# Dame Jacqueline Wilson delighted to be regarded as a gay icon



Dame Jacqueline Wilson, the legendary British children's author, has expressed her joy at being considered a gay icon, four years after she publicly came out. Known predominantly for her widely cherished work, The Story of Tracy Beaker, which later became an acclaimed CBBC television series starring Dani Harmer, Wilson's literary contributions have spanned over several decades and touched millions of lives.

In 2020, Wilson, now 78, announced that she was in a long-term relationship with a woman, revealing that the relationship was already two decades old. Speaking to the BBC recently, Wilson shared her thoughts on the newfound title of 'gay icon'. While she humbly mentioned she does not see herself "rampaging around with a rainbow flag," she conveyed her heartfelt appreciation for being recognised as a significant figure within the LGBTQ+ community.

Wilson's literary career continues to evolve. Known for her extensive oeuvre of over 100 books, Wilson is poised to release her first adult novel, Think Again. The novel explores themes of same-sex relationships and other mature subjects, marking a significant departure from her usual focus on children's literature. The story revolves around a protagonist who, after divorcing her husband, finds herself falling in love with a woman, a scenario that somewhat reflects Wilson's own life experiences.

Wilson acknowledged that the idea of writing an adult novel had been lingering in her mind for years. The inspiration stemmed from her daughter’s curiosity about what would happen to her beloved young characters as they grew older. Wilson envisioned that, in real-time, characters like Tracy Beaker and others would be approaching significant life milestones, such as turning 40, prompting pivotal life decisions.

Her ground-breaking exploration into LGBT themes in literature commenced in earnest with her 2020 novel Love Frankie, her first book to feature an openly gay protagonist. Wilson notes that while she could have penned such stories earlier, the societal context of previous decades would likely have resulted in significant backlash.

Outside of her latest literary ventures, Wilson and her partner, Trish Beswick, have shared a life together for 22 years. Wilson's personal life has frequently woven in and out of her professional realms, adding nuanced layers to her narratives.

Wilson's debut book dates back to 1969, and since then, she has released numerous standalone novels alongside her famed series such as Tracy Beaker, Sleepovers, Hetty Feather, and The Werepuppy. Her legacy was formally recognised in the 2008 New Year Honours, where she was appointed a DBE (Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire), following an earlier OBE for her contributions to literacy in schools.

Reflecting on her coming-out journey, Wilson remarked that people close to her were already aware of her relationship, implying that her public announcement in 2020 was hardly a revelation to those within her circle. She added that her only disapproving figure was her mother, who had a history of discontent with her previous relationships.

Think Again is set for release on September 12.