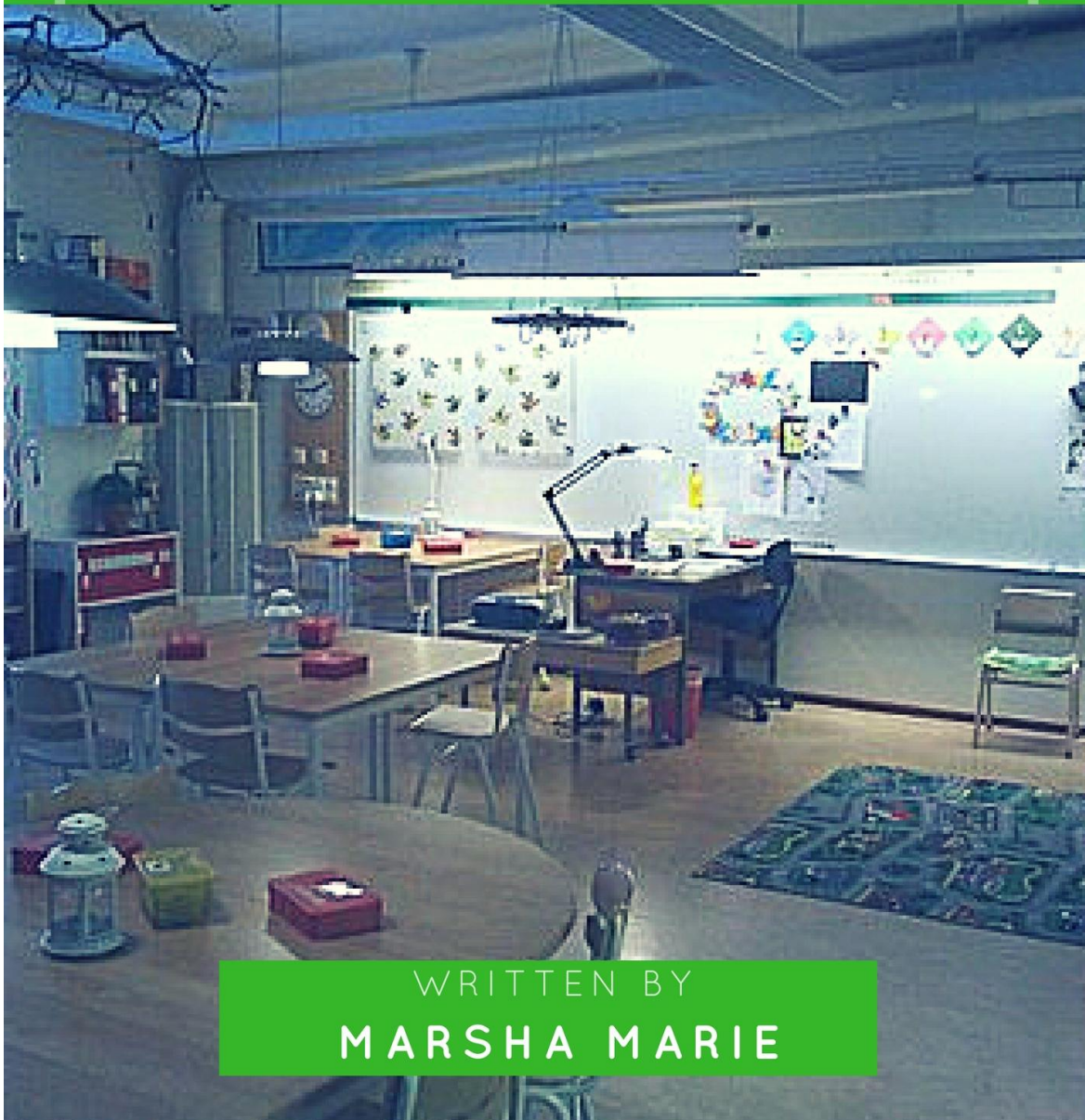


Teacher Talk

BOOK 3

A COLLECTION OF MAGAZINE ARTICLES
FOR TEACHERS



WRITTEN BY
MARSHA MARIE

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- ***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
- ***Teacher Talk: A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers, Books 1 and 2***, Indie Published 2017

Teacher Talk –Book 3

Teacher Talk
A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers
Book 3

By Marsha Marie

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Email: marsha@marshamarie.com

Visit the author’s website at www.marshamarie.com.

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 students of the world. They deserve the best from us.

Good teachers know how to bring out the best in students.

Charles Kuralt

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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****Dear Teacher**

Let's imagine getting a letter from a student that goes something like this.

Dear Teacher,

Things aren't always that easy for me to say. I try to get my feelings out, but too often they just won't manifest the way I want. I know that school is good for me, and it's preparing me for my future; I get that point. But, what about now—my present? Lately, I have been wondering why you never ask me how I feel, or want. I mean, is following the schedule and curriculum all that school is really about? Well, if you were to ask me today what I need, this is what I would say to you.

First of all, I would like you to greet me each and every day I come into the classroom. Smile and say hi! When the week has finished, tell me to have a nice weekend. I know you say it to others, but why not me? But most importantly, when we're in class, pay more attention to me— notice me! Take the time to speak to me directly and personally; even if it is for just a few moments. Bottom line, I really want

know that you care about me as an individual, and that I'm not just a small drop in your sea of students.

Another important thing that I really need from you is for you to take the time to imagine things with me—help me dream! Remind me what I can do in life, and what I can be in life! Then once I have dreamt, show me how to achieve those dreams, and trust me enough to know that I will accept your guidance.

Do this by challenging and engaging me more in class. Show me how to handle the challenges that you give me, and allow me the time to think and reflect about them. I need that time to let things soak in. And don't forget, at the same time, keep me pumped-up and interested. Oh yea, and whatever you do, don't let me get away with low standard work—demand more of me!

One final note: give me the freedom to ask questions of you; even if my questions or comments are off-topic from time-to-time. I need to share with you how I feel and what I am thinking.

Thanks for listening.

Anonymous Student

****It's All in the Writing**

All too many times while teaching I noticed that boys act quite differently than girls. For example, one of my anecdotes that would work well in an all-girl class might flop miserably in an all-boy class. Why such different reactions? Fortunately, researching more on the subject has enlightened me—boys and girls are simply wired differently, therefore, they learn differently.

Schoolboys bring incredible energy into the classroom. Using this liveliness is a great opportunity for teachers, but we must understand how to do this. For example, boys accomplish

schoolwork much better with clear bullet-point instructions, timeframes to work within, and problem-based learning involving decisions or choices. Likewise, segmented tasks in the classroom are a great benefit for our young men --as they have a tendency to be better focused. However, in order to keep them interested in reading assignments, we should surround them with material that they will enjoy reading or we run the risk of them zoning out.

A very important fact to remember is that boys generally have weaker hearing than girls, so, if a boy seems to be disinterested suddenly, it may be simply because he cannot hear you. And finally, remember that boys need to be boys! They *love* having time for just pure boy-loudness. Whether, it's clapping loudly, tapping on the desks, or just a special time scheduled in their day to free-talk in class, it is great way to utilize some of their energy!

On the flip side of things, girls bring a certain spice to the classroom, with an added tendency to want to please the teacher. Luckily, teachers can obtain incredible results by channeling this quality during lessons and discussions. Although schoolgirls generally need more thoroughly explained instructions than boys, they do quite well with project-based learning. And thus can absorb new information better when they are able to make a connection with the real world. Likewise, schoolgirls do great with circle discussions, because each girl feels they can be heard and respected; *Think-Pair-Share activities* can be equally beneficial. However, be careful when using separate work stations, because, as opposed to boys, girls have a tendency to become stressed when given time limits, so let them move about the stations more freely.

A few final points, because these little ladies naturally have keener hearing, keep noise distraction to a minimum, and always allow them be creative with assignments--they love it.

Naturally, these are only a few differences, but they really influence learning styles, school performance and behavior; so understanding these types of psychological differences between boys and girls are just as important as understanding the various learning types themselves.

****Tot-Teachers**

As a parent and a teacher, it seems that I'm continually teaching *something* to somebody. However, lately I have been reflecting on lessons that my own children have taught me through the years. Here are a few of those invaluable lessons that these *tot*-teachers have passed on to me.

- **Money is not the key to happiness.** Happiness can be in hopscotch, a balloon, or even a paper football. Joy can be found in playing with friends, or swinging on a swing set. There's no need to go to far-away-places; delight can be found right in our own back yards.
- **Don't be afraid to ask why.** Too often we accept things without asking why. But asking *why* can present us the means to a deeper understanding, and personal growth. We ask *why* by reading, taking classes, or researching. Although, we may have to ask more than once to get a satisfactory answer, it's often worth it.
- **The world is an amazing place.** If you don't think so, then you're not taking the time to look around you. Up, down, and all around; children are amazed at every little detail they see. They marvel at colors, shapes and textures, and are constantly intrigued with how things work.
- **Seize the moment.** Children are spontaneous. They scream when they are frustrated, and cry when they are sad. They are genuine and free-spirited. True, as adults, we have boundaries to uphold, but we can learn to be more open with our true feelings.
- **You can be whoever, whenever you want to be.** Children are masters at improvisation. Their dreams come to life. They are dancers, artists, singers, or even monsters whenever want to be. No pressure, no *judgment*, just pure enjoyment.
- **Weird and wonderful is beautiful.** Just watch a child color. They generate vivacious combinations of objects and colors, and they love it.

- **Relationships don't need to be that complicated.** Children fight and make-up so quickly. But just as kids, we say things we don't mean in the heat of the moment. In that case, a time-out might just be the thing we need.
- **Being too serious ruins all the fun.** In today's stressful world, we need to learn to let-go once in a while. It's okay to laugh and play. It starts with a simple smile.

Lessons come from all aspects of life. I think that sometimes we get so preoccupied with adulthood, that we lose that image and reality of what it was like to be a child. Children of all ages are amazing teachers, too. Embrace your inner-child today.

****I Can Tweet, But Can I Search?**

Some time ago, my students persuaded me to start 'tweeting' online. At first I was hesitant, but now I have to admit, I am enjoying the interaction with them outside the classroom. It is quite apparent that digital literacy has jumped into the mainstream of education with full force.

Digital literacy can be defined as one having the skills to effectively and critically use, evaluate, and create information using a range of digital technology; for example, being able to use a computer, laptop, tablet, or cell phone.

Without a doubt, kids today are digital wizards. But we should ask ourselves: Are they really *search savvy*? Most likely, if we were to give our students a topic to research, they would quickly jump to the net and ask *Sir Google* for the information; then they would probably take the first piece of information that comes up on the screen. What they don't understand is that the items are most likely listed in the order of popularity, and are *not always the most reliable*. Thus, being able to critically search is an important aspect that needs to be developed.

Following are the levels to teach in order to guide our students to be more search savvy:

1. First, begin with critical thinking and language skills. Narrowing their focus to a more specific idea, and then selecting key words or synonyms that will help them to search out a given topic.
2. Next, show them how to utilize the diverse search tools that various search engines offer. For instance, searching by images, news, reading level or dictionary. Some add that the Boolean tools are useful to know. Here are some search engines that are very kid-friendly and would be great fun to practice on
 - a. Kids Click
 - b. Yahoo Kids
 - c. Fact Monster
 - d. Quintura Kids
 - e. Ask.com
3. Finally, demonstrate how to critically sort through the results. Take the time to teach about credible resources, scholastic-based resources, and valid resources. Some critical questions to ask when deciding if the information is credible is:
 - a. Who is responsible for the website? Is it from a trust-worthy organization?
 - b. Who is the author of the information? Does the author have any credentials or experience?
 - c. When was the information written? Is it current and still relevant?
 - d. Are the sources cited? Or is it just someone’s opinion?

Love it or hate it, the digital generation is here. Let’s teach our kids to use it with critical thinking.

****Calling All Writers**

November is approaching fast, and soon the inspired writers of the non-profit organization National Novel Writing Month (known as NaMoWriMo) will unite with fiery to punch out the tall tales that burn within. Come each November 1, aspiring writers from around the world take to their keyboards and feverishly attempt to write a 50,000-word novel in just 30 days. If the novelist is successful, they are awarded an official certificate and badge from the NaMoWriMo organization. But, if they don't make the mark, no harm done. You see, the fun part of this yearly event is the process of writing, and the personal satisfaction of fulfilling one's goal.

Amazingly, what started with just 21 NaMoWriMo writers (in 1999), has now skyrocketed to a booming 256,618 participants last year alone; all of them with a burning desire, and a tale to tell.

Tell me, do you have a story that is just dying to get out? Here is what to do:

1. Go to www.NaNoWriMo.org. Create an account and fill in the details of you and your upcoming novel.
2. Start outlining and planning your story, but refrain from any writing! You will get the chance soon enough.
3. On November 1, begin writing! *No real plot? No problem!* Just let your creative juices flow and keep typing. You will watch your own epic unfold before your eyes. Remember that your goal is to write 50,000 words by midnight November 30. Pace yourself and have a mini-goal each day (e.g. 1700 words per day).
4. At the end of the 30-day deadline, upload your novel for official verification. And that's it—you will be a novelist!

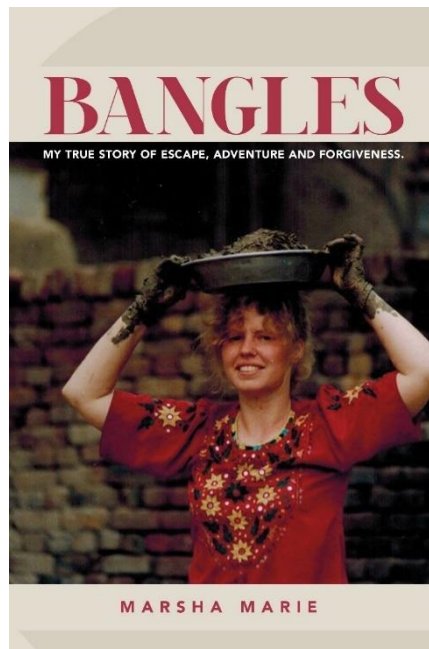
Besides all of this, an amazing part about NaMoWriMo, is the work that they are inspiring around the globe with young writers. This year, the Young Writer's Program (YWP) will support nearly 2000 classrooms and 60,000 inspired independent kid-novelist worldwide. What an incredible inspiration to all of us! What is more, the YWP website is *loaded* with resources for teachers, such as curricula, workbooks and even a classroom kit—for teaching NaNoWriMo in schools, libraries, and community centers. So this year, get those kids writing!



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 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."

Books by Marsha Marie

www.MarshaMarie.com



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- **Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness** (Bangles Series, Book 1), Indie Published, 2016.
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