

Southern Sunshine (*or random thoughts from an often absent mind.*)

Contest and Interview with Marie-Nicole Ryan!

Posted on Tuesday, January 20, 2009 at 10:45 am

Category: [Author Days](#), [Interviews](#)

For a chance to win an autographed print copy of *Too Good To Be True* by Marie-Nicole Ryan, all you have to do is post a comment to Marie on this post!

Want a *second chance" in the hat? Send me an email to sscontests2@gmail.com with the answer to this question...

Which book of Marie's is an Eppie 2009 Finalist?

I'll let this contest run until Thursday January 22nd!



I'd like to congratulate you on your book, [Too Good To Be True](#), being a 2008 EPPIE winner and all the wonderful reviews you've received! Can you tell us a little about this book?

Too Good to be True is a romantic suspense very loosely based on an incident which occurred some years ago here in Tennessee: a sheriff was shot in his own driveway. I started with that as my inciting incident and asked what would his daughter, a detective with the Nashville Metro Police Department do to find his killer? It's pretty clear from the beginning the killing was a hit and related to the increase of party drugs among local teenagers. The tag line for the book says it all for the conflict of the story: The sheriff has the hots for her prime suspect. What's a girl to do?

How long have you been writing and what was your first published book?

I started my first manuscript in January of 1999 and completed it in September of 2000; however. It wasn't my first published book. That "honor" goes to Love on the Run in 2002 which was released by Wings ePress. Love on the Run has since been revised and re-released by Samhain Publishing. The mystery/suspense with romantic elements sequel to that book, One Too Many, has been named a finalist in the 2009 EPPIEs in the mystery/suspense category.

Do you plot out your stories first or do you let the characters lead you?

Early on, I tended to start with the characters and a bare thought or two of how the hero and heroine will meet, interact and fall in love. Of course, there's always a happily ever after ending. I still start with the characters, but I get to know them in a deeper fashion before I start writing. I also tend to pay attention to their journey as I progress through the story. I love Vogler's book The Writer's Journey and devised a spreadsheet based on it, so that I can figure out in a general way where the story is going and the turning points along the way.

What are you currently working on?

I'm currently working on my first novella. It's a historic western and I'm almost through the first draft. It's quite a departure for me since I normally write contemporary, but I had to throw in a bit of a suspense element to make it exciting for me.

Of all your characters, do you have a heroine that you identify with the most? If so, which one and how do you identify with her?

Randi from Love on the Run and One Too Many is the one who's most like me. She's braver than I am, younger and thinner, but she's a Tennessee gal at heart and extraordinary circumstances have brought her to the U.K. So at heart she's a lot like me, even if I'm still in TN and not romanced by and then married to an earl. She's the only one of my heroines, thus far, who has a child, so her fears and desire to protect her son are very real to me.

Is there a genre that you haven't written, but would like to try one day?

No. There was a time when I would've said "yes", but since I've now written a murder mystery, I can't say it anymore. I'm a tried and true romantic suspense lover, as well as a hardcore murder mystery reader. I would love to have a mystery series someday, but that would take a major career goal change. Right now, romance novels sell better than mysteries, too. ;-)

What is the best thing about your job as an author? What is the hardest thing?

The best thing is that I get to do what I love: tell stories. The hardest thing is whipping the first draft into a publishable book and finding someone who believes in me and my storytelling as much as I do. There's a tremendous amount of rejection and you just have to pull up your big girl panties and keep submitting.

Have you ever had any embarrassing moments at a book-signing that you can share with us?

OMG! Yes. Durring my 2005 trip to St. Louis for the RT convention, I managed to humiliate myself quite handily. I was seated next to a well-known author who has the same last name as I do. She was very gracious and someone asked if we were sisters. I, idiot that I was on that particular day, said no, but I wished she were my mother. Okay, you have to know this author was probably my age if not a few years younger. When I realized what I'd said, I would have cheerfully swallowed my tongue. I apologized and said I'd had a brain fart. But I think it's more of how I/we see ourselves as younger than we are. In my mind, I'm still forty. But that's the stupidest thing I've ever said or done. She remained gracious, but I was soooo humiliated.

Describe a day in the life of [Marie-Nicole Ryan](#).

Best case scenario:

I spring from bed at six to walk a minimum of an hour on my treadmill. Then I have a health breakfast. After breakfast I settle down to write from ten until twelve, creating a thousand words of pure elegance and excitement. I have lunch, record the Weight Watcher points and watch All My Children and One Life to Live. After that it's back to the computer for two more hours of elegant and exciting prose. After that I record my word count on my Excel spreadsheet, and I'm done for the day. My handsome prince returns home and we spend the rest of the evening making love.

The truth:

I drag out of bed anywhere from seven to eight, then immediately go to my recliner and laptop to read all the e-mail that ended up in my mailbox overnight. Then I might think about breakfast and how many Weight Watchers' Points it'll use. After breakfast, I head back to the recliner and laptop, read more e-mail. Tell myself that I'll start writing as soon as the news goes off, but I don't. Instead, I IM with one of my fellow Samhain authors. She keeps me up to date on all the Internet brou-hahas. I'll check the blogs myself. I might figure it's been long enough that I'd better post a new entry on my blog. (<http://marienicoleryan.blogspot.com>) I also check the Shades of Suspense blog which I moderate to see if the respective author of the day has posted a new entry. (<http://romanticsuspense.blogspot.com>)

By this time, I realize it's time for lunch and my soaps. I end up watching all three of them, then finally turn to the Soundscapes channel on my TV for my New Age background music so that I can block everything else out and get down to writing. OR I might remember that NCIS has three back-to-back episodes on USA channel and watch those. If this occurs, I'll be in bed writing on my AlphaSmart at ten just to get in some new words. I often write 500-1000 words this way, then I actually get up and upload it into my computer and clean it up. I am a serious procrastinator, and that's the real truth. Are you sorry you asked?

Favorites...

Favorite Season?

Spring.

Morning person or night owl?

Night Owl.

Favorite movie?

After this weekend, it might just be Australia. Loved that movie!

Favorite song?

I don't have one, but I love Bach's Brandenburg Concertos. I think the fifth one is my favorite if my memory serves, but they're all lovely.

Favorite color?

Red

Fun Questions...

If you had a shrinking device, what's the one thing in your house you'd miniaturize first?

LOL! Myself.

If a movie was made about your life, who would you like to see play the lead role as you?

Roseanne Barr because she would at least make my life seem funny.

If someone wrote a biography about you, what do you think the title should be?

How to Not to Accomplish Anything in Ten Easy Lessons.

Instead of leaves or money, what do you wish would grow on trees?

Good, decent men, who are loving and secure.

If you had to smell like one thing for the rest of your life, what scent would you pick?

Something clean and fresh: an orange maybe, something citrusy.

Marie, thank you so much for taking the time to do this interview with me!

Thank you, Cindy! It was my pleasure.

