

# Teacher Talk

## BOOK 2

A COLLECTION OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES  
FOR TEACHERS



WRITTEN BY  
**MARSHA MARIE**

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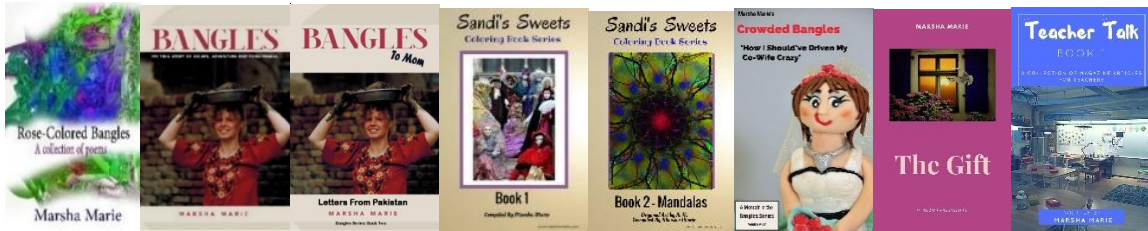


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- ***Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness*** (Bangles Series, Book 1), Indie Published, 2016.
- ***Sandi's Sweets Coloring Book Series***, Book 1 and 2, Indie Published, 2016. Not for Sale: For Domestic Violence Shelter's only.
- ***Bangles to Mom: Letters from Pakistan***, (Bangles Series, Book 2) Indie Published, 2016
- ***Crowded Bangles: How I Should've Driven My Co-Wife Crazy***, (Bangles Series, Book 3) Indie Published 2016.
- ***The Gift: a mini-memoir***, Indie Published 2017
- ***Teacher Talk: A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers, Book 1***, Indie Published 2017

Teacher Talk –Book 2

Teacher Talk  
A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers  
Book 2

By Marsha Marie

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Second Publication (Articles originally published in UAE, in 2012.)

This is a work of nonfiction.

Edited by Marsha Marie.

Book cover by Marsha Marie.

This book is dedicated to all the dictionary lovers in the world.

“Impossible is a word to be found only in the dictionary of fools.”

Napoleon Bonaparte

**From the author:**

Hi. I’m Marsha "Yasmine" Marie.

I was born in Ohio, but was raised in Phoenix, Arizona. At 25, I found myself trapped in a difficult and abusive marriage. Out of desperation, I went against court orders and threw myself into a 22-year-long self-exile in Asia. I ended up in a remote farming village in Pakistan with my two small children in totes---ages three and five. I lived in that incredibly modest farming village for the next 14 years; knowing that I could not return to my homeland in the States.

Although the 14 years in the village was lived out surprisingly pleasant, I yearned for a change of scenery and lifestyle. I then packed up and moved to ‘big city’ of Islamabad. Once there I gained invaluable life experience. For instance, I joined the faculty of one of the most popular universities---teaching English and communication skills. I also trained American Accent to call center agents. I volunteered as member of a human rights committee monitoring jail conditions, and I did lots of voice-over work for local radio. Surprisingly enough, one of the local TV stations even decided to make me the topic of a mini-documentary. (Too funny to watch, really!)

Two years later, I was off spreading my wings again—this time to the United Arab Emirates. It was an amazing experience indeed. There I continued my English teaching studies and received an influential CELTA certification from the University of Cambridge in London. After which, I was given the opportunities to teach in a college, university, in private homes, royal palaces (training sheikhs and princesses). I was also invited to hold classes for the President's staff at his office in Al Ain. The most challenging of all was when I worked as Head of English Department for a year at a K-12 school with over 1,000 students. (Now that was a handful!) Altogether, I taught English writing and communication skills in UAE for about seven amazing years—loving every minutes of it! (Okay,,,,almost every minute of it.)

After upkeeping a few websites and blogs for my students as part of my teaching toolbox, I was requested to do some article writing for a couple of local magazines. They were mainly about English language development and mini-memoir pieces. It was during this time of my life that I fell deeply in love with writing and with its process; and I longed to continue with it. Recognizing that my life's story was unique, I knew that I would eventually write a book; but just didn't know when. I would tell myself, "*Not yet Marsha.*"

Long story short, I am back in the States and sharing my story with the world. I have dozens of magazine articles that were just hidden away; so I decided to republish them and share with teachers around the world. I hope you enjoy them in the series of four books, and I hope you will be interested in the rest of my story. (As a bonus, I have added chapter one of my full-length memoir, *Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness.*)

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### **\*\*Education Liability**

**Education Liability**.....what a mouthful!! As head of the English Department in a Dubai K-12 school--with 2000 students, I was bombarded on a daily basis with issues concerning education, teachers, and discipline. I had meeting after meeting with teachers, students, parents and educational gurus--all having their own concepts of what education is, and whose responsibility is it to administer it. And yet, the lack of responsibility that society itself takes when it comes to academic liability still astonishing to me today.

There are two main issues that really concern and provoke me the most. First of all, too many adults act--and even openly admit--that they have no goals in their lives—personally, professionally or academically. How can this be? If an individual doesn't know where they're headed in life, who else does know?

I think that it's safe to say, that most of us felt that education was something that was supposed to *happen* to us when we were in school. We waited for some mystical power to come and put the knowledge into our heads, with our without any effort on our part; and then leaving school (or university) finalizes the end of the learning process. Let's face it, when you're a child, you think as a child. However, as adults, we have come to know different. Unfortunately, too many people still do not understand that no matter what stage we are in life--whether married, or already established in our career--**we should never stop learning**. It is *our* responsibility to keep the learning process alive within us. The rule of our physical mind is: *use it, or lose it*. We shouldn't let a day go by that we are not striving to better ourselves somehow; for example, learning a new skill or another language.



Unfortunately, what's even more disheartening is that more and more of the younger generation today is going through our educational systems with what seems to be steadily declining concern for guidance, ambitions and goals. It seems as they are high-speed racing cars spinning around a race track, without any prize at the finish line. There is no beginning, and there seems to be no ending in sight. They are in auto-drive, simply going through a process, just running the laps as fast as they can in order to achieve passing marks, and nothing more. But, what will be of their future? Who will guide them to set goals? What has happened to education liability?

My dream in this imperfect world is to implore the parents and the teachers--whom have the lives of these precious young people in their hands--to look at their own personal role in this accountability equation. Parents and teachers alike must share in this task and show the children of this country that young people need to put their energies more into academics, and less into video games and lazy idleness. They have been tricked into believing that a never-ending race around a make-believe track *is* the real world. Truth be told, if our children are not going forward academically, then obviously, they are going backwards; while the rest of the world is pushing ahead.

We cannot keep telling our children that they can make it in the universities in the highly-developed countries around the world, without properly preparing them. I am shocked when students approach me and tell me that they are heading to London for university, and yet they cannot write a simple letter in a proper English format. Most likely, such students will suffer in the end. We--parents, administrators and teachers--must help them overcome these academic weaknesses.

Moreover, parents and educators alike should continue their own educational development in order to make *themselves* more capable of passing this *baton of academic goals* to the children of our communities. The good news is, that it is never too late to start. Start today and invest the time and effort in yourselves and your children! Start a library in your home. Teach your children the love of reading at the earliest age possible. Instead of video games and Internet chatting, make

education and studies the most important thing in their world. Children need our guidance! Work as much as you can with your school's officials to bring about the best in your child's today, and their future.

### **\*\*Reflecting Yesteryears**

Our learning experiences from our childhood, adolescence, and young adulthood can have a tremendous impact on the way that we teach today. Not only can these learning experiences show us what to do as teachers, but they can also show us what *not* to do; particularly when considering the different aspects of teaching, such as, conducting assessments on student achievement, our teaching style and delivery, or even our student rapport.

Have you ever thought to yourself: *Am I a product of my learning experiences?* The answer is most likely, yes. Let's think about it for a minute. Do you remember the first time you got up and spoke in front of the class in your high school, or those times you had to read out loud to the class and your stomach went into a frizzy? Do you remember receiving a low mark on something you really worked hard on and never understanding why? Do you remember how your teachers made you feel in class, or how they handled your endless questions?

All of these experiences during our educational past directly affect who we are as teachers today. Let me share a good example with you. My third grade class was doing a Show-and-Tell activity, and I chose to present our puppies that were just born at my home. I remember that the kids went crazy and I received an impressive A-grade. But now when I think about it, I wonder why I received that mark. Was it the fact that the puppies were so cute, or was it that I was an extra-talented third-grade presenter? *Odds are the mark was for the puppies.* Consequently, I now wonder how it made the other students feel when they received lower marks. This whole *cute puppy experience* of mine taught me what *not* to do with my students today. For instance, I carefully

consider what I am assessing during student presentations or writing assignments. I make sure to give them a clear rubric—detailing exactly what I am looking for and how they will earn their marks.

No secrets, no surprises!

On the other hand, my schooling history had some good points too—several wonderful math teachers. Because I was a terror in learning math, I had to move along in very small steps. My teachers took the extra time needed for me, and never got angry or frustrated. For this reason, I learnt the true meaning of patience. They were the finest examples of what I *should* do in the classroom while teaching grammar and pronunciation to my students today.

All in all, teachers these days are likely better trained than before; even so, it can be very enlightening to reflect what we have learned from our classrooms-passed, thus helping us to discover what shaped us to be the mentors we are today.

### **\*\*Education is Worth the Trip**

One of my favorite memories of school field trips was the day my first-grade class went to the Phoenix Zoo in Arizona. *Ah yes! It was just like yesterday.* I strutted around the zoo with my brown-bag-lunch in hand and quarters in my pocket—I was a miniature queen. It was an incredible day filled with a train ride and a lot of different animals. But, it was the event just after lunchtime that I remember the most.

While walking amongst the playful deer, I decided to pull out some chocolate-chip cookies. Instantly, I was pounced-on by a baby deer, which seemed to be the size of a semi-truck. I ran for my life! It didn't take long for me to figure out that the deer was after my chocolate-chip treasures. So, like Jack-be-Nimble, I sprinted toward my teacher and slipped the cookies into her open purse and fled. It was only a split-second later that the deer rammed itself head-first right into the teacher's

bag. She let out a piercing screech; and the kiddy-crowd went wild! Bambi had turned into a wild hunter. What an exciting day at the zoo for a bunch of five-year-olds!

As you see, field trips are exhilarating part of childhood memories. Of course any teacher who has ever monitored a school outing will vouch that field trips are a lot of work and responsibility. But the benefits of a jaunt outside the classroom are well supported.

For instance, school-supported outings:

- **Develop stewardship, awareness, and brings the community together:** Trips to parks or national monuments can help children to develop a sense of belonging to the city or country. They can also introduce special emphasis on different concerns. For example, climate change, social issues or pollution.
- **Reach adults through children:** Children take back their experiences and share with their families; this in-turn helps spread information and new ideas.
- **Lend legitimacy and credibility:** Of course outings to the zoo and wild life preserve are great fun, but through field trips children can learn the underlying purpose of these very establishments.
- **Reinforce classroom instruction in a way that is not available for the teacher:** Only so much can be done in the classroom; but a trip to see how the giraffe eats or how a snake slithers is something only the five senses can appreciate. In so many cases, outings can mesh beautifully with school curricula and lessons.
- **Unite learning with peers with special experiences:** Children learning with others in their own age group, or level, are particularly beneficial. Plus nothing can replace the memories of experiencing real places, and real things.

Remember the saying: *I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.*

**\*\*I'm Not Board at All**

Of all the items in my classroom, I think that the whiteboard has got to be the most essential item that I use. I cannot image my room without it! It plays a role of some sort in nearly every lesson I teach. *An incredible invention indeed!* But have you ever thought about the history of classroom boards? I did, so after some snooping around on the Internet I was able to visualize and understand a bit more of its historical legacy.

**THE BLACKBOARD:** The blackboard, or chalkboard, is said to have been invented by a high school Headmaster, named James Pillans, possibly around the very late 1700s. Although the exact date that Pillans began using the blackboard is still a mystery. It is known, that he used it to teach geography. *Smart guy!*

Blackboards have remarkably enabled teachers to share ideas with large amounts of students at one time, as opposed to a single student at a time. There is no doubt as to why it became a revolutionary item. The only drawback is that some teachers and children are allergic to the chalk that is used to write on it. Likewise, this same chalk dust causes havoc with computers, thus a cleaner solution was needed. *Welcome in the whiteboard!*

**THE WHITEBOARD:** Although the whiteboard, or erase-board, first appeared in the market in the 1960s, its acceptance and evolution was a bit slow. It didn't become an educational hot item until the 1990s. Granted the whiteboard's true origin is debatable, but no one can dispute its worth in today's classrooms. It is easier to clean, and the uses vary only as much as the teachers imagination! But wait, there's more! The board just got smarter! Now let's welcome the Smart Board.



**THE SMART BOARD:** The SMART Board was introduced by Smart Technologies in 1991, giving us the perfect blend of *computer and board*. This innovative tool is an interactive board that allows the user to maneuver around a software application by simply touching the projected image on a big screen.

Needless to say, as all technologies have advanced, so has the means of education. For example, online students have reached a remarkably high number, and as a result, this online-necessity has brought us the Blackboard Learning System.

**BLACKBOARD INC-** Around 1997, Blackboard Inc. supplied us with a virtual classroom management system that is easy-to-use and allows online teachers to communicate and assess their students more efficiently.

One thing's for sure, anywhere around the world, online or in a classroom, the board plays a vital role in teachers' lives. An incredible history for an incredible tool!

### **\*\*Little Blue Dictionary**

I present you a tale of a discovered treasure! My story begins when my two small children and I left the States to begin a new life in Pakistan. My dear mother helped me pack to ensure that nothing necessary got left behind. As we packed, I asked my mother if I could take along her paperback dictionary. A strange request indeed, but my mother was more than happy to give her permission. I tucked it away safely in my bag. *Why did I just do that!?*

A month went by, and I became bored out of my skull living on the farm; after all, the only thing to do was to look at the family cow! One day, feeling desperate for something to do, I went rummaging around in my luggage hoping to find something—anything! Suddenly I ran upon my mother's dictionary. An idea struck me. *I could READ the dictionary!* So, I sat outside in yard and opened it up. That was the mystical moment for me! Reading that little blue dictionary became an

obsession; I couldn't get enough. I spent hours upon hours reading and analyzing words that I had never seen before. Each page was a captivating adventure for me.

To this day, my love affair with dictionaries continued, beckoning me to know more of their history. Did you know that the first dictionary is credited to the Akkadian Empire? Tablets were discovered in Ebla (modern Syria) and dated roughly 2300 BCE. These historic tablets were written in cuneiform and contained Sumerian—Akkadian wordlists. Interestingly enough, it wasn't until 1604, that the first purely English alphabetical dictionary titled, *Table Alphabeticall*, was created by Robert Cawdrey, an English teacher.

(And, have you ever wondered why British spellings are so different from American spellings? Well, we have Mr. Noah Webster to thank for that.)

Twenty-five years has passed since my mother gave me that little blue book—a cherished treasure that travels with me from place to place. The pages are yellowed and frayed. The binding taped over and over in attempt to keep it composed. Occasionally, I take my tattered treasure into the class so my students can see first-hand the token of my favorite little love story.

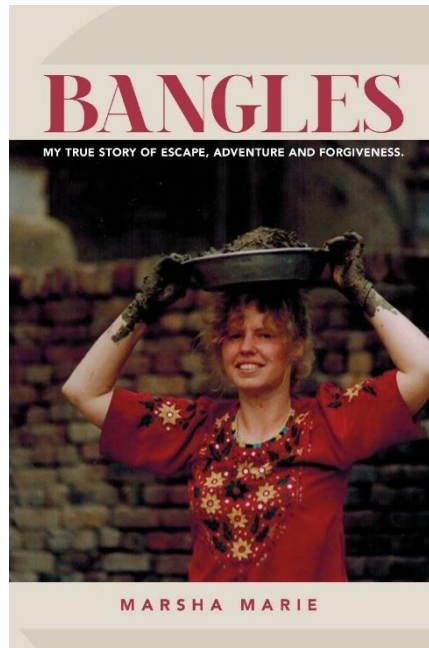
*Woe is me!* If only we could help today's generation to fall in love with words, as I did that day with my little blue dictionary.



Marsha 'Yasmine' Marie is a author, human rights activist, public speaker, radio personality, voice-over artist, blogger, vlogger and mom. She has also worked as an English department head, English instructor, American accent trainer, and communication lab designer. Marsha was born in Ohio, but then raised in Arizona; to escape and domestic abusive relationship, at 25, she moved to the Middle East---where she lived and taught for over 20 years.

She's now back in Arizona and lives with her children. She has joined forces with RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, and the Arizona Coalition to End Sexual and Domestic Violence and is currently a member of various speaking bureaus to share her story. She is also working on her upcoming radio show, *The Izz Wow Radio Show*---a show focusing on her love for Middle Eastern music and women's' issues around the world.

Check out [www.MarshaMarie.com](http://www.MarshaMarie.com) for updates, information and upcoming titles.



## **BANGLES: Chapter One: Surrender**

**by Marsha Marie**

Twenty years of running ends today—March 1, 2014. As a result, I am sitting here on an international flight, wedged between my daughter and a young handsome Marine going home on his leave. I’m heading towards Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport to turn myself in.

The plane ride is long and tense. I've been chatting on and off since we left Dubai, trying to keep my mind busy. I can't believe I'm finally bringing this to an end. I've taken my head scarf off for the first time in years. I feel an unusual sense of freedom, but shyness at the same time.

Mona, now twenty-five, has been my greatest support and comfort. She calls Dubai her home and rejects the idea of returning to the States, most likely because she fears what lies ahead. Nevertheless, she stays positive.

“They are not going to take you,” she says, reaffirming herself more than me. “You have to think



positive, Mom."

"Okay, dear. I will," I say with a slight tremor in my voice.

Walking down the long carpeted hallway of the terminal, I feel as if everyone around me knows who I am—knows of what I have done. But in reality, each of the passengers is in their own world, clambering to see who can get to the immigration counter first. The lines are lengthy, but just as well for me.

Wait! Is that my heart pounding? Can everyone hear it? I feel as if I am in Poe's "Tell-Tale Heart." My booming chest will surely give me away.

I step up to the counter. This is it. The man asks for our passports, and I hand them over. I try to breathe, but I feel as if an elephant is sitting on my chest; it's just too heavy to bear. "Breathe, Marsha! Damn it," I scream to myself. "They'll know something's up!"

The immigration officer is wearing a typical black police uniform, safely tucked away in his little Pope-like glassed area. Tick, tick, tick on the keyboard. Each stroke—taking me closer to exposure. Will he discover in the system that I am wanted by FBI? Will he know that I have been eluding the authorities for the last twenty-two years?

Yes, he will. And he does. I see it in his eyes. I guess it's true; a criminal can always tell when they have been made.

He tries to make small talk with me about Dubai. But each stroke on the keyboard seems more urgent, more excited as he informs his colleagues on the other end of the intranet about me. I know on the inside that he is jumping up and down like a screaming little kid, "I have finally caught somebody! Come and get her!"

Suddenly, I see a large police officer standing to my right. "Can you go with this gentleman, ma'am?" the immigration officer says. Slowly and steadily we follow as I grasp Mona's hand. He leads us to a large deserted area in the terminal. About four other officers are huddled together, as if in a football game.

As I watch them discussing nausea sets in. After a minute or so, one of the four separates and comes towards us. “Ma'am. Are you aware that there are two arrest warrants out for you?” the officer inquires.

“Yes, I do,” I say. “Can I get my attorney’s letter out of my bag? I can show you that I am surrendering myself—to clear all of this up.” I continue as I reach in my purse for the letter, “My son should be right outside waiting for me. Can I call him?”

“No! No calls,” one officer from the desk area quickly snaps back. The officer standing near me takes the letter and returns to his group.

Mona starts to tear up; the pressure is now too much. This has just gotten real for both of us. I grab her hand again and hold tight—a feeble move to calm a young autistic lady who hasn't been separated from her mother in the last twenty-two years.

“Everything will be okay, sweetie. Don't worry, I have this all planned out. I have to turn myself in. They will let me out in a couple of hours. This is all part of the process.”

“Marsha, we have just spoken to your son outside. He is waiting for his sister,” the officer informs me. “Please stand up. You are under arrest; we have to take you into custody.” Like clanging church bells in my ears, the finality of it all has hammered down. I embrace my daughter and try to calm her tears.

“Why are they taking you? You have done nothing wrong!” she bursts, unable to bear silence any longer.

I try to calm her. “Sweetie,” I say, “your brother is just outside the airport. This officer will take you to him. Okay? I will be fine. This is what I came back to do. I have to do this. For all of us.”

The officer leads my precious Mona away from me—out of the terminal and towards her awaiting brother. She is sobbing. My heart is breaking. My legs go numb, and I have to sit down. A woman officer comes towards me and asks me to stand back up, then handcuffs both hands behind my back. The clasps of the cuffs echo through the empty terminal. I am escorted to the awaiting police vehicle outside.

The cuffs are cold and hard, making it difficult for me to sit in the back cab of this small pick-up truck. The escorting officer bizarrely asks me about Dubai. “Yeah,” he says, “I’ve always thought about going there.”

“Really?” I reply, almost reminiscent, with a touch of regret for having just left. “It really is an amazing place.”

My holding cell. Could this be any smaller? But still, nothing like I had imagined. The walls are made of cement block, with a cement shelf built into the back of it. The shelf is about two and a half feet off the ground. The entire room is painted a shade shy of daisy-yellow, and the door is oversized and metal. A woman officer un-cuffs me and asks if I would like a drink of water. “Yes. Please,” I barely utter. “This room is awfully small. Can you leave the door open for me? I’m extremely claustrophobic.” The woman very politely—and surprisingly—agrees. (You never know when you’ll get what you ask for.)

I sit on the hard cool shelf, like an obedient child who has just been given a time-out, and watch them as they cluster around the desk reading and discussing my profile on two different computer screens. I eventually get tired of trying to eavesdrop, and look to the floor to size up the room. “Six feet by four. Yuck! Please God, don’t let them shut the door.” I pray this under my breath with all sincerity.

“Is it true?” I hear suddenly. I look up and see one of the officers is slightly leaning against the metal door frame, with his arms crossed. “Are you really surrendering yourself after running for twenty-two years?”

“Yes,” I say, without even a touch of pride.

“That took a lot of courage,” he replies. “Well, I think you’re doing the right thing by turning yourself in. Don’t worry. This will all be just a memory in the morning.”

After a while the woman officer returns to me. We are going to transfer you to the main city jail now. I will have to put the handcuffs on you again. I stand up and go along without any kind of hesitation. One of the male officers escorts me out to the transporting wagon, or paddy wagon as some call it. He opens the little cab area between the driver's seat and the back cage. He guides me in. It is cold and dark—almost black. The seats are hard plastic and my hands hurt pressing against them. I try to scoot over, but my long tight skirt is only complicating matters. I half lean over and my head rests on the side of the cab just behind the driver's side; my feet are still behind the passenger's side. I give up trying to move any further. The only light I can see is from the streetlights looking out the front windshield through the metal screen that separates me from the front. Suddenly, I feel true isolation for the first time in my life. Such intense loneliness I have never felt before. I begin to weep softly.

A few seconds later, I hear a voice coming from behind me. "Mom. Whadja do?" I'm a bit taken back. It's a young male's voice coming from sheer darkness. Not knowing if I am annoyed that someone is getting up in my business, or relieved to hear a human voice in my darkest moment, I barely give the effort to turn my head to see who is speaking to me.

Oh, what do I even say to THAT? I don't reply but continue to sob.

He says, "Oh Mom, don't worry. Everything's gonna be okay. You'll see the judge in the morning and you'll get to go home. Morning will be here before you know it." Then the voice goes silent again. A driver climbs in the front and we're off. I peer out my screened opening to see if I can recognize Phoenix. I recognize nothing.

We arrive at the main city jail, or "the matrix," as the streets call it. I continue through a rigorous and calloused check-in process, from one small holding cell to the next—all serving different functions: mouth swabbing, groping, finger-printing and of course the infamous mug shot. Like controlling cattle, the door opens to one of my holding cells. The officer calls my name and tells me to stand behind the podium for my picture to be taken—leaving me open for yet another opportunity of enquiry. "So-o," the officer says, all drawn out. "I hear that you have been hiding out for over twenty years. Is that true?"

"I am not proud of what I have done," I murmur.

With amazement in his voice and almost a chuckle, he says, “Well, you’re either really good, or we’re really bad?” It almost sounds like he wants me to answer the question, but then he quickly adds, pointing at the card taped below the camera, “Go ahead and look at this card right here.” Snap! “Turn.” Snap!

After the mug shot, the officer instructs me to go to the nurse’s station. This main function area is now co-ed. The female nurse sits behind a huge desk. She is wearing a typical white nurse’s uniform. She looks over at me and says, “I am going to ask you some questions and you just answer. Okay?” I shake my head, agreeing, another tear streaming down.

“Do you smoke?”

“No.”

“Do you use marijuana?”

“No.”

“Do you use heroine?”

“No.”

“Have you ever shared a needle with anyone?”

“No. Really, are all of these questions necessary?”

“I’m sorry, but I have to ask them.” She continues, “Have you ever been a prostitute?”

“No!”

“Have you... Have you... Have you...?” The questions keep coming.

“No...no...no...” I answer with mirroring rhythm.

Finally, the nurse says, “You know what? Looking down this list, I don’t think we need to continue. I can already tell what the answers are...”

Suddenly, just as she was ending the sentence, a mammoth of a man inside the holding cell directly behind me starts slamming his fists on the metal doors and screaming profanities at the top of his lungs. I jump in surprise as fear strikes through me as lightening. I begin crying even harder—but now out of terror. The man keeps pounding and pounding on the door. Three officers bellow at him to calm down. He doesn’t stop. The door flies open. They tackle the man and start tazing him.

My entire body is literally shaking by this point. “I don’t belong here!” I sputter at the nurse, knowing very well she can’t help me.

She leans in closer to me over the desk and says, “Do you want to know how to survive in here?”

I shake my head as if to say: yes.

“Just focus inward. Try to block out everything that is happening around you . Okay? You will make it through the night.” (Again, a voice of reason comes to me when I most need it). She continues, “It’s nice seeing someone that really doesn’t belong in here—if you know what I mean.”

I nod, wiping another tear away. “Thank you.”

I get up and walk to the next process station. I take a seat at the beginning of the long bench. As we are called, we move down to the right. In due time, I make it to the end of the bench. My tears have dried for now. A young boy seats himself next to me. I continue looking forward. Suddenly, I hear him say, “Are you okay, Mom?”

With instant recognition, I look up towards the boy. It’s the same voice I heard in the dark hole. With a half-smile, I reply, “Yeah. Yeah. I’m okay.”

“Has anyone told you what will happen tonight?”

“No. No one.”

“Once you’re done here, you’ll go out into the hall in the next room. They’ll search you again and then take you to another cell for the rest of the night. Then in the morning you’ll see the judge, and then you’ll get out. Don’t worry. It’ll go by fast.”

“Thanks. What’s your name?”

“Kevin.”

“Thanks, Kevin.”

Again they call my name and take me to the next hall just as Kevin had said. The beckoning officer politely instructs me. “Stand here, young lady. Remove your coat and shoes.”

A woman officer heads over with surgical gloves on.

Oh my God. What is she gonna do?

She stands directly in front of me and says, “Bend over at the waist and hang your arms straight down.”

I oblige without saying a word.

“I am sorry for doing this,” she says. She runs her fingers along the bottom-inside of each cup in my bra. She then grabs the middle area where the cups are joined, and shakes it to and fro. Then she says, “Now put your hands against the wall.” Another patting down.

Again? How many times are we gonna do this tonight?

“Alright, put your stuff back on and stand against that wall.” The officer then leads me down the hall into my next holding tank. It’s about 2 a.m., and there are about twenty-five women sprawled out like cats sleeping on the benches and the floor. The room has two phones on the wall to my right, and a u-shaped cement bench to the left. There is a toilet against the back wall and a green thirty gallon garbage can by the toilet. How odd. I find a narrow spot along the middle of the u-shaped

bench and settle in—nothing to do but wait for my attorney to arrive.

As women often do, I carefully chose my wardrobe for the arrest. Unfortunately, I didn't consider that I might have to sleep on the floor of the city jail. I'm wearing my favorite long Turkish black skirt with a black turtleneck shirt, my bluish-purple power-blazer, black high-heels, and—to top it off just right—a multi-colored long mini-stone necklace. Maybe I over-thought it just a bit—and by the looks of it, I am the only one who did. Some of the women have dirty jeans on, some shorts and tank tops. One lady even has her house slippers on. But the thing freaking me out the most is this young girl who's scratching and shaking. Forget her dirty clothes; she has scabs all over her body. What is wrong with her? I later found out that she was a Meth-addict. (This was my first encounter with someone who was on Meth. It was not pretty.)

The cement holding cell is chilly, with a dirty brown cement floor, and a pungent metallic smell. Suddenly, my claustrophobia kicks in. I find it harder and harder to breathe. My eyes begin dashing to and fro, looking for a passage for air. I lock onto the two-inch space under the steel door. I convince myself that the air coming from under the door is just for me. I can actually see it flowing towards me; it's invisible, but I can see it. "Okay, calm down. You can do this. Breathe... Breathe..." I say to myself, between each long gulp of air. I start to relax. My breathing stabilizes.

One of the girls gets up and uses the toilet. Oh my. Am I supposed to look the other way? After she finishes, she lies down in a different spot. I notice a depleted roll of toilet paper next to me. The other girls are using the rolls of paper as pillows. I had better take that and keep it with me for later. I slyly snatch the roll and press it flat, stuffing the roll into the left front facing of my blazer. Okay, now I'm ready just in case. (That stash of toilet paper came in very handy later that night, as the call of nature came to light in the most inappropriate way for public display. I tried to scrape up some self-respect by using the garbage can as a barrier. (Not one of my funner moments in life.)

Around 5 a.m., we are suddenly jarred alert by an officer at the door. He yells out that it is time to eat. Like a scene in a zombie movie, the women begin rising from the floor and take a spot on the bench. I wonder what they serve in jail. The officer leads a young man in an orange prisoner jumpsuit holding an open box with clear baggies spiking out the top; he couldn't be more than twenty-four years old. Without uttering a word, he walks around to each woman in the cell and offers them the three entrée items from the menu tonight: One small bottle of school cafeteria fruit juice, one hamburger bun, and one baggie with a few tablespoons of creamy peanut butter.



The two “waiters” leave the cell and the women begin devouring. I decide that it’s best to ration. Who knows when my next meal will be? So I take a few bites of the bread, and suck some of the peanut butter for flavor. I savor it slowly, and then down it with a small swish of juice. Once the women have finished, they return to their spots on the floor and benches, and drift back off to sleep again. I sit silently in the same spot, thinking. Keeping my food supply near—and just thinking.

Time crawls its way to morning. The sound of the keys rouse me. Finally. Maybe it’s time to see the judge? They call out a list of names. Yes! Thank God! I wait anxiously for my next instruction. He tells us to line up against the wall outside in the hallway. With my peanut butter and juice bottle in tow, I accept my place in line and follow the lead. We walk slowly with no sudden movements into a small white room. Again they take my fingerprints. A lady officer looks at my food and says while pointing to a trash can, “You can’t take that with you inside to see the judge. You need to dump it here.”

There goes my food supply.

The officer leads us into the courtroom next door. It’s cold, and much brighter compared to the holding block—mostly white floor and walls.

Hey, where’s my lawyer? I look around and keep thinking that he will come into view at any minute, but he isn’t. The proceedings begin anyway. A recorded male voice comes over the speaker: “You have a right to...” The words fade into the background. I whip my head to and fro. Where is my attorney? He is nowhere to be found.

A female judge, sitting on a circular brown platform, calls my name with authority. “Marsha Marcum.” I walk to the marked spot as one does on a performance stage. “State your name and date of birth, please,” the judge commands.

My voice crackles as I answer her.

The judge continues, and without any explanation announces, “Because of your record, you will remain in jail until your hearing.”

What? My legs go numb. Oh my God! I'm going to jail? Where is my attorney? This was not supposed to happen like this.

Suddenly, I remember that my attorney had scheduled a quash warrant hearing for me. I finally muster the courage to speak to the judge. “But, Your Honor, I came to America for a quash hearing,” I say with great desperation. “I thought my attorney would be here for me right now, but he isn't, and I don't have his number with me. My purse went home with my children.”

“Okay. Let me look into it. Go back and sit down. The bench will call you up when I am ready.”

My mind is racing a thousand words a minute. I begin mumbling to myself, “I shouldn't have come back home. This was not supposed to happen like this. Where is my attorney? Oh God, what have I done?”

After what seems like hours, but in reality is only about thirty minutes, the judge calls me back to the bench again. “We looked into it, and yes, you do have a hearing set in a few days. I will go ahead and release you.”

Oh, thank God! “Thank you, ma'am,” I say.

I am transferred to one process room after another. Each room is getting smaller than the one before. I wait anxiously to be released. I am still trying to fathom what in the world happened with my attorney. Why didn't he show up? I replay it to myself over and over again. We had this planned out for well over a year.

The final process room has a phone in it. I try to call my son to let him know that I am being released. But I can't remember the bloody number. I think as hard as I can, but it's just not coming to me. Luckily, one of the other girls being released is calling her mother on the phone next to me. I ask her if her mother could go onto Facebook and let my son know what is happening—it's worth a shot, anyway. After twenty minutes, her mother has found him. “He is on his way,” she says.

Awesome!

At last, the final door of the matrix opens. I step outside with great anticipation, but nothing greets me except a light shower of rain. But I'm not sad. I'm back home. I made it to America. These cool refreshing drops are a welcome change from my former desert refuge. At last, appearing from around the corner, I see my son and daughter on American soil. We embrace. This is the first day of a lengthy legal battle, but my two children are here beside me, to love me, to support me and my past decisions.

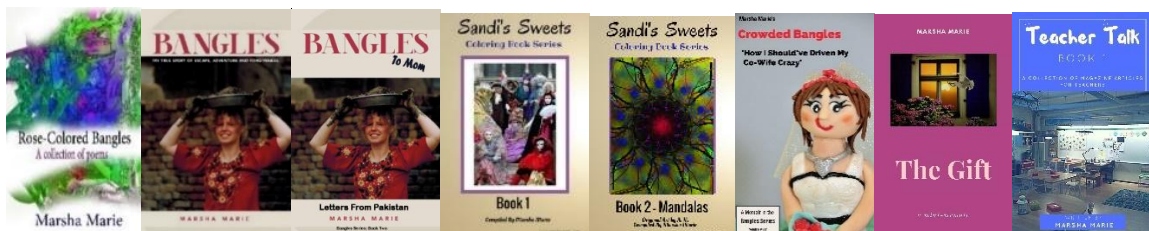
“Son,” I anxiously ask, “where's my attorney? Did you call him and tell him I was arrested at the airport?”

“Oh yeah...” he says, “I forgot.”

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## *Books by Marsha Marie*

*www.MarshaMarie.com*



- ***Rose-Colored Bangles: A Collection of Poems***, Indie Published, 2016. (Bangles Pre-Launch release.)
- ***Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness*** (Bangles Series, Book 1), Indie Published, 2016.
- ***Sandi's Sweets Coloring Book Series***, Book 1 and 2, Indie Published, 2016. Not for Sale: For Domestic Violence Shelter's only.
- ***Bangles to Mom: Letters from Pakistan***, (Bangles Series, Book 2) Indie Published, 2016
- ***Crowded Bangles: How I Should've Driven My Co-Wife Crazy***, (Bangles Series, Book 3) Indie Published 2016.
- ***The Gift: a mini-memoir***, Indie Published 2017
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