and seeing an idea come to life. We knew in advance how each book would start and end." For the latest book, Ms. Leimkuehler researched by interviewing individuals currently dating along with those looking to utilizing online dating sites. Here, she shares the inside scoop on the series...



What's the *Shy Town Girls* series about?

It follows the adventures of four 20-something girls grappling with entering adulthood in the vibrant city of Chicago. They experience a major turning point in their lives: their quarter-life crisis, where they question what the hell they're doing, who they're with and how they really define success.

What inspired you to write the books?

The project evolved from the idea that every girl has moments, which all women can relate to, where a bond of friendship starts to form. These moments, from sharing a love of fashion to careers to relationship ins and outs, bring women together – even shy girls – creating an instant connection. Most of the inspiration for the second book [focusing on character Ivy Westin] came from personal dating experiences and stories from friends. There's something to

be said for being young, in your 20s and trying to figure out not only yourself but also the person you should be with.

Will this series continue with Chicago as the setting?

Chicago is unlike any other city and we wanted to tap into that. All the books will be set in Chicago. It's a city we love and adore and wanted to highlight that throughout the novels. C.B.

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