



# Gardner Gab

Vol. 2 No. 2

“Authors are easy to get on with—if you like children.” Michael Joseph

April 2004

## Lights, Camera, Action: An Author’s Guide to TV Movies

Movies. TV movies, Hollywood movies. Writers aren’t picky. For a group of people who pride themselves on standing outside the theater earnestly saying the book was better, there’s nothing so flattering to an author as to have her novel become a movie.

I’ve been flattered three times. First one was purely luck. Harlequin sold six backlist titles to a Canadian production company, and my *Silhouette Intimate Moments, At the Midnight Hour*, (written as Alicia Scott) was one of the ones selected. Of all of Harlequin’s thousands of titles, why my book? I haven’t a clue.

I took the money and ran. Actually, I took the money and quit my consulting job, which was better than running (which is sweaty, tiring, and well, painful).

I had no involvement with *ATMH* movie. I got one call that it would be a movie. A second call telling me it had been cast (Simon MacCorkindale from a slew of Danielle Steele movies and Patsy Kinset from *Lethal Weapon II*). Then a third call telling me when it would air.

Naturally, I threw a party. It involved good friends and lots of chocolate. We cheered as my name came on screen, then settled in for the long haul. I didn’t recognize the opening scene of the movie. Nor the one after that, nor the one after that.

In hindsight, that’s the most money I’ve ever received for a title. Not that I’m complaining, because that money gave me the

free time to write my first suspense novel, *The Perfect Husband*.

Which became, yes, another TV movie.

*TPH* was my first venture into international entertainment media. That’s a fancy way of saying it was a TV-movie in Germany. Which is a fancy way of saying I got paid a great deal less than an LA deal would’ve given me.

The movie was renamed *Instinct to Kill* and starred Mark Dacascos. No calls about casting this time. No calls about air dates. We didn’t even get to see the movie until two years later, when it came to video in the US.

Which meant—very, very, sadly—no party.

True confession time: I’ve never seen *ITK*. We have it on video downstairs, but somehow, I’ve never felt like viewing it. My husband’s seen it. He claims the movie’s highly entertaining, which may or may not have to do with the fact that there’s a lot more nudity on European TV.

In comparison to my first two experiences then, *The Survivors Club* felt like hitting the big time. An A-list production company, Lawrence Bender from *Good Will Hunting*. An A-list TV actress, Roma Downey from *Touched by an Angel*. And, an A-list network, CBS, which you have to love for the CSI franchise alone.

When we signed the deal, I had visions of visiting the set. I’d hobnob with the stars, sitting in my own version of a director’s chair. Then, I jet to LA where I would

don designer threads for the red carpet premiere party.

Well, I got another party out of it. We had it catered this time, a big step up for me. And my husband rolled out red fabric on our front walk, so we kind of had red carpet treatment. That’s gotta count for something.

I also recognized parts of the movie this time. Actual dialogue and scenes from the book. That was fun. Though also strange...seeing people who’d only ever existed in my head suddenly walking and talking on TV... It’s the kind of thing that makes you wonder about upping your meds.

I’d like to say I loved the movie; it’s the cousin of my child and you want to love your family. Roma Downey was good. And some of scenes were definitely creepy or intriguing. On the whole, however, I thought the movie was choppy and some of the plot points were hard to follow. Ironically enough, I think the script tried to follow the book *too closely*, and it was too much plot for only an hour and forty minutes.

But I had fun. Good food, good friends, good time. Besides, what did you expect from a writer? Of course, the book was better...

### Coming soon:

*The Killing Hour* paperback  
Oct. 2004

*The Devil Inside* hardcover  
Early ‘05