



Interview with CHERIL N. CLARKE

**THE ROCK:** Who is Cheril N. Clarke; tell us something about you?

**Clarke:** Writing has been my passion for quite some time. This is my third book and my best work yet. I'm very proud of it. What else would you like to know?

**THE ROCK:** Where are you from and currently residing?

**Clarke:** I'm from Toronto, Canada, but I grew up in Miami. I live in New Jersey now, and I plan on staying for awhile. I love the diversity and the proximity to NYC. It's an artist's dream.

**THE ROCK:** Are there any other writers in the family?

**Clarke:** No. I'm the only one crazy enough to follow my creative drive. I have three sisters: a dentist, a lawyer, and a medical biller, as well as a brother who is a manager. We all love what we do though.

**THE ROCK:** When did you start writing?

**Clarke:** I started writing seriously about six years ago. I guess it was the only thing I could never get sick of doing. I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. A 20 minute conversation with a good friend who was going off to college a year before me helped me zero in on what I loved, which was music and writing. I chose writing because my passion for it was stronger. I started off by writing poetry. Then I wondered if I should skip short stories and write a whole book, and Foundations was born. I wrote that book when I was 19 years old and never looked back.

**THE ROCK:** What prepared you to become an author?

**Clarke:** I've been studying different writing techniques for awhile now, which has helped me develop a style that is truly my own. That coupled with my ability to pour my emotions onto paper with ease has made me the writer that I am today.

**THE ROCK:** What inspired you to become a writer?

**Clarke:** The friend I mentioned above. He gave me the initial push, whether he knows it or not. After that, I started posting poetry that I wrote on the Internet. The positive feedback gave me the inspiration and confidence to go all the way.

**THE ROCK:** What inspired you to write your book?

**Clarke:** Intimate Chaos was inspired by a relationship that I had. It started off as me just writing my feelings down on a piece of paper, then I decided to create two characters based off us. I posted it on a message board and kept updating it every couple of days with a new chapter. The next thing I knew, I had a novella done and tons of positive e-mail about it. SABLE Magazine.com even picked the story up to publish as an ongoing series. That's when I realized I had a winner on my hands. Forget about my failed relationship, I had a very promising book. It brought out the best in me. At this point though, it's more fiction than fact. It has gone through thirteen or so revisions. The characters took on lives of their own.

**THE ROCK:** Tell us about your newest creation. What is the premise?

**Clarke:** Well, the two main characters are women. Jessie and Sadira. Sadira tells the story in first person. She is desperately searching for love and intimacy and finds Jessie, who displays a desire to be loved but runs when it is given to her. Despite Sadira's inner voice and advice from friends, she continues to shower Jessie with love hoping that it will one day be returned to her. Jessie, on the other hand, pops in and out of Sadira's life as she pleases. She is afraid to get too close and risk getting her heart broken so she disappears without warning, sometimes for days at a time. She eventually convinces Sadira to move to Miami with her. In one word, this book is drama. It digs into the reasons why some people hang on to others even though they know the person isn't good for them. It delves into why some people swear that a person is meant for them when they aren't. It's a fun read though. You'll laugh, you'll get angry, and you may even cry. There are twists and turns to keep the reader from guessing what will happen in the end. No matter what sexual orientation you identify with, this book will hit home with you.

**THE ROCK:** Any publishing contracts in the working?

**Clarke:** No. I'm not looking for a deal.

**THE ROCK:** Have you ever self-published? Why or why not?

**Clarke:** I have used two subsidy houses to help me with my first two books, but now I have my own company, Dodi Press. I don't want to wait for anyone to decide my fate as a writer.

**THE ROCK:** What are "traditional publishers" looking for?

**Clarke:** I suppose they are looking for writers who not only can write, but are willing to do the legwork of promoting themselves as well. They are looking for writers who can sell books.

**THE ROCK:** If you were a publisher, what would be your niche and why?

**Clarke:** I am a new publisher. At this point, the company is only five months old, but I don't plan on going anywhere. The goal is to publish books that cover various topics, which can speak to the heart of human beings everywhere rather than a specific niche. The storylines will be so strong as to transcend gender, race, religion, and/or sexual orientation. I'm working with a new writer right now who is working on a story about a lover's revenge. It is borderline sci-fi. I also have plans to publish an anthology, but I haven't decided on a theme. I want to build a company that attracts, nurtures, rewards and retains the best writers so that readers always get a quality product.

**THE ROCK:** For an author, is having a publishing contract with a "traditional publisher" important professionally?

**Clarke:** It depends on their personal goals. For me, it's not important at all because I want to build a business. I want to invest time and money in myself as well as help others. I don't mind doing the research and putting my own money into it. Plus, I love the creative control I have over each project from beginning to end.

**THE ROCK:** What are some of your professional and personal achievements?

**Clarke:** These goals go together. I wrote my first book when I was 19 years old and published it when I was 21. Now, I have my own publishing company taking off with the best story I've written to date, Intimate Chaos. Both of those goals are personal and professional achievements that put a spotlight on my courage and willingness to take risks and follow through.

**THE ROCK:** Who are some of your favorite authors?

**Clarke:** As of late, Octavia Butler is topping the list. Other than that I don't have any favorite authors but I have tons of favorite books: "Think and Grow Rich" by Napoleon Hill, "Tearing Down the Walls: How Sandy Weill Fought His Way to the Top of the Financial world...and Then Nearly Lost it All," by Monica Langley, "It's OK to Leave the Plantation" by Mason Weaver, and "See You at the Top" by Zig Ziglar just to name a few. These are books that helped make me who I am. I've read all but one of these books at least twice.

**THE ROCK:** Where do you want to be in five years?

**Clarke:** In five years, I plan to have published seven, maybe eight books. I'm focusing on strategic growth right now. A few of those will be anthologies with contributions from other writers, another is the project I mentioned above with a new writer, and another two would be second editions of my first two books. As plans get solidified, I will let people know when the books will be released.

**THE ROCK:** Where can readers find you?

**Clarke:** [www.cherilncclarke.com](http://www.cherilncclarke.com). Sign-up for my mailing list. I send out an e-mail at least once a month with updates on my projects, and I will also send out a call for submissions, book previews, opportunities for readers to have an input on cover designs, content, etc. Right now anyone who wants a free preview (PDF) of Intimate Chaos can request it by e-mailing [cherilnc@cherilncclarke.com](mailto:cherilnc@cherilncclarke.com).

**THE ROCK:** Thank you, Ms. Clarke.

**Clarke:** You're welcome. It was my pleasure.



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