

Interview with Patricia Sargeant

During the holidays I like to pick up books both from my favorite authors and new ones. I wanted to write this blog about the benefit of giving a new author a chance then decided why not interview one instead. I hope you enjoy my interview with Patricia Sargeant whose debut romantic suspense novel *You Belong to Me* is scheduled for release November 2006.

Did you face a lot of rejection before you received *The Call for You Belong to Me*?

Yes, I did. I wrote this story in 2000. It didn't sell until 2006. The journey to publication was quite the roller coaster ride. I'd get a request for a proposal or even the complete manuscript. The request would fill me with hope. How could it not? But then I'd either never hear back from the editor, or I'd receive a rejection that didn't provide any insight into how to improve the story. It was so frustrating. I'd actually given up on that manuscript when I finally received *The Call*.

What do you like about mixing sensuous romance and suspense?

I love romance and I love suspense. Together, they're a powerful combination. A well-written suspense keeps you in the story. At the heart of a good suspense is motivation. And what is the ultimate motivation? Love. Love of family, friend, country. Love makes you find the hero within you. That universal truth helps your reader relate to your character's motivation. Make your reader care about your characters - craft the connection - and they'll finish the story.

When did you know you wanted to be a writer?

When I was 9 years old. My sister introduced me to the joys of reading. I wanted to write stories that would transport people the same way a good book transports me. I knew I was a writer when, even though I wanted to give up, the stories kept coming.

Where's your favorite place to write and why?

My family room. I write in the evenings after work. I just like being in the same room with my husband at the end of the day.

Who gave you the most encouragement before you got *The Call*?

It's hard to measure who gave me the most encouragement. My parents, my siblings, my husband and my critique partner, Marcia James, were very supportive of my dream of becoming a published author. (It's appropriate that Marcia and I signed our first publishing contract the same year.)

I think the defining moment, though, is the hour I almost gave up. My youngest brother called to chat and asked how things were going. I'd recently accepted a promotion at work - what was I thinking??? - and I was feeling overwhelmed. Between my new job, my family, my personal commitments and my writing, I couldn't keep up. I told him something would have to give. I was thinking of giving up my writing. More than a year later, I still remember his exact words, "Don't give up your dream. Don't ever give up your dream. Even if you just write a little each day, don't give up your dream." I'm so very, very glad I listened to him.

What was the most ridiculous thing you'd ever heard about being a romance writer?

I have to pick just one? The comment that bothers me the most is, "Romance isn't good writing." Tell that to Shakespeare, the Bronte sisters, Homer. Do you think Ulysses was determined to return home after the battle of Troy because he wanted his throne back? No; he wanted his wife back. Isn't that romance?

There are extraordinary writers, good writers and not-so-great writers in every genre.

What would you like prospective readers to know about you and your books?

My stories place ordinary people in extraordinary situations so they can find the hero inside. For example, in *You Belong To Me*, the hero and heroine are stalked by a serial killer. They aren't trained to deal with a situation like this one. The hero is a movie producer; the heroine is a fiction author. How will these ordinary people respond to this extraordinary situation?

I hope when people read my stories, they're able to connect with the characters - their goals and motivations - and get carried along for the ride.

You can find out more about Patricia and her book at her website: www.patriciasargeant.com

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