

Armchair Heroines



News, reviews, fun and games for the romance reader

Author Feature: Marcia James

Today I'm pleased to welcome colleague and friend, Marcia James!



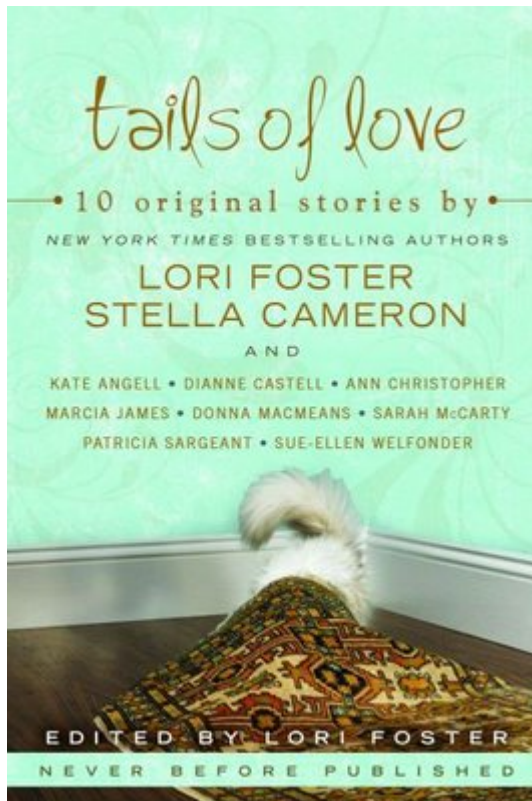
*** Big round of AH applause ***

So, Marcia, one of your stories, “Rescue Me”, is part of the Tails of Love anthology that just came out this month. Tell us about “Rescue Me”.



In “Rescue Me”, ex-quarterback Adam “Nuke” Baumgardner saves a starving stray, and Buddy, the Chinese crested hairless dog, returns the favor by reuniting him with his lost love, veterinarian Claire Mendelsohn. Reviewers have described the story as heartwarming and humorous. One of the reasons I enjoy including “crestie” dogs in my stories is I love the comic contrast between a tough, Alpha-male hero and a tiny dog. And I’m a sucker for a pet who’s also a matchmaker. By the way, I have an excerpt of “Rescue Me” on my Web site’s Books page: <http://www.marciajames.net/books.html>

I checked it out and it's great! How did you get involved in the Tails of Love project?



Tails of Love (Berkley, June 2009) is NY Times bestselling author Lori Foster's pet project, pun intended, and she invited me to donate a story to the anthology. I was thrilled to be asked. Lori supports many charities and spearheads a benefit anthology each year. 100% of the author and agent proceeds from Tails of Love will go to the Animal Adoption Foundation, a no-kill animal shelter in Hamilton County, OH. Lori contributed a story to the anthology, along with mine and those of award-winning and bestselling authors Kate Angell, Stella Cameron, Dianne Castell, Anne Christopher, Donna MacMeans, Sarah McCarty, Patricia Sargeant, and Sue-Ellen Welfonder. Each of the stories features an animal--from dogs and cats to a goat and a monkey. Lori created a cute book trailer for Tails of Love that I have on my Web site: <http://www.marciajames.net/index.html>

What's next from Marcia James?

The first in a comic romantic mystery series I'm writing, featuring a sex therapist/amateur sleuth, is with Berkley Publishing. The heroine "writes" a sex advice column on my Web site (<http://marciajames.net/QandA/>). Dorchester and Sourcebooks have requested the manuscript I'm finishing--a funny contemporary set in a clothing-optional Caribbean resort. Beyond Tails of Love, I don't have a release date for my next book. There's a lot of "hurry up and wait" in publishing.

You're not kidding. But how exciting for you! Tell us seven things we couldn't possibly

know about you.

I have a list of “fun facts” on my Web site’s bio page (<http://www.marciajames.net/bio.html>), and the following is from that:

1. As a volunteer at charity events, I’ve met a lot of celebrities, including Tom Selleck, Paul Newman, Michael York, and Bob Hope. I have photos with some of the stars on my site (http://www.marciajames.net/Photos_Celebs.html).
2. My wedding was covered by People Magazine because we encouraged our guests to donate to charity vs. giving us wedding presents.
3. I worked as a sound technician for an NBC-TV affiliate in Maryland. (This was a challenge, given the weather girl’s sometimes salty language.)
4. I was a movie extra in a church scene for the War and Remembrance miniseries. (The part required 1940s dress, hairstyle and make-up but no acting, thank goodness.)
5. I participated in a March of Dimes Celebrity downhill ski race in Big Bear, CA. My team captain was Olympic gold medal pole vaulter, Bob Seagren.
6. I wrote, produced and directed training videos for the U.S. Navy. We videotaped aboard nuclear subs, a minesweeper, a destroyer and a tender.
7. I once asked actor David Niven, who was appearing on The Charlie Rose Show, what Scotsmen wear under their kilts. (The answer? Nothing.)

Hahaha, that's an amazing list! What's the craziest place you've found inspiration?

Before I moved to Ohio, I worked in video production in Washington, D.C. I was involved in shooting a Chinese beer commercial and learned firsthand how difficult it is to get the necessary filming permits from the various federal and D.C. agencies who have jurisdiction over the nation’s capital. That lack of interagency cooperation gave me the idea for my first book, *At Her Command* (<http://www.marciajames.net/books.html>). The premise question for that comic romantic suspense: What might happen if the DEA, FBI, and D.C. police unknowingly put operatives undercover at the same sex club? The comic and sensual possibilities were endless. ;-D It was a fun book to write.

I'll bet. You've had a lot of varied experiences (jobs, travels, etc.). How do those experiences contribute to your writing?

As a freelance video producer/scriptwriter and advertising copywriter, I've worked on a wide variety of projects for corporations, nonprofit organizations, government, and the military. That gives me a lot of experiences to draw from when I write my contemporary romances. And the sense of humor I've needed to deal with many of the personalities I've encountered serves me well when writing hot, humorous fiction.

What's your best marketing advice for new authors?

My best advice is not to ignore the business side of publishing when learning the craft of fiction writing. Learn about promotion and branding before you sell. Once you're a published author, choose those self-promotion options that work best with your budget, time constraints, books, and personality. I present author PR online workshops (check my site's Schedule page for upcoming workshops:

<http://www.marciajames.net/schedule.html>), and I see how stressed authors can get from attempting to do too much promotion or the types of promotion that don't come easily for them--such as a technologically challenged person like myself trying to learn Web design. Since authors' Web sites are our most valuable promotional tool, it's important the sites look professional. I also recommend understanding what your brand is and making sure your Web site and PR materials reinforce your brand. Jenn Stark is the go-to person on author branding, and she has information on her site (<http://www.jennstark.com/branding.aspx>) to help authors determine their brands.

Great advice! I can't wait to take your PR class in September. If you could invent a new holiday, what would it be and why?

I'd establish "Read a Romance Week" for people who have never tried a wonderful, feel-good romance. It's ironic that most of the people who denigrate romance novels have never tried one--at least not in this century. In addition, I could definitely get behind a "Support Your Local Author Day". ;-)

Love both of those. :0) What's your favorite thing to do in the summer?

I'm not a beach person, but I definitely enjoy relaxing with my husband on our patio after dinner, reading a good book and watching the chipmunks and rabbits who like to hang out in our back yard. I also enjoy road trips through Ohio and neighboring states, especially when we come across small-town street fairs and yard sales. And year-round I like to get out from behind my computer to meet friends for lunch. Writing is a solitary job, so I enjoy socializing online, on the phone, and in-person.

I'm a backyard hanger-outer myself! I'm so sad - our plants got stripped last evening during a gargantuan hail storm. I'll post pictures on Friday...

Thank you so much for being here, Marcia!



A copy of Marcia's book *At Her Command* is up for grabs today. Comment, ask questions, just let us know what you're thinking for your chance to win! The winner will be announced Friday in a new blog post.

Posted by Tiffany James at 5:00 AM  

Labels: [Author interview](#), [contest](#), [Marcia James](#), [PR for writers](#), [romance author](#), [romance novel](#)

42 comments