



Front and Center (The Dairy Queen Trilogy)

By Catherine Gilbert Murdock

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After five months of sheer absolute craziness I was going back to being plain old background D.J. In photographs of course I'm always in the background . . .

But it turns out other folks have big plans for D.J. Like her coach. College scouts. All the town hoops fans. A certain Red Bend High School junior who's keen for romance and karaoke. Not to mention Brian Nelson, who she should not be thinking about! Who she is done with, thank you very much. But who keeps showing up anyway . . .

Readers first fell in love with straight-talking D.J. Schwenk in *Dairy Queen*; they followed her ups and downs both on and off the court in *The Off Season*. Now D.J. steps out from behind the free-throw line in this third installment of the Dairy Queen series.

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Front and Center (The Dairy Queen Trilogy) By Catherine Gilbert Murdock Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Product Description

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Amazon Exclusive: A Letter from Catherine Murdock



Dear Amazon Reader: The Dairy Queen series began with a dream and ends with a pizza. In late 2003, I had a dream about a girl playing football. As I'd been studying screenwriting for eight years, I immediately began to craft this idea into a script. Then, all too aware of my script failure rate, I decided to attempt a "practice novel" using everything I'd learned about character development, plotting, dialogue, and description. Today, I can offer aspiring authors this hard-earned advice: If you want to write halfway decent books, start by writing truly horrendous screenplays. I set *Dairy Queen* in Wisconsin, as I have family there and so can visualize the landscape, and I laid it out as a traditional three-act script, the only story structure I knew. I never intended to write a second book--I really love the vagueness of *Dairy Queen*'s ending--but when the publisher asked if I had a sequel in me, what could I answer but "Yes"? I love *The Off Season*'s ending as well, but readers (may I mention how utterly fantastic the fan mail is?) wanted more. So--boom--I found myself writing a third. All of a sudden I had a trilogy. Given what I'd learned about college sports recruiting from the first two books, it seemed only natural to examine this in *Front and Center*, while of course continuing the saga of D.J. Schwenk's love life. So many stories have as their conflict "Will the hero(ine) get the scholarship? Will s/he get the love interest?" And of course you already know the answers on page 1. To me, a much more challenging story, both to read and to write, would be "Does she *want* a scholarship? And which love interest will be it be: the dreamboat who keeps breaking her heart, or the safe, fun guy who's not quite Mr. Right?" Call me old fashioned, but I like a little mystery in my narrative. Which is why I'm also not going to tell you how the pizza fits in. But it does. Really. Sincerely, *Catherine Murdock*

(Photo © Greg Martin)

From School Library Journal

Grade 8–11—This final installment in the "Dairy Queen" trilogy kicks off with Wisconsin junior D.J. Schwenk back at school, having spent several weeks away helping big brother, Win, with his rehabilitation. She's catching up with classes and best friend Amber (also newly returned). D.J.'s excited and nervous for basketball season, which might score her a much-desired college scholarship and a less-desired position literally calling the shots on court. Her ex, Brian, is neither out of sight nor off her mind. But reluctantly famous D.J., who generally craves anonymity, wants a boyfriend who acknowledges her in public. Enter energetic friend Beaner, an attention magnet interested in actual dating. When recruitment letters pour in, talented athlete D.J. feels the weight of obligations and expectations (yet again) from well-meaning family, friends, recruiters, coaches, and from herself. Will she be ruled by fear or will she step up and make the choices, whether between colleges or guys, that'll make her happiest? The self-conscious teen is socially anxious, hyper aware, and cleverly observant. Her fans won't be disappointed, but new readers may occasionally feel out of the loop, compelled to read the prequels for a more invested experience. Fortunately, Murdock successfully integrates fresh trials and pressures, well-developed primary and likable peripheral characters, and amusing introspection into the backstory. Occasional doormat D.J. is ultimately a responsible, realistically flawed, funny, endearing, and strong heroine worth rooting for whether on the court or on the page—*Danielle Serra, Cliffside Park Public Library, NJ* END

Review

"The particulars of farm life, high school relationships, and college decisions are imparted with uncommon realism, and Murdock showcases the unexpected drama of everyday characters making mundane but essential life decisions. D.J.'s voice is intimate and compelling, her story both universal and unique, familiar and eye-opening. Here is a worthy send-off for a one-of-a-kind character." —*Horn Book*

"[D.J.'s] self-deprecating and humorous voice is still as fresh the third time around." —*Booklist*

"Murdock successfully integrates fresh trials and pressures, well-developed primary and likable peripheral characters, and amusing introspection into the backstory. . . D.J. is ultimately a responsible, realistically flawed, funny, endearing, and strong heroine worth rooting for whether on the court or on the page." —*School Library Journal*

"Front and Center is a perfect coming of age story and a completely satisfying conclusion to the three-book series." —*Jen Robinson's Book Page blog*

"This was a great novel with a lot of humor, but also a lot of serious situations, and relatable characters that I loved reading about." —*BookDivas.com*

"A fantastic end to a terrific series...A+" —*Lauren's Crammed Bookshelf blog*

"You won't want to miss it." —*Abby the Librarian blog*

"Front and Center by Catherine Murdock is a satisfying conclusion to the Dairy Queen trilogy with a message that lasts long after you've read the last page. By emphasizing the importance of family, friendship, and support, all of which are sometimes overlooked in young adult literature, this book will motivate its reader to reach out and take risks. —*Feed Your Imagination blog*

"I haven't read the first two books in this series, but I had no problem falling in love with DJ, her family and her friends." —*KISS THE BOOK blog*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

John Silverstein:

What do you think about book? It is just for students because they're still students or the item for all people in the world, the particular best subject for that? Just you can be answered for that query above. Every person has different personality and hobby for every other. Don't to be obligated someone or something that they don't wish do that. You must know how great and important the book Front and Center (The Dairy Queen Trilogy). All type of book are you able to see on many solutions. You can look for the internet resources or other social media.

Arthur Seaton:

Reading a book tends to be new life style with this era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. Together with book everyone in this world may share their idea. Textbooks can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire all their reader with their story or even their experience. Not only situation that share in the guides. But also they write about advantage about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach children, there are many kinds of book that you can get now. The authors nowadays always try to improve their skill in writing, they also doing some analysis before they write to their book. One of them is this Front and Center (The Dairy Queen Trilogy).

Rita Merritt:

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