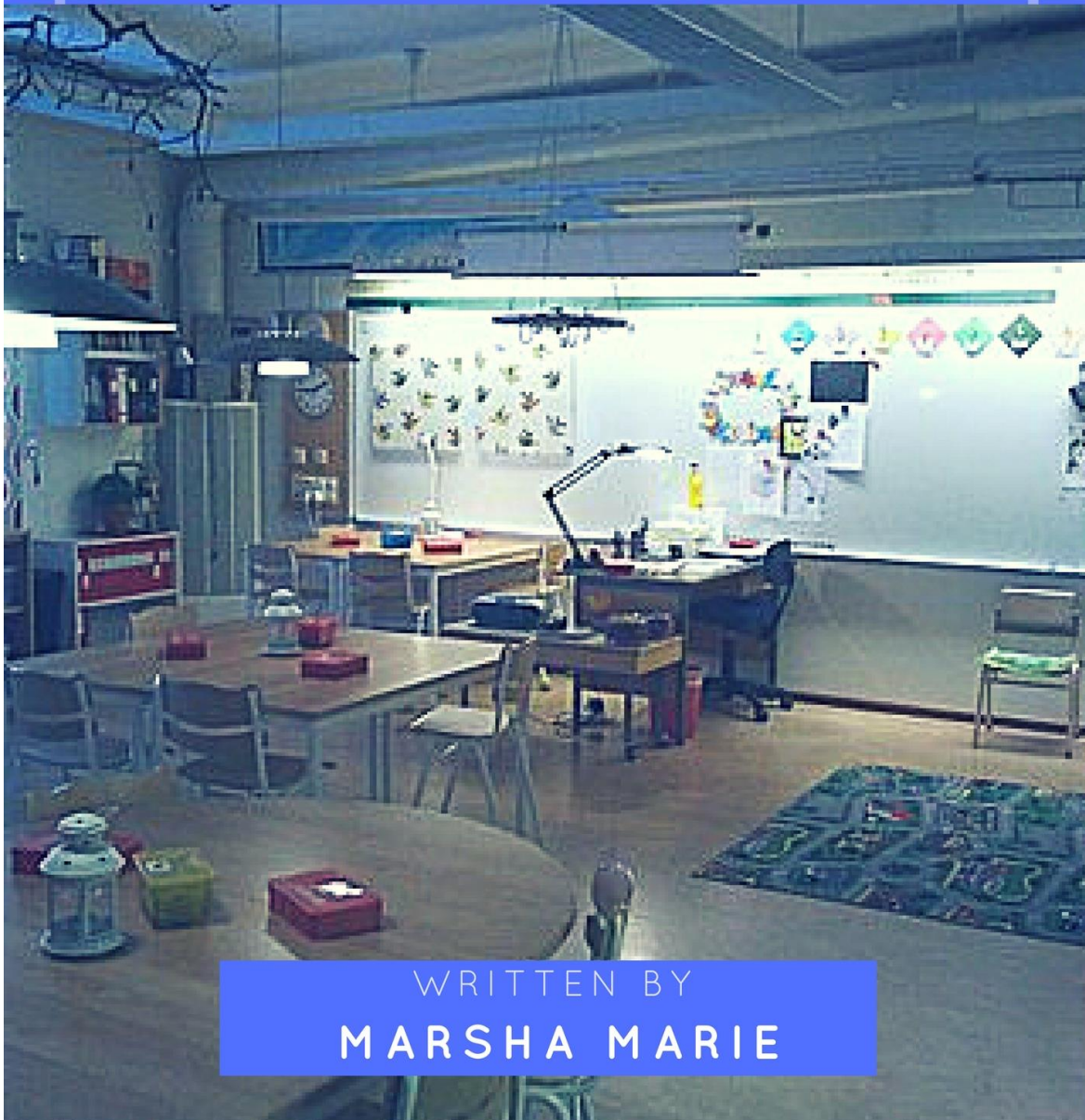


Teacher Talk

BOOK 1

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FOR TEACHERS



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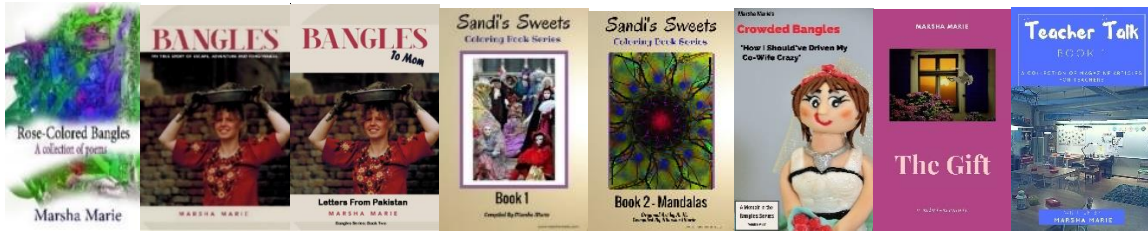


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- ***Rose-Colored Bangles: A Collection of Poems***, Indie Published, 2016. (Bangles Pre-Launch release.)
- ***Bangles: My True Story of Escape, Adventure and Forgiveness*** (Bangles Series, Book 1), Indie Published, 2016.
- ***Sandi's Sweets Coloring 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, Book 1***, Indie Published 2017

Teacher Talk –Book 1

Teacher Talk
A Collection of Magazine Articles for Teachers
Book 1

By Marsha Marie

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This is a work of nonfiction.

Edited by Marsha Marie.

Book cover by Marsha Marie.

This book is dedicated to all the teachers of the world. I love you!

“I am not a teacher, but an awakener.”

(Robert Frost)

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 tow---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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Veni Vidi Vici

It was 1980-something, in a middle-class neighborhood on the west side of Phoenix, a tall, thin, eccentric man with hair like Einstein's, ruled his high school math class with confidence and humor. Although I was awkward and rebellious those days, I couldn't wait each morning to get to Mr. Evanstock's class and see what kind of comical thing he would do next. It was normal for him to dance about like a mad man, quoting historical figures, and then somehow manage to link them to our math lessons. I remember thinking—*what does Caesar have to do with algebra anyway?* But according to Mr. Evanstock, a lot!

But today, how is it, that nearly 30 years later, I can still close my eyes and remember his face, his voice and his favorite saying? He would say "Veni, vidi, vici, I came, I saw, I conquered." He would say it with explosive contagious energy, while clinching one fist tightly in the air—an impression that would last with me a life-time. What is it that Mr. Evanstock had that the other teachers did not?

Being an educator myself, I have often pondered what makes a teacher unforgettable. Leading me to wonder what kind of teacher I am today. So since school season has teachers back to work in full force, it is a perfect time for all of us to do some self-reflection. What kind of educators do we want to be? What makes a *great teacher*? Let's look at some of those qualities.

Great teachers:

- **Set high expectations for all students.** (Students love the challenge and will appreciate it later.)
- **Have clear written objectives.**
- **Are prepared and well-organized.** (If we fail to plan, we plan to fail.)
- **Engage students and get them to look at issues in a variety of ways.**
- **Are respectful and form strong relations with their students, showing that they care about them as people.**
- **Master their subjects, are great presenters, and are diverse in methods of lesson delivery.**
- **Are inspirational and communicate well with students and parents.**

- **Are flexible and resourceful.**
- **Are always a student themselves.** (A learner produces a learner.)
- **Are creative, passionate, and humorous.** (Imagine a class without it.)

Regardless of the subject being taught, these are desirable qualities we should all seek. I now understand why I still admire Mr. Evanstock and remember him to this day. He mastered these skills; *he came, he saw, and he conquered* the art of teaching us mathematics. And now, I want to be an educator like him.

Read All About It

Imagine yourself on the busy streets of old London, when you hear a young boy cry out, *EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!!!* These words would ring out every day, enticing those who couldn't wait to get the day's newspaper with the latest news and current events. Now, let's jump forward in time to today. Think of the last time you went to the mall. The most common thing you probably saw was people staring at their mobile phones. (**BB this, and SMS that!**) Instead of the latest local news, folks are more interested in seeing who the latest person is to *LIKE* or *TAG* them on Facebook. Drastic change indeed!

What has happened to the love of *real* reading? You know what I mean, the pleasure and serenity with just sitting down with some book (in any language) and taking your time to embrace the ambiance of a heart-gripping scene as it unfolds in your imagination. Did you know, that statistics show that the average American reads anywhere from 11-15 books a year, and a British reader takes-in about 9 or so? However, I am sure that every teacher reading this today will agree that the number of books *our* students are reading is only a fraction of what we would like it to be.

Can I hear an AMEN?

So what can we do? I suppose the most basic thing we can do is bring the love of reading back into the forefront. Teachers, and parents alike, *can* make a difference. Here are some great ways to encourage our students and help revitalize this 'lost love'.

1. **Encourage students.** Show them that we care and want them to improve their lives by improving their reading skills. Positive reinforcement from both parents and teachers will go

a long way. A word of caution: don't force the students. Instead, try setting up regular timings in which the class--or family--reads quietly together. Let them choose the material to read, and let them start off light. Remember, we are starting a life-long habit, so don't push.

2. **Be a good model.** Children, who watch their parents and teachers read, are more likely to accept reading as a norm in life, and will follow suit.
3. **Subscribe to periodicals or magazines of student interest.** As they collect the material, set up a personal space in the home as their 'personal library' or 'reading space'. 'Ownership' is exciting for children. In fact, this works well in the classroom, too. With the teacher's input and guidance, it is a great way to show the students different interesting genres.
4. **Schedule regular visits to the library or bookstore.** Give them some time to thumb through and experiment with the types of reading they would enjoy.
5. **Gift with books.** Choose books about the topics, or hobbies, that you know the recipient enjoys. Show them that reading is not just academic—it is for everything in life.
6. **Read out loud to them!** It's fun for any age of student, as well as encourages reading.
7. **Select specific computer games.** Gaming is here to stay, so look for games that involve, lots of reading and thinking to play them.
8. **Encourage them to write a book themselves.** This is a wonderful way to open them up, not only to reading, but to writing too. I have heard about successful class projects that publish a class-authored book of short stories each year. *What a fantastic idea!*

One final note, don't discourage any student that starts a book, but doesn't finish it. We have all started books and decided to let them go. Just encourage them to try another genre or author! Remember, it is never too late to start good habits; they just need us to show them how!

Pitfalls

To me, teaching is the greatest profession in the world. I love it—it's my life's passion! After all, that is why I write about it over and over again. But, teachers are only human, and with time we may develop some unattractive and unproductive habits. Today, I want to share with you some common snares that we need to watch out for in ourselves.

- **Arguing with other teachers in front of the class.** Never argue in front of the students about anything; instead take it to the teachers' lounge.
- **Yelling at students.** Yelling in class only shows that you have lost control. Practice some anger management instead—like yoga or meditation (but not in class, ok?-- *hummmmm!*).
- **Making phone calls or chatting online in class.** You only have a few minutes with the students, so make them count.
- **Lacking knowledge, preparation or organization.** Fumbling around and attempting a lesson half-way is just unprofessional, and you will lose credibility with the students.
- **Talking too much.** Excessive talking will only tune the students out. Make sure they get engaged in the lesson at hand.
- **Relying too much on the current pedagogical advice, not taking into account your own instincts, adopting new strategies without fully thinking them through, or teaching the material more than teaching the student.** Find a balance, adapt to your students' needs, and do what is best for them.
- **Talking to the board.** When you talk to the board, you disconnect with the students. Remember this: write, turn, and then talk.
- **Using a student to demonstrate something negative.** Doing so can make them feel signaled out and self-conscious. However, doing the opposite is quite productive—use a student to reinforce positive behavior.
- **Underestimating students.** Believe in your students, and help them to believe in themselves.
- **Not showing passion and enthusiasm for the topic.** The more you show that you love your subject, the more your students will reflect the same emotions.
- **Invalidate students' opinions and viewpoints.** Even if you feel the student's opinion is not totally spot-on, soften your response to them. Squashing their views may hinder them from expressing themselves in the future.
- **Not giving clear explanations.** Give instructions and explanations clearly and slowly the first time—it will save a lot of ambiguity and repeating later.
- **Not giving feedback early/quickly enough.** Whether it is reading or writing assignments, if you don't provide feedback quickly, your future assignment requests will lose their significance to the students.

- **Failing to allow enough time for discussion, exploration, practice, and innovation for students.** Provide them the time they need while discovering a new skill or revisiting an old one.
- **Relying too heavily on exams as means of assessing student learning.** Some students do not have good exam skills. So, keep in mind, there are other ways of indicating if students have learned what they were supposed to learn.
- **Responding with “You should know that” or “I don’t care”.** These statements are destructive and should be avoided at all cost.
- **Failing to assess learning objectives.** Take the time to notice if you have really accomplished what you originally set out to do in each lesson.
- **Getting too familiar with students.** There should always be a distinct line between teacher and student; if you don’t cross the line, neither will they. Of course having a good rapport with students is necessary, but both sides must know the limits.
- **Believing that you are the answer person for the students, and believing that you should never admit that you don’t know the answer.** There is no way to know everything. Our job as educators is to show them how to discover answers, not spoon feed the answers to them.
- **Sitting behind a desk or podium and talking in a monotonous voice in a stationary position.** It is a fact that our minds will zone out in a stale and boring setting. Keep your lessons alive and real. Moving around and changing voice intonation is a tool that we should relish in classroom.

A lot to think about I know, but it’s good to check and evaluate ourselves from time to time. We want to make sure that we don’t fall into any of these *teaching-related-potholes*. One good way to check yourself is to have a trusted peer sit in one of your classes and give honest feedback. Another way might be to record your lecture from time to time, and critically review it. All in all, we know that being aware is half the battle.

Never Too Late To Bounce Back

We’ve all had those days when we say to ourselves: *I just don’t know how much longer I can go on like this?* But nowadays, it seems that teachers have to deal with more stress than ever before

–with things like discipline issues, parents, administration, quizzes, benchmark testing, and even professional jealousy. Often there are times when we feel that we’re facing these struggles alone. Chances are *stress* is taking its toll on us; or we may be approaching something worse—*burnout*.

These two *cousin-conditions* are such huge topics that we could discuss them here for days. But for now, let’s just take a brief look at the characteristics of the two of them, and see if any sound familiar.

Stress--

- is characterized by over-engagement.
- can cause our emotions to overreact.
- produces urgency and hyperactivity.
- causes loss of energy.
- may lead to anxiety disorders.
- can damage us physically, and may kill us prematurely.

Burnout--

- is characterized by disengagement.
- can cause our emotions to be dulled.
- produces helplessness and hopelessness.
- causes loss of motivation, ideas, and hope.
- leads to detachment and depression.
- can damage us emotionally, even to the point that life may seem not worth living.

The good news is that recognizing the signs of these unwanted visitors are a very important step. However, failing to recognize such demons can lead to lasting damage in one’s life, family and career. Likewise, watching our friends, family or colleagues suffer in such damaging states can be as equally unsettling. Fortunately, it’s never too late to start on the road to recovery. As they say, prevention is the best medicine, so here are a few things that we can do to prevent stress and burnout.

- Start the day with relaxing techniques, like yoga or reading some positive materials.
- Adopt healthy eating, exercising, and sleeping habits.
- Nourish yours and other's creativeness. Creativity kills stress.
- Support others in times of need. Help to build community and morale with your colleagues.
- Plan a better work and life balance. Teachers can get involved outside of the school and encourage wellness and fitness.
- Provide back-up and support. If someone needs your help, be there for them!
- Help create a positive, supportive climate at work.

Teacher should band together and support one another, thus ensuring that this amazing career remains a sustainable one for all of us. Work together. Stay aware. And remember, it's *never* too late to bounce back.

Summer Recharge

Have you noticed that summer is just around the corner? Before you know it, all of these hard-working schooldays will be behind you; time will be yours to immensely enjoy. So, have you decided what you are going do for all of those free hours? Here are some great summer break ideas that you can start thinking about now.

- Sleep, sleep, and then sleep some more. Maybe even slumber for 24 hours straight!
Undoubtedly, this is #1 on everybody's list.
- Read as much as you can. Catch up on those books you've been dying to get your hands on, but just couldn't find the time for.
- Do some gardening or yoga. Summer is a great time to get in shape or to try something new. For instance, doing some volunteer work or perhaps take some classes, like karate or art.
- Go on a field trip with family or friends. This can also be a great opportunity to pick up some teaching props for your classes next year.

- Watch some funny videos on YouTube--an incredible resource for side-splitting entertainment.
- Do some major cleaning of your house or office. Prepare you school supplies for next year. Organize, label and alphabetize everything! A clear space means a clear mind.
- Connect with other teachers from all over the world using social media like Facebook and Pinterest, or discover teacher-oriented websites and blogs. Association with other educators is vital for needed support and updated knowledge.
- Take some time to study up on some teen-lingo. Watch wrestling, soccer, or some current action movies. This will help you to converse with kids better.
- Create something outstanding and memorable for your school or students. Let your creative juices flow during your summer healing.

And most importantly, don't forget to reflect on your previous academic year. Teaching is an art and a skill; it takes practice. Therefore, summer allows us a superb opportunity to regroup our thoughts and tweak our teaching strategies. A personal diary or class log is a remarkable way to track successful classes, failed techniques and issues that may arise during the year.

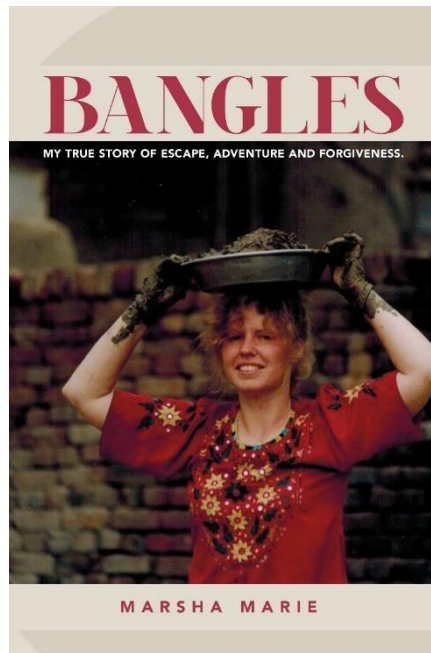
Rest and relaxation is a must for every teacher. We need the down-time to recharge ourselves and mentally prepare for our next challenging year. Summer break—a blessing to us all—yet a shame if left barren.



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 lightning. 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

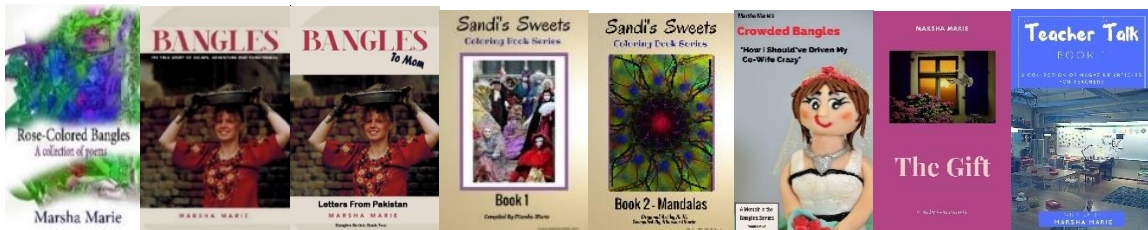
around the corner, I see my son and daughter on American soil. We embrace. This is the first day of a lengthy legal battle, but my two children are here beside me, to love me, to support me and my past decisions.

“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



- **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.
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