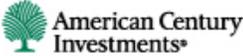


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Speakeasy: Judy Blume 'Eyes' the Silver Screen

By MICHELLE KUNG

At 74, author Judy Blume is experiencing something of a professional renaissance. Puffin Books is publishing a special 40th-anniversary edition of her best-selling children's book "Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing," and a film adaptation of her novel "Tiger Eyes"—the first of her nearly 30 books to become a movie—will have a premiere Saturday at the inaugural Montclair Film Festival.



Katy Winn/Associated Press

Judy Blume co-wrote the screenplay for the film adaptation of her 1981 novel, 'Tiger Eyes.'

Co-written by Ms. Blume and directed by her son, Larry Blume, "Tiger Eyes" stars "Gossip Girl" alumna Willa Holland as a girl coping with the sudden and violent death of her father.

Though Ms. Blume and her husband spend most of their time in Key West, Fla., the author grew up in Elizabeth, N.J., and graduated from NYU in 1961. Over the past four decades, her books, including young-adult titles like "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" and novels like "Wifey" and "Summer Sisters," have sold more than 82 million copies.

Ms. Blume recently spoke to The Wall Street Journal about "Tiger Eyes," why so few of her books have been made into films, and why she loves Twitter.

"Tiger Eyes," the first film adaptation of one of your books, is finally debuting at film festivals. Are many of your other titles optioned?

I think I've come around to not optioning [my books]. It's like, what's the point? If somebody's passionate and really wants to do it, then maybe... I don't think that every book should be a movie. I can't imagine "Margaret" as a movie, though there were two times when there were young actresses who I just adored and thought, I would do "Margaret" if I had them. One was the little girl, but has since grown up, that was in "Little Miss

Sunshine."

Abigail Breslin?

Yes. I thought she could be Margaret. But it was a while ago, and her mom said, "I don't want her to carry that on her shoulders." And so I think, okay, not every book. But "Tiger Eyes," yes. This one's so visual and so beautiful and the book that would best translate to the screen.

It's been a long time coming.

You know what I'm glad of? I wanted to see one beautiful feature made from my book in my lifetime. And not only do I have that, but it was a magical experience to be on the set every day with Larry. The pressure wasn't on me; the pressure was all on him, so I loved it. We were this cast and crew that were all in this together and it was very intense, but I loved it.

How does that compare to the "Fudge" TV series you once worked on?

Judy Blume: As my husband says, that won the DNE Award—"Does Not Embarrass." It was okay, but it's not what I wished it had been.

What do you think of e-Books?

I'm not going to be judgmental about it because reading is reading is reading. Everything is changing and we have to go with it. But I never want to see a world where [children] can't go to libraries and bookstores and browse where it's supposed to be quiet. I just can't imagine a world without that. And my husband, who is very funny, says, "And how are people going to decorate their houses? What are they going to put on their bookshelves?" Books are beautiful and books are wonderful and books smell good and all of that. But I do have an eReader, which is great for travel and for bedtime reading for me because it lights it up. So I think that it's important not to be judgmental.

You are very active on Twitter, with more than 61,000 followers. Do you enjoy using social media?

My husband rues the day he taught me how to tweet. He's a very tech-y guy and got me an iPhone a while back. I don't know why, but I love [tweeting]. It's both addictive and one could say, a huge waste of time. I could be reading so many other things instead of Twitter. But I'm a people person and I'm locked in a little room all day writing. I really consider my followers my friends. One type of friend, that is.

What are your days like now?

Well, I'm writing a book now. I get up in the morning and I go for my morning two-mile walk and I come back and I eat my breakfast and shower and go to work. Go to work, get dressed, go to work. And I stay there. First drafts for me are powerful, but I hate them; it's torture to write them. But I will sit there till lunchtime. Then in the afternoons, I work more on the professional things. If I was on the second draft or third draft or fourth, I'd be going back and I'd be working more on the book. But right now, this is how I've always done first drafts. Two to three hours a day and hope you get a couple pages, lots of scribbles, maybe some good ideas for the next day.

Does the writing process get any easier?

Judy Blume: It hasn't. If anything, I think it's harder because in the beginning, you're new and it's fresh and it's spontaneous. Now it's like, I don't want to repeat myself and it has to be completely different.

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