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WRITING NEWS AND DISCONNECTED THOUGHTS OF AUTHOR JENYFER MATTHEWS

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2008

Friday Feature: Marcia James



I'm pleased to have Cerridwen author Marcia James with me this week. Marcia writes hot humorous romances. She finaled in eleven Romance Writers of America chapter contests before selling her first comic romantic suspense, *AT HER COMMAND*. And mark your calendars - a short story of hers will appear in a Berkley charity anthology in June 2009.

By day, Marcia is an advertising copywriter and PR consultant. In her eclectic career, she has shot submarine training videos, organized celebrity-filled nonprofit events and had her wedding covered by *People Magazine*.

Enjoy the excerpt for *AT HER COMMAND*. As a special bonus, leave a comment for Marcia and you could win a free download of *AT HER COMMAND* for yourself!

[At Her Command](#)
4 Stars, [RT BOOKreviews](#)

Blurb:

DEA agent Domino Petracelli is chasing a career-making promotion and nothing will keep her from getting her man. Okay, so she'd rather infiltrate a Columbian drug cartel than go undercover as a dominatrix at D.C.'s Xecutive Branch sex club. But she's up to the task. As the leather-clad Mistress Bella, Domino investigates the club's drug ring while juggling a surreal roster of kinky submissives—and resisting one sexy client who's not what he seems.

Police detective Dalton Cutter is a man with a mission—avenging his partner, who was murdered investigating the Xecutive Branch. Retracing his partner's steps, he goes undercover as a club client. Dalton 's handled killers, junkies, and pimps, but can the Alpha-male cop act submissive long enough to fool Mistress Bella? And will their sexual chemistry, crackling louder than Bella's whip, derail Dalton 's investigation?

At Her Command, a comic romantic suspense, pokes fun at the alphabet soup of D.C. law enforcement agencies. When the DEA, the FBI and the DC police unknowingly put operatives undercover at the same club, sexy sparks fly. Rated R for Risqué

At Her Command
By
Marcia James
Available from Cerridwen Press

Excerpt:

Detective Dalton "Bull" Cutter sat slumped on the leather couch, drinking his third beer and staring into the eyes of a large Siamese. Chi, the sleek, blue-eyed tom cat, could have been fashioned from marble for all his stillness and unblinking gaze. Despite the open can of cat food Dalton had placed on the kitchen floor, the animal sat on the coffee table directly in front of him as though demanding an explanation.

"Jason's not coming back, big guy."

Dalton's voice sounded rusty so he tried to clear his throat. But there was a lump he just couldn't wash down with the Budweiser. His eyes burned from lack of sleep, and he wished he could find a way to turn off his brain. One thought kept repeating in his head: Jason Walters, his partner and best friend, was dead.

Twenty-four hours had passed since he'd received the call...heard his captain break the news, but the pain was still fresh and razor-sharp.

Dalton resisted tossing his beer bottle against the wall of Jason's living room...his living room, he corrected. Jason had named his partner his beneficiary, a fact Dalton had learned from a lawyer today. The cozy Cape Cod home complete with cat now belonged to him. He'd give a billion Cape Cods for the chance to go back in time.

"It should have been me."

Chi leaned forward as if to make out the muttered words. Instead of continuing the one-sided conversation, Dalton let his head fall back on the couch and his eyes shut. That night two months ago played like a movie behind his closed lids.

*

"Hey, Dalton, heard about your spanking new assignment." Laughing, Jason walked into Dalton's apartment with a six-pack of beer and two pizza boxes. "Maybe we should change your nickname from 'Bull' to 'Mouse.'"

Several inches shorter than Dalton and leaner, Jason looked more like a college fraternity pledge than a cop. "Very funny. Besides it's not definite yet," Dalton grumbled, unwilling to think about the possible undercover job. Assigned to the Metro Police Department's Special Investigations team, Jason and he worked whenever and wherever needed. They'd been involved in everything from homicide to vice cases.

Recently the Metro PD had received a tip that underage girls were working at the Executive Branch sex club. Dalton had heard through the grapevine his name had been suggested for the undercover role of a club client—a submissive wimp who got off on pain and humiliation.

Damn. Probably retribution for some of the hot-dogging he'd done recently. Maybe he shouldn't have been quite so disrespectful to the police chief when he was being chewed out for wrecking his third unmarked in a month.

Grabbing two beers, Jason put the rest in the fridge. While Dalton watched, his friend made himself at home, getting out bags of chips and placing them on top of the pizza boxes. Balancing the items, he carried them to Dalton's second-hand kitchen table. Unlike Jason's sunny home, there weren't many cheery spots in Dalton's apartment. The breakfast nook with its bay window was the best bet.

"I hear Captain Bennett thinks you're the right man for the job." Jason laughed at his partner's glare.

Dalton cursed fluently. "Yeah, I'm 6'4" and wear a size 46 jacket, but I'm the perfect

choice to go undercover as a bondage and discipline junkie?"

Jason snorted. "Haven't you heard? Size doesn't matter. And maybe the captain thinks you need a vacation from always being in charge."

"If it's such a cushy assignment, why don't you volunteer for it?"

"And rob you of the chance to get in touch with your softer side?" Jason dodged Dalton's half-hearted punch.

"Maybe we should draw straws on this one," Dalton suggested.

"No way, José." Jason shook his head emphatically before taking a long swig of his beer.

"Didn't I draw the short straw on that homeless shelter job?" Dalton laid on the guilt as he opened the chips and took a handful. "You think it was fun wearing flea-ridden clothes and sitting in the gutter all day?"

Jason rubbed the thumb and forefinger of his right hand together. Dalton frowned. Years ago, his partner had explained the gesture represented the world's smallest violin playing "My Heart Bleeds For You." Obviously he was getting nowhere fast with the "who's had the worst assignments" guilt angle.

Dalton changed tactics. "Of course, if you don't feel like you owe me for saving your life at the warehouse in October..."

Jason pointed the neck of his bottle toward his partner. "That was payback for saving your sorry ass in that 7-11 on Penn Avenue last June."

As they fell into their familiar banter, Dalton raised the stakes. "That punk's gun wasn't even loaded. Now if you want to talk life-saving debts, what about that bullet I took for you when you were too busy hustling that working girl to watch your back?"

Jason denied the allegation, and the good-natured argument continued until he finally agreed to draw straws over the Xecutive Branch undercover job. The horrified look on his partner's face when he drew the short straw made Dalton laugh.

"I appreciate your handling this assignment, pal." Dalton laughed and saluted Jason with his beer bottle.

"Investigating the Xecutive Branch isn't like busting some massage parlor." Jason deliberately took the last slice of pepperoni pizza before Dalton could reach for it. "I'm the best damn partner you've ever had, so you better hope nothing goes wrong with this case."

"A bossy woman, black leather, whips,...what could go wrong?" Dalton smirked. "The only thing you might die of is embarrassment."

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The only thing you might die of is embarrassment. Dalton's words came back now to haunt him as he tried to breathe under the weight of his regret and guilt. Thanks to him, his partner had convinced their captain to give him Dalton's Xecutive Branch assignment.

Thanks to him, Jason was dead. And the loss was sharper, deeper than anything Dalton had ever experienced.

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*At Her
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by
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