
Creative Spaces with Romantic Suspense Author Marcia James



In At Her Command, a comic romantic suspense, the DEA, the FBI and the Washington, DC police unknowingly put operatives undercover at the same X-rated club and sexy sparks fly.

At Her Command is Marcia James' 1st book available now from Cerridwen Press.

The Where: My office occupies a sunny, second-floor room that faces the front of our house. This is very convenient for spotting mail and UPS deliveries, just one of the many ways I procrastinate.

First Glance: I have framed movie posters on my walls – including *Ghost* and *Bull Durham*. I chose the posters for their “inspiring” photos of yummy men like Patrick Swayze and Kevin Costner.



Creative Enhancements: Because I hear the music in printed words, I have never been able to write with music playing in the background. So my creative enhancements are more eclectic than a CD player or a TV. They include a 1950's slot machine bank, a collection of movie- and TV-themed items from my “day job” writing corporate video scripts, and an assortment of stuffed animals my husband gave me on special occasions.

Most Helpful: My L-shaped desk and my ergonomic chair are the most helpful things in my office, although I've been experimenting with balancing on an exercise ball while I type. No, I'm not crazy. This actually causes you to sit with better posture and can boost your core strength at the same time. It's not conducive, however, to swiveling to answer the phone or to check something in my thesaurus.

Creative Nemesis: Email is the hands down winner. I'm so addicted I keep my email server open in the background behind my WORD manuscript so I can jump over to check incoming email whenever I hear the click that signifies a new one. I've had to go on "digest" with all of my professional email loops so I get their emails in digests of 10 – 25 emails vs. getting individual emails whenever someone posts to those loops.

Filling the Well: I've been blessed (cursed?) with a quirky outlook on life. To me, everything has a humorous side, and I see the comic possibilities in most things. For example, sparrows love to nest behind the shutters outside my office window. Unfortunately, they also like to flirt and mate on my window sills, creating a racket even when the windows are closed. I write "hot, humorous romances," and the sparrows always seem to pick the days I'm penning love scenes to create their birdie version of a Greek chorus.

Keeping Track: I use "dual document editing." This means, I have two documents open at the same time—my manuscript and a support document containing a breakdown of all of the characters, a timeline of the book and a summary of the chapters. Whenever I write a description in my manuscript (what the heroine's house looks like, what the hero likes to eat, what the villain drives), I copy-and-paste the info into the character breakdown in my support document. This way, if I get hundreds of pages into my manuscript and can't remember if the bad guy drives a gold or silver Lexus, I just go to my support document and look up the villain's information. It's saved me from many a continuity error.

On the Move: Very rarely, I'll take my laptop and my manuscript on vacation with me. I have this fear of having two versions of my manuscript—one on my home computer and one on my laptop—and accidentally deleting or overwriting the most current version of my manuscript. Yes, I know I can change the file names to avoid this, but it still makes me nervous.

Effects of Setting: In my office, I have lots of fun things to fiddle with when I'm brainstorming a plot point or trying to conjure up the perfect word. These include a beanbag ball sporting the statement "I'd rather be playing poker" and one of my self-promotion goodies—a working thumbcuff keychain. Unfortunately, there aren't any keys for the thumbcuffs, so I have to be careful not to lock anything important in the cuffs!

On the Nightstand: I have two books: an ARC (Advanced Reader Copy) of Patricia Sargeant's Kensington romantic suspense, *You Belong To Me*, and Paige Cuccaro's sexy *Queen of Hearts* e-book from Cerridwen Press. (It's loaded on my old Rocketbook e-reader.) I highly recommend both books.

Designer Help: I'd love built-in shelves with drawers and spaces for office supplies and resource books. Of course, a dumbwaiter that sends up food from my kitchen would be lovely!

Last Word: *At Her Command* features a tiny Chinese Crested hairless dog who works for the DEA as a drug-sniffing dog. I use a caricature of this dog on my Web site and on all of my promotional materials. This image always makes me smile, getting me in the right frame of mind to write comic romantic suspense and mystery. I just might have to add a Chinese Crested to all of my future books!

Visit Marcia James online at www.MarciaJames.net