

~ Marie-Nicole Ryan ~

I've had a life-long love affair with books. Like a lot of people, I thought I'd write a book some day. Since time passes so quickly (when you're supposed to be having fun), I found myself well into middle age and still no book--as long as you don't count the 100 pages of one I typed on an old portable Smith-Corona typewriter back in the late Seventies. *Love on the Run* was my first book published, and it was the realization of a long-held dream. Although I've spent most of my life working as an RN, I also found time to earn an associate degree in interior design, something that comes in handy when it's time to visualize a room. And since I can't resist placing my characters in danger, my medical experience isn't wasted either.



Thank you for joining Sensual Reads for this interview, Marie-Nicole! Tell us about your latest release *Too Good to be True*.



TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE is a sensual romantic suspense set in a small rural Tennessee county. It's very loosely based on an actual incident, the shooting death of a sheriff in his own driveway. In this story his daughter, Rilla Devane, is asked by the county commissioner to serve out the rest of his term. She's determined to find who ordered the hit and bring them to justice along with whoever is selling a deadly batch of party drugs to the county's teenagers.

Her prime suspect is a newcomer to Cherokee Springs, Mac Callahan, a published author supposedly seeking small town atmosphere for his current work in progress. Actually he's an undercover DEA agent who's been sent to the area to investigate the drug trafficking and the sheriff herself.

It's only natural they should meet and fall in lust.

Much like the characters in this book and you, I, too, am currently in Tennessee. What was it like basing a tale set in your home state?

It's so much easier writing about an area I know well...even if I'm using a fictional county. Cherokee Springs, TN, is based on an amalgam of a lot of small rural towns. I also love the eccentric characters I can create and use to populate my work.

When you are browsing the bookshelves - online or otherwise - and are in search for something new and different, what do you look for in a good read?

I always go for a nice thick romantic suspense, or mystery novel. I'm seldom disappointed with either genre. I love discovering authors I haven't read before. Marlis Melton, Warner Forever, is new to me. I just read *Forget Me Not* and loved it.

Do you think that you'll set future books in the beautiful state of Tennessee, or where would you like to build a story next?

Right now I'm working on a romantic suspense set in Nashville. It'll be the first of a series of six books based on a "Party of Five" type PI agency.

It's quite possible that I'll see you at the murder mystery event in Kingsport this October. Have you ever participated in a murder mystery before, and what do you expect this event to bring?

No, I've never participated in anything like that before, but I'm really looking to it. I'm sure it'll be a perfect experience to spark some story ideas for more than one author.

Tell us about your corresponding gig at the Kingsport Times News Women's Expo. This sounds like an exciting event!

It'll be my first Women's Expo, so I'm not quite sure what to expect. I know there'll be a cover model contest--and yes, I'm really looking forward to that event! LOL I know we'll have booksignings, and the chance to connect with a lot of women readers. I'll also have an opportunity to meet my publisher at Samhain Publisher, Cristina Brashear, for the first time face-to-face. She's done a fantastic job with the company.

CJ Hollenbach is sponsoring the male cover model contest. Who is your ultimate male cover model, Marie?

My ultimate male cover model would be an ABC soap opera actor, David Fumero, who plays Cristian Vega in One Life to Live. He's a hot, hot Cuban-American. He'd get my vote if he were in the running.

What's next for Marie-Nicole? Is there anything new in the works that you'd like to tell about?

I'm eighty-thousand words into the Nashville-set romantic suspense, and there are five more books to come--one for each of the members of the blended family, the Holt-Lackeys. BUT I have a November 06, 2007 re-release called LOVE ON THE RUN, revised and expanded from the original version. I also have the Sequel to LOVE ON THE RUN, titled ONE TOO MANY, which is more of a mystery/suspense with romantic elements. That's for release in late spring of 2008, followed by the release of HOLDING HER OWN in midsummer. HOLDING HER OWN is a romantic suspense set in New Orleans with two undercover FBI agents who infiltrate a gambling casino as newlyweds. They're anything but. Caitlin's in charge, and her partner Jake doesn't like it one bit, either.

Where would you like to take your writing that you haven't yet? Are there any new genres that you'd like to conquer?

I think my true calling is the mystery novel, even though they might not sell as well as romantic suspense. I'd love to create a wonderful character/s on which to base an entire series.

As an erotic romance author, how would you personally define both erotica and romance, and what would you say is the key for making the two fit together in literature?

My editor tells me I don't write erotica. LOL. She says I write more mainstream romantic suspense with graphic--sometimes very graphic--love scenes.

As for definitions, erotica is a story about sex. Romantic erotica is a story about a character's sexual journey, and they may portray BDSM, menage a trois, or hot man/man love. You won't find any of those in my work.

My stories are more mainstream in that the suspense element plays a large part of the story, and the hero and heroine fall in love along the way. I don't write about BDSM, menage a trois or hot man/man love, but I do write some pretty hot love scenes for my hero and heroine. Another element to my stories is the large dose of family drama I always incorporate. For example, in TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE, the heroine's mother, who ran off with a Ricky Skaggs roadie twenty-seven years earlier, returns to town with a secret of her own and complicates the heroine's life even further.

On this final note, Marie, when you pen the final draft of a book and it is edited and released, what do you hope for your audience? What do you wish to leave them with as they become one with each new piece?

I hope they have a fast and fun read, and that they don't regret having purchased it. I hope they'll think, "What else has she written? Where can I get it?" As far as I'm concerned, what I write is for entertainment, and I don't want to disappoint my readers. Samhain Publishing's motto "It's all about the story" is the best motto going whether it's about suspense, romance, a world of fantastical dragons, or a sensual journey on another planet. I want readers to love my stories. They may not appeal to everyone. No author can please every reader every time. The best any of us can do is tell our stories in the best way we can.

Thanks you again, Marie-Nicole, for honoring Sensual Reads with this interview! The best of luck on Too Good to be True, and we can't wait to see what you have in store for us in the future!

Thanks so much for taking time to interview me. It's been a lot of fun.

**Interview conducted by JL Foster
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