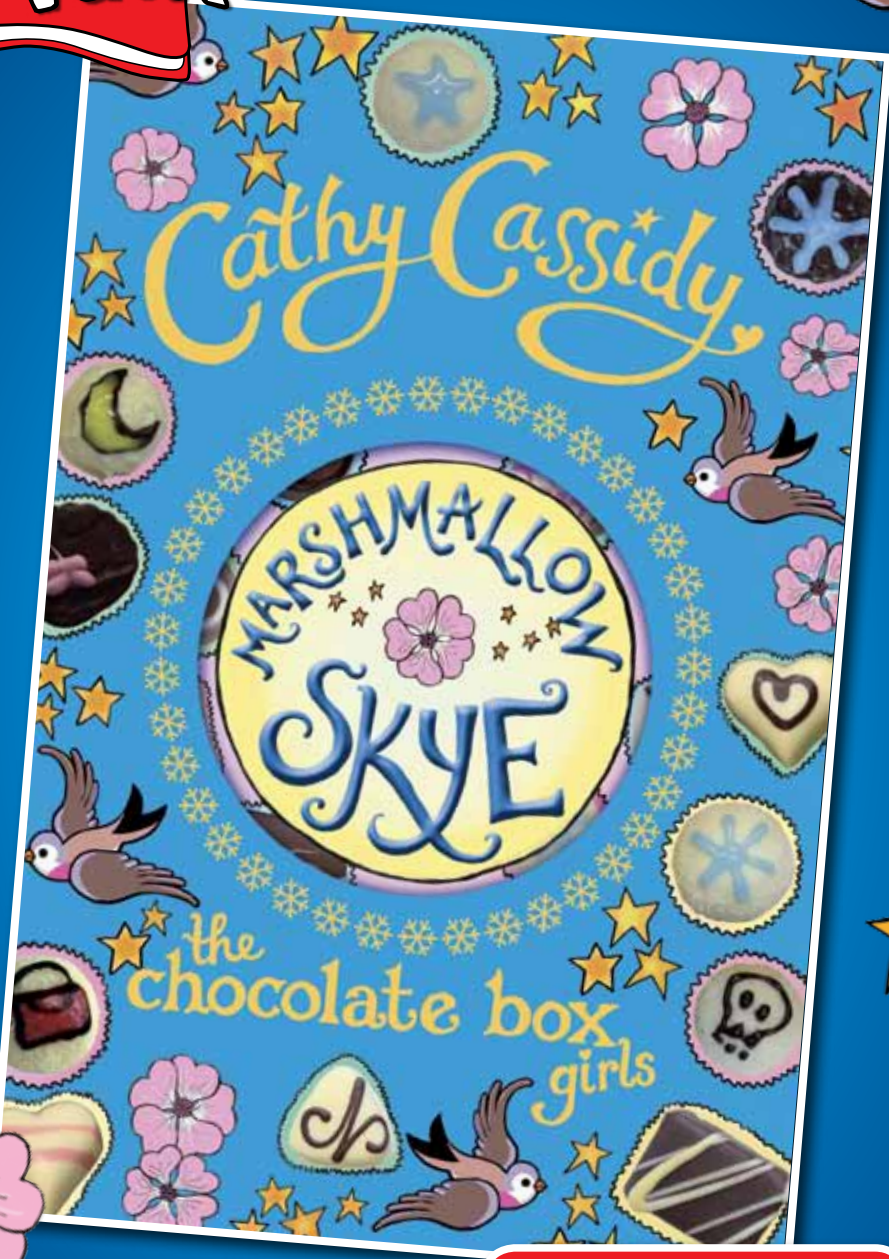


**Book
Talk**

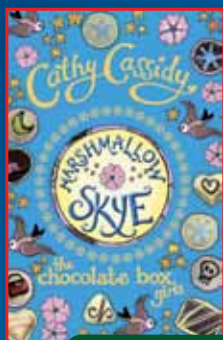


AGES 8+



**Engage and inspire your
pupils with a Book Talk!**

AGES 8+



Look out for this book at your Fair!

Price	£6.99 / €8.20
Case	Read On
Author	Cathy Cassidy
Publisher	Puffin

Using this book in your classroom

Themes

A heartwarming story of love in all its guises – **romantic love**, and also love between **sisters and step-sisters**, between **children and their parents and step-parents**, and between **friends**. The book also touches on historical themes, giving a glimpse of **life in the 1920s** – and on the existence, or otherwise, of **ghosts!**

Summary

Skye Tanberry doesn't believe in ghosts ... until a mysterious trunk is found in the attic. The trunk contains a treasure-trove of beautiful vintage clothes and letters which belonged to Clara Travers, a young woman from the 1920s who was believed to have drowned herself when her father forbade her to follow her true love, a Romany traveller boy.

Skye begins to wear Clara's clothes, despite the misgivings of her twin, Summer. At the same time, Skye is haunted by strange and beautiful dreams, where she meets a handsome traveller boy called Finch. As thoughts of Finch seep into Skye's waking life too, she begins to wonder if she is actually being haunted by Clara and her own gypsy boy who lived so long ago.

Skye's dreams, with their promise of otherworldly romance, entwine with real-life events as Skye navigates some difficult times at school and home. She's drifting further and further from her almost-too-perfect twin Summer. It doesn't make things any easier that a friend of Skye's, Alfie, has developed a crush on Summer... Meanwhile, their older sister Honey is finding it difficult to come to terms with their new, blended family and even Skye's best friend, Milly, seems to be changing – now all Milly can think of is clothes, make-up and boys. Skye thinks about boys too, of course, but increasingly she's thinking about just one boy, from her dreams of long ago – Finch.

Things come to a crisis at Summer and Skye's thirteenth birthday party on Valentine's Day, where Skye has developed a fever making her think that she's seen Finch in real life. She follows him, but of course he vanishes, and Skye's fever gets the better of her and she collapses in the snow. When she recovers from her illness, everything feels a bit clearer – and she even solves the mystery of what happened to Clara Travers so long ago. It turns out that she managed to change her identity and escape with her much-loved traveller boy after all. Skye's dreams of Finch fade, and she's almost put them behind her when she meets a fascinating boy in real life. His name? Jamie Finch...

Using this book in your classroom

Did you know?

- When she was a child, Cathy Cassidy used to make home-made comics for her friends to buy – and her first job was on the legendary *Jackie* magazine for teenage girls.
- Cathy used to be an agony aunt on a teenage magazine. On her website, www.cathycassidy.com, she can't answer reader's problem-page type questions, but she offers some very helpful general advice about what to do if you're being bullied or experiencing problems with friends, boys or family. She also has strong connections with Childline and offers links to Childline from her website.

The Story Session

1. Introducing the book

- Ask the children to imagine that they have found an old chest in the attic. They bring it downstairs and open it up, to find that it is full of cool vintage clothes from a long time ago. How would the children feel about the clothes? Would they want to try them on? What if they knew that the clothes had belonged to someone who died a long time ago? How do the children think they would feel if they put some of the clothes on? Would they feel a connection with the person who wore the clothes in the past?
- Ask the children if they have read any ghost stories. What are ghosts normally like in stories? What kinds of things do they do? Do the children think ghosts could ever be friendly or peaceful?
- Introduce the story by explaining that Skye Tanberry, the narrator, has an identical twin sister called Summer. Although they are identical, Skye and Summer have different talents and like different things. What do the children think it would be like to have an identical twin? What would be the good and bad things about it?
- Read Chapter 1 aloud to the children, and then pause to share ideas about the kind of person Skye is. Do the children think they would like her if they knew her? What clues do they get from the chapter about things that might be difficult in Skye's life at the moment?
- Do the children think that ghosts might feature in this story? Share their predictions about what might happen.



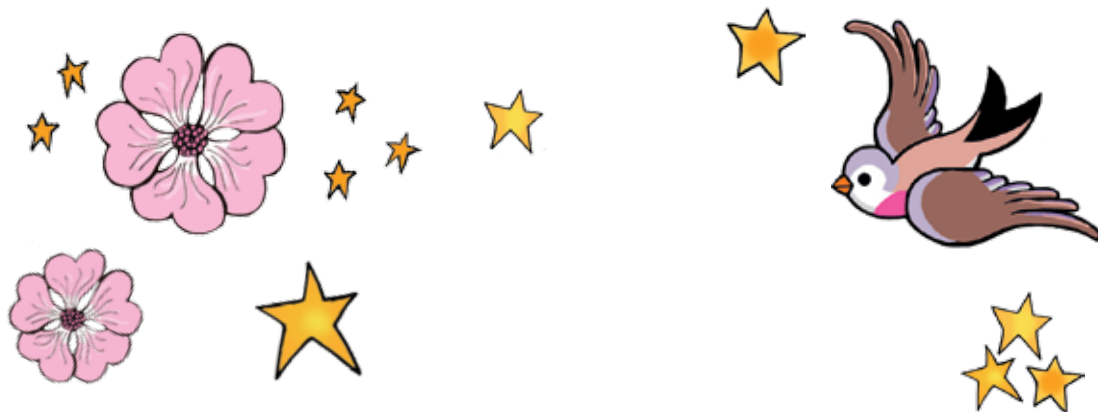
The Story Session**2. Reading the story**

- Read Chapter 2 aloud, or let the children read it independently. As they read, ask the children to look out for more evidence about Skye's family set-up. What do they think Skye likes best about living with her family? What are the aspects that are difficult for her? At the end of the chapter, share what the children have found out. Do the children think it would be fun to have a chocolate factory at their house? What problems do they think Honey might cause for her family?
- Encourage the children to read on to the end of Chapter 6. How would they feel if they had a dream like Skye's in Chapter 5? Do they think this means that Skye is being haunted in some way by Clara Travers, or could there be another explanation?
- Talk about the scene at school in Chapter 6, with Mr Wolfe and Alfie Anderson. Do the children think Alfie shows a better side of himself, when he takes the blame for the accident with the rucksack? Do they think Skye is right when she says history 'is all about cause and effect, but there is a lot of luck involved'?
- Ask the children to continue reading the story, and pause after every few chapters to talk about what has happened. Encourage them to look out for evidence of how Skye's feelings about Alfie, Millie and Summer change during the story. Why do the children think Skye feels so hurt when she realises that Alfie has a crush on Summer? Do the children think Skye's beautiful dreams about Finch help her to feel better about what is happening in real life? Could Summer be right that it's not a good idea to wear Clara's clothes?
- After Chapter 14, do the children think Skye is right to tell Honey that she's being shallow and spiteful and cruel? Share their predictions about how things might begin to get better for Skye's family from this point.
- After Chapter 23, ask the children why they think Skye lies to Summer about the dreams of Finch having stopped. How do they think Summer feels about the relationship between herself and Skye at this point? Might Summer be missing the closeness they used to have, just as Skye is?
- After Chapter 25, talk about the different ways Skye tries to get at the truth about what happened to Clara (e.g. through the letters, by talking to the museum staff and looking at old newspapers, etc.). Which of these methods seem to be most helpful? Can the children think of any other ways Skye could try to find out about this?
- After Chapter 30, why do the children think Skye has such mixed feelings about her birthday? What do they think will happen at the party?
- At the end of the book, share the children's predictions about what might happen next for Skye. Do they think she will meet Jamie Finch again? Talk about the way the story ends with most of the loose ends tied up – Skye has found out what really happened to Clara, and she has properly made friends again with both Millie and Summer. Jamie Finch presents another, fresh storyline which hasn't been tied up yet. Do the children think this storyline might turn up again, in a future book? How about Skye's relationship with Alfie – do the children think that has been resolved in this story?

The Story Session

3. Follow-up

- Look back at Chapter 1, and compare the way Skye feels in that chapter with the way she feels at the end of the book. Ask the children what advice they would give Skye at the start of the book, to help her feel better. They can talk about this in pairs, and then draft a letter with advice for Skye. They can draw on things that happen later in the story, and on their own experiences.
- Ask the children to draw a 'friendship web' for Skye. Put Skye in the middle, and radiating out from her write the names of all the people who are important to her. Draw lines connecting the different names, and along each line write what the relationship is between them, and how they feel about each other.
- Encourage the children to use local resources (library, neighbours' memories, etc.) as well as the internet to find out a bit about what their own area was like in the past. If they live in an old house, they could try to find out about some of the people who lived there previously.
- The children could interview an older neighbour or friend, or a member of their own family, to find out what life was like for them as a teenager. How have things changed for teenagers now? What aspects of being a teenager are still similar?
- Encourage the children to do some research about costumes from the 1920s. A website such as www.fashion-era.com/flapper_fashion_1920s.htm could be a good place to start. For children who are interested in the history of fashion, this website also gives information about clothing in many other periods of history.



YOU TELL US

- Did you use these notes to have a Book Talk in class?
- Were they helpful?
- Are there any changes you'd like to see to make them more useful?

We're always happy to hear your comments, so please email us at bookfairs@scholastic.co.uk (UK) or bookfairs@scholastic.ie (Republic of Ireland).