

Newsletter – December 2005

BECOMING LATINA IN TEN EASY STEPS

Well, this is it!!! The release date is just days away now. On January 3rd, BECOMING LATINA will hit the shelves, and will hopefully be at your closest neighborhood bookstore. If you plan to buy the book, I encourage you to do so the first week it's out. In publishing, the book's "numbers" are very important and lots of times publishers rate the success of the book by how it does the first week it's out. Crazy huh? You can even pre-order it to make sure it's available.

Also, if you haven't joined my fan club, please do so. It's called Lara's Ayudantes. My ayudantes will receive special news and treats during the year that others do not. It's free. But in becoming an Ayudante you do things like go to your local bookstore and make sure the book is in stock or recommend my book to a friend. Things like that. Basically, anything you think will help with sales.

BOOKSIGNING AND RELEASE PARTY!

Though I know most of you are scattered all over the country, if you happen to live in Southern California, I want to invite you to attend my kick off book signing event at Barnes & Noble in Riverside, California on January 7th from 2pm to 4pm. Then we'll caravan to my home for a salsa party catered by my good friend Theresa at Elite Home Catering. Join me for as we celebrate with great music and little spice. And you can get your book autographed, of course.

MARCELA'S LIST OF 10

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!! I hope that your Thanksgiving was fabulous. Mine certainly was, and now I look forward to Christmas with the same enthusiasm as my children. I LOVE the holidays. And one of the things I enjoy most about the holidays is the music. Like everyone else, by the end of the season, I'm sick of listening to it, but nothing kick-starts the Christmasy feeling like music.

So, let me recommend a few of my favorites.

THE CHRISTMAS SHOES by Newsong – Sheltering Tree album

If you haven't heard this song, by all means, buy it! It's my favorite by far. Here are the lyrics:

It was almost Christmas time – There I stood on another line – Tryin' to buy that last gift or two – Not really in the Christmas mood – Standing right in front of me – Was a little boy waiting anxiously – Pacing 'round like little boys do – And in his hands he held a pair of shoes – His clothes were worn and old – He was dirty from head to toe – And when it came his time to pay – I couldn't believe what I heard him say (CHORUS: Sir I want to buy these shoes – For my mama, please – It's Christmas Eve and these shoes are just her size – Could you hurry, sir – Daddy said there's not much time – You see mom's

been sick for quite awhile – And I know these shoes would make her smile – And I want her to look beautiful – If mama meets Jesus tonight) He counted pennies for what seemed like years – Then the cashier said, “son, there’s not enough here” – He searched his pockets frantically – Then he turned and he looked at me – He said mama always made Christmas good at our house – Though most years she did without – Tell me sir what am I going to do, - Somehow I’ve got to buy these Christmas shoes – I just had to help him out – And as I laid the money down – I’ll never forget the look on his face – When he said mama’s gonna look so great (Repeat Chorus) – BRIDGE I knew I’d caught a glimpse of heaven’s love – As he thanked me and ran out – I knew that God had sent that little boy my way – To remind me just what Christmas is all about.

MARY DID YOU KNOW by Clay Aiken – Merry Christmas With Love album

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN by Bruce Springsteen. His voice is to die for.

PLEASE COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS by The Eagles. I’ve loved this from the Ally McBeal. Did anyone ever watch that?

SILENT NIGHT by Gloria Estefan – Christmas Through Your Eyes album

FELIZ NAVIDAD by anyone

Even though we don’t have 10, I’m going to stop here, because I really love all Christmas music. The above are simply my very favorite. I hope you are able to enjoy some of your favorites this holiday season

May you all have the very best Holidays this year. I wish you much happiness and love!

IN THE PUBLISHING WORLD

For all those who enjoy watching American Idol, I thought you might enjoy knowing that in the world of books, we have our own version called, the American Title contest. Here is some info:

During the American Title II competition, which will include five rounds looking at various portions of the contestants’ unpublished novels, voters will be asked to pick their favorite authors. Much like the popular television show American Idol, the contestants with the fewest votes will be eliminated from the competition. Visit www.romantictimes.com each month to vote for your favorite entry. The next voting round starts Dec. 19th to Dec. 31st and will ask you to pick the best hero and heroine.

But make your selection carefully. Each reader gets only one online vote per month. Generally, the two contestants with the lowest scores will be eliminated each month, until one lucky winner is announced in the June 2006 issue of Romantic Times Bookclub Magazine.

RT and Dorchester couldn't be more excited about this new batch of contestants. "There's a wide range of settings and time periods, and some incredibly fascinating characters," says Dorchester senior editor Leah Hultenschmidt. "I'm really glad that the voting rests on the RT readers because I know we'd have a tough time picking just one."

Portions of the contestants' novels, their competition progress and their biographies can be found in monthly Romantic Times Bookclub Magazine, which is co-sponsoring the contest with Dorchester Publishing.

But let me introduce you to two of the contestants.

Theresa Meyers

Always a writer, for newspapers, then for magazines, Theresa wrote her first novel in high school. She eventually enrolled in a Writer's Digest course and joined Romance Writers of America in 1993. Since then, she has written several books. She lives in a Victorian house in the Pacific Northwest with two young children, three cats, a dozen chickens and the first man she ever dated. Theresa shares, "Many people aren't aware of how tough it is to break into the fiction market. I've been writing novels since graduating college, while working full time and have completed four to date. But even with an agent, this is the best odds I've had of getting published in ten years."

Theresa's novel, *THE DEVIL'S MAIDEN*, is a historical romance based on the actual witch trial presided over by King James VI of Scotland, who became King James I of England at Queen Elizabeth I's death in 1603. "The research for the novel into the witch hunts of the time was extensive, but added a lot to the characters and story," she said. "I'm hoping that being in the American Title II Contest is the start of a long publishing career in fiction, but that's up to the public. Their votes are what decide the winner."

Michele Ann Young

Michele grew up in Britain and majored in literature and history, fascinated by the glittering elegance of the Regency era. Now she lives and writes in Canada with her English husband and two beautiful daughters. Each year, she returns to Britain to steep herself in family and to explore new settings for her novels. She loves to imagine her spirited heroines facing challenges still relevant today. About the contest Michele says, "This is a such a fun contest. I love the idea that it will bring my work to the attention of readers who enjoy historical fiction with a little bit of spice and lots of action. I hope they get as much enjoyment out of reading the excerpts from my novel as I did in writing them."

Michele's American Title entry is novel *NO REGRETS*. In the Spring of 1816, Viscount Lucas Foxhaven, an incorrigible rake, persuades childhood friend, Caro Torrington, to marry him in name only and solve their vexing financial problems. The bargain leads them into unexpected passion and a risky adventure from the sedate drawing rooms of

London and Paris high society to intrigue in the romantic countryside of Champagne. But when the danger is past and they return to England, will either of them have no regrets?

Isn't this fun? To find out about the rest of the contestants visit www.romantictimes.com

CONTEST

The winner for the November contest is: Kimberly Beauchamp of Vancouver, Washington.

Congratulations! She has won the wonderful coffee table size book, Salsa Cooking by Marjie Lambert. Enjoy!

For December, I'm happy to announce that I'll be giving away a Lara Rios gift basket. It will contain all my previous releases (all two) and many other goodies so you can kick off your shoes and relax as you enjoy the books. Don't forget to visit my website and sign up!