

Naughty & Spice

And you thought we were just bad in our books...

« Speaking of Hair

**FOUR-LEGGED AUTHOR PROMOTION, or
How to Reach Animal-Loving Readers** By Marcia James

Spice Girls Books
Available Now

Karen Erickson
Lillian Feisty
Amie Stuart
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I love reading romance, especially if the novels include four-legged characters! And as an author, I enjoy including animals in my books—in particular, Chinese crested hairless dogs. Smokey, the “crestie” who works as a DEA drug-sniffing dog in my comic romantic suspense, *AT HER COMMAND*, was so popular, I adopted him as my author logo.

So I can attest to the pull of animals in fiction. They are a wonderful hook to encourage pet-loving readers to check out your book. And as a workshop presenter on author promotion, I can offer the following suggestions for inexpensively promoting your pro-animal books:

- Google Alerts – Many authors set up Google Alerts for their book titles and pen names. But you can also set up an alert for a topic, such as the breed of animal in your book. For example, I can set up a Google Alert for cresties and comment on any blogs that mention cresties. You can also do an online search for blogs about animals and comment on those blogs.

- Niche Marketing – Most libraries have a reference book on groups and organizations, e.g., The Association Book. You can check to see what organizations are listed for the breed or type of animal you are featuring in your book. For example, I could look up “Chinese Crested dogs” or just “dogs”. The book will list the contact information for the group and whether they have a newsletter or email loop. You can send a press release about your book (tailored with the group in mind) and even ask if someone in the group might be interested in reviewing the book for their membership.

- Tie-ins With Local Events – There are lots of opportunities to promote and sign your book outside of bookstores and libraries. If your book features an animal character, you could sign copies of it at a pet supply store or during a pet adoption fair.

- Tie-ins With Holidays – Most libraries have Chase’s Calendar of Events, a great reference for fun holidays. For example, you could send a press release to your local newspaper and tie your book into an animal-themed holiday, e.g., Hug Your Cat Day (May), Take Your Dog To Work Day (June 26th), or National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week (November).

- Cross-Promote With Other Authors – Other pro-animal authors will kindly agree to let you guest-blog about your book (Thank you, Shelli!) or interview you for their Web sites.

- Use Animal-Themed PR Materials & Giveaways – All of my promotional materials include my dog logo, which has proven popular and memorable. Readers also like animal trinkets, such as stuffed dogs or cat squeeze toys.

- Support a Pro-Animal Cause – Authors occasionally donate a percentage of their royalties to a good cause, such as a no-kill animal shelter, and mention this in their press releases. Encourage the non-profit organization to feature your book in their contributor newsletter.

The authors of TAILS OF LOVE took this concept a step further. We’re donating all of our (and our agents’) proceeds to Animal Adoption Foundation (AAF) a no-kill animal shelter in Hamilton, OH. This benefit anthology is the pet project (pun intended) of New York Times bestselling author Lori Foster, who contributes a story 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. The ten of us have been blog-touring, chatting up the book on email loops, and sending out reader e-newsletters citing reviewer praise for these pro-animal short stories.

The TAILS OF LOVE stories are PG-rated, which usually doesn’t limit the promotional avenues available to an author. However, the sensuality level of “naughtier” books can affect your PR options. For example, AT HER COMMAND is set in a sex club, so I didn’t approach my local pet store about signing copies at their location. 😊

Speaking of AT HER COMMAND, I’m giving away a free download of my comic romantic suspense to a randomly chosen commenter on this blog. I’d love to hear about your favorite romance featuring a pet, as well as your favorite pro-animal book promotion.

Thanks, Shelli, for this opportunity!
– Marcia ;-)

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