

Erin McCarthy

## Turning opportunity into success

Thursday, September 30, 2004

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*ThisWeek Contributor*



Erin McCarthy

Two years ago, aspiring romance author Erin McCarthy was targeting industry giant, Harlequin Enterprises, when she happened upon a writing contest that launched her career with Kensington.

Since meeting that opportunity with talent and hard work, McCarthy has sold close to 20 novels and novellas and landed on the *USA Today* bestseller list.

"I wrote nine books before I sold to Kensington," McCarthy recently shared with *ThisWeek*. "You grow as a writer with each book, and tenacity will pay off."

She entered a contest on Cincinnati author Lori Foster's Web site, writing her entry practically overnight. Foster showed the winning entry to her Kensington editor; soon after, McCarthy received "the call." The author, who lives in northeast Ohio with her husband and two children, was offered a multi-book contract for the publisher's Brava erotic romance line.

McCarthy's current Brava release, *Houston, We Have a Problem*, features a surgeon-hero who's facing a career-destroying injury and contains the type of smart, sexy writing her fans expect. *Booklist* praised the novel, the reviewer stating, "Josie and Houston are terrifically sympathetic characters, and their story, by turns comic and steamy, is highly enjoyable."

Writing this book, which also received a 4-star review from *Romantic Times Bookclub*, was a challenge at times for the author.

"*Houston, We Have A Problem* had difficult spots because it required extensive medical research," McCarthy explained. "My first full-length book, *Smart Mouth*, was a straight comedy, whereas with *Houston*, I wanted to layer it ... blending the humor and emotion."

The author credits her editor, Kate Duffy, for giving her the freedom to write the stories she wants.

"When I told Kate I wanted to write a story about a controlling male surgeon who gets bitten by a shark and a female resident with weight issues -- and that it would be funny -- she just said 'Go for it.'" Fans will receive an early holiday treat when *Merry Christmas, Baby*, a Brava anthology featuring McCarthy's latest novella, hits the stands in October. *Mouth to Mouth*, her next Brava novel, follows in January 2005. The prolific author recently sold to Berkley Publishing as well.

"What makes writing for Berkley different (from Kensington) is the sensuality doesn't need to be an underlying theme in the book," McCarthy said. "The books are sexy and funny, but the emphasis is more on a witty 'tone' as opposed to extremely explicit love scenes. I've had a lot of fun switching gears for my Berkley releases, and the first two books will take place in southwestern Ohio, in a fictitious town filled with restless ghosts. The first release, *The Spirit's Guide To Dating*, will be out in July 2005."

In addition to her publishers' marketing efforts, the author promotes her books through her Web site ([www.erinmccarthy.net](http://www.erinmccarthy.net)), online reader chats, and appearances, such as Central Ohio Fiction Writers' Oct. 2 and 3 booksignings.

**Meet the author**

**What:** Erin McCarthy, author of *Houston, We Have a Problem*, will sign copies of her erotic romances at two multi-author book-signing events.

**When & Where:** Saturday, Oct. 2, from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel Columbus-Worthington (7007 N. High St., Worthington, Ohio) and Sunday, Oct. 3, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at the Upper Arlington Barnes & Noble book store (3280 Tremont Road, Columbus, Ohio).

**For more information:** Call the Radisson Hotel at 614/436-0700 for the Oct. 2 book-signing and the Upper Arlington Barnes & Noble at 614-459-0920 for the Oct. 3 book-signing.

**Related signings include:**

Oct. 2 and 3: Author Stella Cameron will appear at a multi-author book-signing at the Radisson Hotel (7007 N. High St., Worthington, Ohio) at 2:30 p.m. on Oct. 2 with Becky Barker, Toni Blake, Dianne Castell, Paige Cuccaro, Jamie Denton, Lori Foster, Karen Harper, Rosemary Laurey, Toni Leland, Michelle Levigne, Gennita Low, Erin McCarthy, LuAnn McLane, Catherine Mulholland-Spaulding and Justine Wittich. She will also appear at the Upper Arlington Barnes & Noble (3280 Tremont Road) at 10:30 a.m. on Oct. 3.

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