



Gardner Gab

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“If you become a star, *you* don’t change, everyone else does.” Kirk Douglas

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Singing with Garth and Other Glimpses of the Glamorous Life

Hey, I’m writing a fresh newsletter and it’s less than a year since the last one. I feel productive. Disciplined even. About as professional as one gets when she does all her work wearing pajamas.

It must be the second cup of coffee.

Truth is, sloppiness is one of my favorite parts of being a writer. In my old days as a business consultant, mornings started with hair, make up, and the biggest torture device of all time, panty hose. Trust me, nothing goes well on a day that starts with control top panty hose and then adds two inch heels. You’re just meant to suffer, even before you start running down the jet way to catch a last minute flight.

Granted, I didn’t realize writing life would be this sublimely comfortable. As an avid reader, spooked by Stephen King, intrigued by Erle Stanley Gardner, and enthralled by M.M. Kaye, I pictured authors as the most brilliant, respected, glamorous people on earth.

They lived in castles, no doubt. Were showered with money and praise. When I saw a special on Barbara Cartland, showing her lounging on a silk settee, while wearing a pink boa and being served by her butler, I figured absolutely, that’s how published authors must live.

So selling my first book was a bit of a shock. You’re hardly going to buy an old English manor, let alone a silk settee, with three grand. I did get my first computer, however, which was kind of cool.

I sold my second novel. A third, a fourth, a fifth. Still no English manors. Not even a designer suit or all expense-paid trip to New York. Publishing is definitely a business you get into for love not money.

But slowly and surely, with more novels, greater name recognition, bigger sales, things started to change.

I remember clearly my first “glamorous” moment as a published author. I had just sold *The Perfect Husband* to Bantam Books, and they invited me out for a group dinner. Sitting at the table with me were such *New York Times* bestselling authors as Tami Hoag, Iris Johansen, and Betina Krahn, Real live authors of some of my favorite books. I kept my eyes on my soup, and my mouth shut; I didn’t want to do anything that would embarrass myself.

Then I ran back to my hotel, and even though it was nearly midnight, called the one person I knew who would appreciate such a dinner: my mom. Tami, Iris and Betina, were some of her favorite authors, too. We giggled like schoolgirls and I promised to get her signed books. I went to bed still smiling. I had brushed shoulders with the gods.

More dinners followed, more writers’ conferences. I dined with Stephen White, Diane Mott Davidson, Kathy Reichs, Karin Slaughter, Laura Lippman, Lee Child, Tess Geritssen, Suz Brockmann, Jayne Ann Krentz, the list goes on and on. And each time, I feel as giddy as a school girl, all over again.

Other people, I suppose, fantasize about meeting NBA

players or rock stars. Not that I wouldn’t love to meet Bruce Springsteen, but I still fantasize about one day shaking hands with Stephen King. It’s never happened, which is just as well; I’m pretty sure I’d only embarrass myself.

For the most part, author-studded dinners are the exception, not the rule. Few times a year I get out of the house, meet some really interesting people, and yes, heaven help me, put on pantyhose. The rest of the time, I have to myself.

I pour a cup of coffee, schlep upstairs and prop up my slippers feet. Still no butler, but I do have two loyal dogs and one really passive-aggressive cat. It works for me.

Which is why it was such a treat in August to be invited to speak to Anderson Merchandisers. I got to wear adult clothes, heels and even a little make up. I was actually the one playing the role of “Glamorous Author.” I tried very hard not to giggle.

And then came the Anderson luncheon. With Garth Brooks. On stage. Sounding as absolutely amazing in person as he does on a studio track. In three seconds or less, he had everyone in the room feeling like long lost friends. In five seconds or less, he had us all singing along with him.

This was the glamorous life. It was even worth the pain of panty hose.

Now, of course, back to work!

Lisa Gardner Bookshelf

Alone, Dec. 31, 2005 paperback

Gone, Jan. 31, 2006 hardcover