



## Interview with Marcia James!!

Please give us your website addy, a list of your books and a short bio.

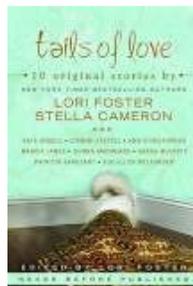
**Website:** <http://www.MarciaJames.net/>

### Book List:

Sex & the Single Therapist, 1st "Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist" comic romantic mystery



"Rescue Me", a short story in the Berkley Tails of Love anthology



At Her Command, a comic romantic suspense  
Love Unleashed, a contemporary romance short story  
Heating Up the Holidays, a contemporary romance novella

**Bio:**

Marcia James writes hot, humorous romances and finished in eleven Romance Writers of America contests before selling her first comic romantic suspense, *At Her Command*. In her eclectic career, she has shot submarine training videos, organized celebrity-filled nonprofit events and had her wedding covered by *People Magazine*. In addition to writing fiction, Marcia presents author promotion workshops. After years of dealing with such sexy topics as how to safely install traffic lights, she is enjoying “researching” and plotting her novels' steamy love scenes with her husband and hero of many years.

**How do you usually come up with a story idea? Dreams? Writer's journal? Eavesdropping on conversations? Newspaper?**

I enjoy playing "what if...?" games when plotting. For example, "What if a female sex therapist became a sex crimes consultant for the Las Vegas police? And what if she was dating a homicide detective who was worried she'd grade his performance in bed?" ;- ) I find quirky things amusing and enjoy making my heroes and heroines "fish-out-of-water" in humorous situations.

**Who or what inspires you when your creative mojo is lagging?**

My husband is a great inspiration. I love his sense of humor and his willingness to brainstorm ideas with me. I can also fill the creative well by reading romance novels or watching funny movies and TV shows. I think the brain needs to be pampered just as much as the rest of the body in order for it to work at peak capability.

**Who is your Yoda—your seasoned mentor?**

I'm very lucky to be in the Romance Writers of America (RWA) chapter, Central Ohio Fiction Writers (COFW), which includes quite a few talented and helpful authors. COFW author Becky Barker is definitely a Yoda. She has "been there, done that" through her long publishing career. And she's always willing to share her knowledge.

**What importance do you place on writing workshops? What workshops would you recommend to us?**

I enjoy participating in workshops, as well as presenting them. Online workshops offer more detailed instruction, since they often last two weeks to a month. During my author promotion online workshops, I have the opportunity to brainstorm branding and PR ideas with attendees, which would take up too much time in my in-person workshops. Many writers focus on workshops about the craft of fiction writing but put off learning the business side of publishing -- such as promotion, contracts, and foreign sales -- until they get "The Call." Then they have to play catch-up during a very hectic time in their lives. Many RWA chapters offer online workshops, and Savvy Authors has an amazing selection of both craft and business workshops.

**What person would you like to thank for inspiring you in your writing aspirations? How did this person help you?**

My husband has given me unconditional love and support for many years, and he's the basis of every hero I write. My critique partners -- Regina Hart/Patricia Sargeant and Janie Mason, as well as a number of other COFW authors -- have been there for me through rejections and sales, offering feedback and motivation. And discovering Nora Roberts' books about twelve years ago inspired me to make the switch from advertising copywriting to romance writing.

**Have you ever used songs for inspiration?**

Funny you should ask that! I'm working on my next Dr. Ally Skye, Sex Therapist romantic mystery, and the secondary hero is the lead singer in a country rock band. He uses songs to romance women, but the secondary heroine is immune to his musical charms. I'm having a great time listening to music and choosing his "pick-up songs."

**Do you play music when you write? If so, what kind? Or, do you have to have silence or background noise to set your writing muse free?**

I don't play music while I write because I hear music in words -- cadence, alliteration, rhymes, etc. But I sometimes listen to a specific song to get into a certain frame of mind before writing a scene.

**Do you read in a different genre than you write? If yes, why? If you read in the same genre that you write, do you feel that it influences your writing in any way?**

I enjoy reading mysteries as well as romances, since both offer readers a positive ending. When I read romances, I gravitate toward funny books, such as humorous historicals, lite paranormals, and comic contemporaries. Authors' voices are so different, I don't feel these books influence me and the way I write, beyond putting me in a good mood. ;-) But I don't read mysteries or romances set in Vegas, since I want to write my Sin City-set series the way I see Vegas; not how other authors have experienced the town.

**What is your process from idea to first draft?**

I'm a plot-driven author, so I mentally plot out the story and make notes that become the "skeleton" of the book. I don't do a rough draft; I just jump into writing the opening scene. I write as clean and as detailed as I can during the first draft because I like word play and having sentences build on each other. Every day I begin by reading over what I wrote the day before, polishing it before I start writing new pages.

**Have you ever given assistance to a struggling new writer? Has another writer ever come to your aide? How?**

I critique manuscript pages for COFW aspiring authors and am a judge for the chapter's

Ignite the Flame contest. I always tell new writers to look for trends in the feedback they get from other writers and not to revise their manuscripts to accommodate every suggestion. After all, a camel is a horse by committee. I've had help from a number of authors over the years -- with everything from how to properly format a manuscript to introductions to their agents. Networking is a valuable thing in publishing, just like in any other profession.

**What do you consider your greatest accomplishments in your career so far?**

I've had several writing careers -- sometimes simultaneously -- including ad copywriter, corporate video scriptwriter, PR consultant, freelance journalist, and romance author. I've won contests and awards in most of those careers. I think my greatest accomplishment is entertaining readers, and I love hearing from readers who've enjoyed my books.

**If you won the big lottery, what would you do with the money? Would give any of it to charity? If so, which one?**

If I hit the lottery, my husband and I would travel the world because we love visiting new places and meeting new people. I would also donate money to charities, especially those dealing with animal causes (e.g., Best Friends Animal Society) and those fighting diseases, such as cancer and heart disease.

**What is the best advice you want to give to a new writer?**

The best thing a new writer can do is to simultaneously learn the craft and business of fiction writing. Studying contract clauses isn't as much fun as writing love scenes, but it's still important. A New York Times bestselling author once told me that she could walk into a room of writers and tell which ones would be selling in the future: the ones who approached writing as a profession.

**If you could choose an animal for a mascot, what animal would it be? What do you admire about this animal? Do you feel you have qualities similar to this animal? If so, what are they?**

I do have an animal as a mascot/logo: a Chinese crested hairless dog. I picked a tiny, goofy-looking "crestie" named Smokey as the unlikely undercover drug-sniffing dog in *At Her Command*. He was so popular -- and the perfect foil for the big Alpha hero -- that I've included cresties in all of my stories since. I admire the devotion dogs show their humans, but I didn't pick cresties because they had similar qualities to me. I use the logo to let pet-loving readers know that they will find dogs in my books.

**If money, education and fear factors were set aside, what three careers would you like to attempt other than writing?**

That's a really tough question! I've always wanted to write. I guess if I had to choose three additional careers, they would be pop singer, pro golfer, and zoologist/trainer at a

performing animals park. ;-)

**If money, talent and fear were no object, what big adventure would you like to have?**

I've always wanted to take an Orvis fly-fishing tour of New Zealand.

**What characteristics do you like to instill in your heroes? What characteristics do you feel are necessary for a good heroine?**

My heroes are strong, intelligent, and honorable, but usually so dedicated to their jobs that they don't have much of a personal life. My heroines are also strong, as well as smart, brave, and kind. But they don't give away their hearts easily. Both my heroes and heroines have to have a good sense of humor.

**If you had the power to change two things in the world, what would those two things be?**

I would instill tolerance and empathy in every human being, so we could end war and work together to solve problems like disease and hunger.

**If could have a super power for a day, what would it be? Why?**

Another really tough question! ;-) I guess I would pick the ability to time-travel and go into the future to retrieve the solutions to today's diseases and other global threats. Although, I have to admit that the ability to become invisible does offer some REALLY interesting possibilities!