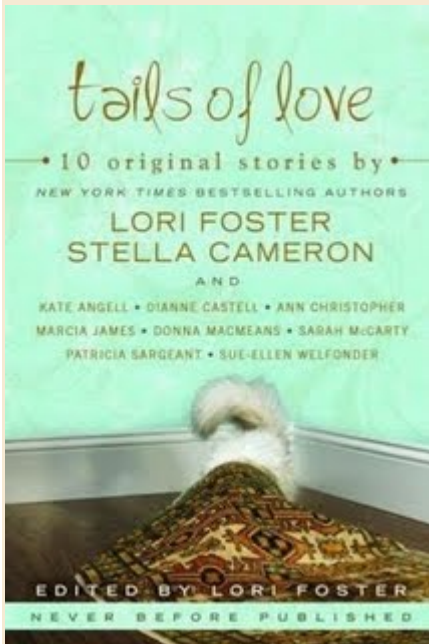




THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2009

## I Heart Pro-Animal Heroes!



*Something Wicked would like to welcome Marcia James! She's one of ten authors who donated short stories to the Berkley anthology, Tails of Love, which has raised \$10,000 since June for an Ohio no-kill animal shelter. In "Rescue Me", Marcia's contribution to this fundraising book, ex-quarterback Adam "Nuke" Baumgardner saves a starving stray, and the Chinese crested hairless dog returns the favor by reuniting him with his lost love, veterinarian Claire Mendelsohn.*

Here's Marcia in her own words:

I love reading love stories featuring four-legged characters. Yes, shape-shifters are sizzling hot, but I'm talking about your basic dogs and cats. Nothing makes a hero more lovable than watching him bonding with a kitten or rescuing a puppy.

In Hollywood, screenwriters have long used the animal-themed short-cut to humanizing a character. When someone onscreen pets a dog, you know s/he is a good person. Remember *As Good As It Gets*, when Jack Nicholson's curmudgeon falls for the toy-sized dog?

I'm a sucker for Alpha heroes who like animals, and you'll always find pets in my "hot, humorous romances". My author logo is Smokey, the Chinese crested hairless dog from my first novel, *At Her Command*. Tiny "cresties" are the perfect comic sidekicks for my big, macho heroes. And writing about animals ties in with my avocation-supporting animal causes on a local and national level.

This first week in November is National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week, the perfect time to read about matchmaking animals in a romantic novel-like *Tails of Love*! 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 authors Kate Angell, Stella Cameron, Dianne Castell, Anne Christopher, Donna MacMeans, Sarah McCarty, Patricia Sargeant, and Sue-Ellen Welfonder. Each of the ten stories features an animal-from cats and dogs to a monkey and a pygmy goat. And all of the authors' and agents' proceeds go to the [Animal Adoption Foundation](#) in Hamilton County, OH.

*Tails of Love* is available in trade paperback from online stores such as Amazon and from brick-and-mortar stores, like Barnes & Noble.

What is your favorite fictional four-legged character? Leave a comment (including your email address) to win an e-book of my comic romantic suspense, *At Her Command*, starring Smokey, the undercover DEA drug-sniffing "crestie".

Who is my favorite fictional four-legged character-besides Smokey, of course? I have a soft spot in my heart for the crime-solving Siamese cats, Koko and Yum-Yum, from "The Cat Who..." mystery series by Lilian Jackson Braun.

Happy National Animal Shelter Appreciation Week!  
-- Marcia James