

109 Romance Novels and Counting

Q&A with Harlequin author Sara Orwig



With a garage filled with books instead of cars, Orwig has dedicated the majority of her life to reading and writing and doesn't plan to stop. With 109 under her belt, Outlook visited with this Harlequin author to learn more about her books, writing process and future plans.

Why did you pick this genre?

I used to read mysteries often and still love them. Once when I was home alone, I tried to write my own mystery, but as I wrote the first chapter, I got so frightened that I had to stop writing and leave the house. That was the end of thoughts of becoming a mystery writer. I spent one summer reading historical romances by Barbara Cartland and her books inspired me. I felt like I had found my niche.

How did you get started with Harlequin?

I had written four unpublished historical romance novels when I got an agent who sold my first two to a California publisher. She sold the next two historical romances to Harlequin through their UK publishing division, Mills & Boon. I then sold to other publishers as well as Harlequin. Now, I write exclusively for Harlequin and in January I had my 71st Harlequin novel released (my 109th published book.)

Out of your 109 books, which one is your favorite and why?

"The Fairfax Brew" is my favorite. It has more humor than most of my books. It's set in the 1800s. I wrote it before I was published, for myself more than for a market, and it became my 4th published book when Harlequin bought it and brought it out as a Harlequin Regency Romance.

Where do you get your inspiration for each book?

My husband likes to say it's him! I get my inspiration from my imagination. I like thinking of characters falling in love and the pitfalls and problems they have to overcome.

Do you plan on retiring?

I've always said I never wanted to retire. I think maybe God was listening.

How closely do your plots reflect real women's lives?

Everyone has problems to deal with at some point in time. I try to write strong, compassionate women who love and are loved by determined, exciting men—two people who are attracted to each other, solving the problems they encounter and finally—as the old saying goes, "love conquers all"—have a happy ending. I had a strong mother and have had strong women in my life. I think my plots reflect these real lives even though the characters are imaginary.

How long does it take for you to write a book?

I've written larger historical romances that when published were over 500 pages. With mainstream fiction or historical books, the research takes more time. Family Fortunes was mainstream fiction and took a little over six months. My romance novels often take three to four months, depending on my schedule.

How do you choose your character's names?

To choose my characters' names, I keep lists of popular baby names. I also keep books of names. I try to avoid family and friends' names. Most names I choose are popular ordinary names.

For more information on Sara and her books visit www.saraorwig.com