

Two authors, one passion...writing Scotland a book at a time



Thursday Blether ~ Interview with Marcia James



We're so pleased to welcome award-winning author **Marcia James** to Tartan Ink! Marcia writes with verve and style, adding a dash of humor to her romantic suspense novels. We're happy to have her in the tea room today and we're sure you'll love her. We're serving our usual Thursday treats: haggis, neeps, and tatties, with plenty of real ale. (*the faint of heart can opt for vegetarian haggis*) So please indulge, grab a chair, and enjoy a bit of good blether before our peat fire. Marcia claims the place of honor near the hearth, but there's room for all, so gather round.

Marcia and I (Sue-Ellen) met when we both contributed stories to **Tails of Love**, one of Lori Foster's charity books and that benefits a wonderful no-kill animal shelter. I was drawn to Marcia for her ready smile and upbeat attitude. She's fun to be around, is clever, and has a wonderful wit. She also loves dogs. So she's right at home here in Tartlandia. Please give her a warm welcome!

Here's Marcia's bio: Marcia James writes hot, humorous romances and finaled in eleven Romance Writers of America contests before selling her first comic romantic suspense, **At Her Command**. Her short story, "Rescue Me", appeared in **Tails of Love**, a Berkley anthology, and her sexy Christmas novella, *Heating Up the Holidays*, was published by Liquid Silver Books. In her eclectic career, she has shot submarine training videos, organized celebrity-filled nonprofit events and had her wedding covered by *People Magazine*. After years of dealing with such sexy topics as how to safely install traffic lights, Marcia is enjoying "researching" and plotting her fictional love scenes with her husband and hero of many years.

Welcome, Marcia...

Please tell us about your current release.



Sex & the Single Therapist is the first in my “Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist” comic romantic mystery series. Ally, with her Las Vegas insider friends, helps her police detective boyfriend solve crimes in Sin City — much to his dismay. This series features an amateur sleuth, cute dogs, and a sexy romance.

Here’s the book blurb:

A crime of passion...

To clear an innocent friend, sex therapist Dr. Ally Skye investigates a patient’s murder. Soon she’s trading heated words and hot kisses with a sexy cop. Can this free-spirited amateur sleuth and her posse of Vegas insiders solve the crime before the killer targets her?

A sexy complication...

Cynical homicide detective Zack Crawford has the murder to solve. The last thing he needs is a red-hot sex therapist who haunts his dreams. Ally is trouble and, given her job and his luck, she’d probably grade his performance in bed.

A dynamic duo...

Zack and Ally form an uneasy and sexually charged alliance. Murderers, extortionists and psychos are no match for these reluctant partners. Crime-solving was never this sexy or this fun!

Favorite character in one of your books?

I’m very fond of Leslie Kerns, the secondary heroine in *Sex & the Single Therapist*. She’s from the South and has many quirky sayings, such as “Just because a cat has kittens in an oven, it doesn’t make them biscuits.” and “Don’t pee down my back and tell me it’s raining.” I had a lot of fun researching “Southern-speak”.

What do you think readers appreciate most in your books?

My writer’s “voice” is humorous, so all of my books and novellas have a mix of comic and sexy elements. My work is definitely R-rated, but the love scenes are romantic as well as detailed. My heroes and heroines are monogamous but adventuresome. I enjoy reading the erotic romances written by my author friends, but I don’t use words in my love scenes that I might call a driver who cuts me off in traffic. 😊

Any advice for new writers?

As important as it is to learn the craft of fiction writing, it's equally important to learn the business side of publishing. For example, I teach author promotion workshops, and I see how unprepared most new authors are when it comes to promoting their brand and their books. There is so much an author can do before getting "The Call" to learn about marketing and establishing his or her pen name.

Do you see piracy having any affect on your writing?

Yes. Not only are most e-books pirated by unscrupulous websites around the world, there's a really disturbing trend of people getting an ebook, possibly changing the cover and title, and then self-publishing it under their own name. It doesn't matter if the original author has the copyright and published it before they plagiarized/pirated it. It's extremely difficult to stop the people doing this. Right now, legitimate sites, such as Amazon, are turning a blind eye to it. Smashwords, however, is working with the real authors to stop that type of piracy on their site.

Have you ever considered self-publishing a book?

I believe that self-publishing is a great way to get a well-edited, good book to one's readers. Some manuscripts just don't fit in publisher's imprints or lines. For example, *Sex & the Single Therapist* is similar to a funny cozy mystery, except for the sex. Cozies don't include love scenes. And romances usually don't include as much mystery in their plots. So my "Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist" series is just the type of cross-genre series that works well self-published in e-book.

Do you attend conventions? If so, why? If not, why?

I love attending conventions. I plan to attend both the Romance Writers of America conference and the RT Booklovers Convention in 2012. I believe in the importance of networking. There are many opportunities to co-promote and cross-promote with other published authors. And writers are also readers, so "power-schmoozing" is a type of promotion. I spend more time at these gatherings with people vs. attending workshops.

What do you see as the best thing about a writing career? The worst?

My favorite part is doing what I love — at home and often in my pajamas. 😊 I'm a plot-driven writer, so I enjoy figuring out how to put my characters into funny or romantic situations. The worst is the aloneness necessary to create manuscripts. I'm an extrovert, so I have to take breaks to call friends to get my "people fix" during long days of writing.

What would say is the easiest part of the writing process? The hardest?

For me, plotting is the easiest. That's why I tend to write romances with mysteries in them, because I like to figure out red herrings and who-dunits. The hardest part of

writing for me is characterization, because I don't have characters talking to me in my head — as many of my character-driven writer friends do.

What's next for you?

I'm writing the next in the "Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist" series, *Death & the Double Entendre*. Someone is murdering the clients of a sex phone service, and Ally consults with the Las Vegas Police Department on the case, much to her detective boyfriend's concern.

Then I'm revising my first manuscript, a comic romantic mystery set at a clothing-optional Caribbean resort.

Wrap-Up Quickies:

Kilt or burr? Kilt (while hoping for a stiff breeze) 😊

Pipes or Fiddle? Fiddle

Dog or cat lover? Dog lover — I'm particularly fond of Chinese crested hairless dogs, which appear in all of my books.

Tea or Coffee? Tea (actually Yerbe Mate, a tea-like drink from the rain forest)

Owl or Lark? Lark

Quiet or music to write? Quiet, because I hear music in the cadence of words.

Coffee shop or writer's cave? Writer's Cave. Luckily I love my office...at least when I'm caught up on my filing and dusting.

Final Word:

Where can readers find you?

My website is www.MarciaJames.net, and it includes a link to my Facebook page. This year I want to step out of my technophobe comfort zone and try Twitter, too. Slowly but surely, I've been forced into this century. 😊

Thanks so much for joining us today, Marcia. It was great fun to have you in our tea room. And — hint, hint — Karen and I hope you will get on Twitter. We're both there (and so is **Tails of Love** Veteran, Patricia Sargeant/Regina Hart) so we'd have a ball together.