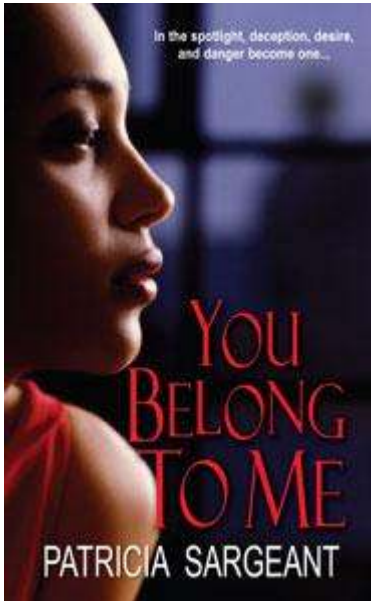


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This Interview belongs to Patricia Sargeant



Alright Ladies and Gentlemen, we're back with a new interview and you're on time to witness an up and coming author who will make a name for herself when it's all said and done. Trust me, this maybe the first you've heard of Patricia Sargeant, but I guarantee it won't be the last. Her new book "***You Belong To Me***" will hit the bookstores soon, so let's get the scoop from Patricia and find out what new authors should look for when signing a contract.

***Charles: Patricia, could you please tell us something about yourself. What convinced you that you were a fiction writer?***

Patricia: I'm a journalist. Once a journalist, always a journalist. Although, I work as a writer/editor in the marketing division of a state agency. I've always enjoyed telling stories, creating characters and

putting them into situations to see how they would react. I always knew I was meant to be a fiction writer because the stories wouldn't go away. In fact, they keep coming even though there were times when I considered giving up.

***Charles: What was the inspiration behind You Belong To Me?***

Patricia: All of my stories start with the question what if. For *You Belong To Me*, the what if question was, "What if you got a second chance at your happily ever after?"

I have a personal connection with the core of the story. Like a lot of couples, my husband and I struggled financially until we were established in our careers. Those were hard times, but it seemed as though every challenge thrown at us brought us closer together, strengthened our relationship, instead of tearing us apart. Once we were on firm financial footing, I wondered what would have happened to us if we didn't treat each other as equal partners?

However, through many rewrites of this story, I learned real-life goals, motivations and conflicts are rarely interesting enough to carry fiction. They often lack a universal connection.

I had a similar situation with the romantic suspense I'm working on now. Originally, the heroine faced a conflict between pursuing a career and getting married. The hero's goal was to get married. I finished the rough draft and thought, "So what?" So I added an arson investigation and

changed the characters' goals and motivations. The story now has much more meat to it.

**Charles: Please share with us a little bit about your main character Nicole Collins. Does she mirror Patricia Sargeant in any way? What do you think of Sci-fi since Nicole is an author of that genre?**

Patricia: There's a bit of me in most of the characters, actually. As writers, I don't think we can help it because we live with the characters even before we write about them. They're who we are and who we want to be. Nicole is an introvert, like me. And she exercises regularly. That's who I would like to be. Malcolm Bryant, the hero, doesn't like to ask for help. Sadly, neither do I. I like to imagine I have a bit of sass like Nicole's friend and agent, and a bit of whimsy like Malcolm's friend and business partner. I love science fiction, as well as fantasy and paranormals. I'm working on a three-part epic fantasy that I'm very excited about. I've put it aside for now, though, while I'm working on my second romantic suspense and starting a mystery series. I want to establish consistency in those genres before I introduce something as different as fantasy.

**Charles: What about the other characters in your novel like Malcolm, his business partner and the stalker who puts Nicole's life at risk?**

Patricia: The story's themes are family and sacrifice. In addition to the question, what if you had a second chance at happily ever after, *You Belong To Me* also asks how do you define family? When you think of family, do you think of only relatives or do you expand the definition to include friends? How wide or how narrowly do you extend the net? Malcolm and his business partner, Tyrone Austin, aren't relatives, but they're as close as brothers. And the stalker identifies too closely with the characters in Nicole's books.

How do you define your family and what are you willing to sacrifice to rescue them?

**Charles: 'You Belong To Me' is described as a 'sensual, suspenseful romance'. What should the readers look forward to this first book of yours?**

Patricia: I hope readers will connect with my characters and that they'll remember my characters fondly even after they finish the book. I also hope I've done a good job with the pacing and that readers will have a hard time putting the book down. I hope the characters' emotions resonant with the readers as Nicole and Malcolm try to break free of the obstacles that kept them apart. And I hope the suspense adds to the tension.

**Charles: I understand your title wasn't your first and there was a change. What was it and why the reason for the switch in titles?**

Patricia: Oh, this poor story went through a lot of changes. I love oldies songs, so the first title

was Back In Love, because I was reuniting a divorced couple. Then I changed it to Family Matters because of the story's family theme. But I didn't think that was suspenseful enough, so I changed it to Alternate Endings to draw a connection with the movie industry as well as show the character's relationship would have a new ending. One of the characters even makes a reference to alternate endings in the story. However, Kensington didn't think Alternate Endings was sexy enough. The editors came up with You Belong To Me. I think the title suits the plot very well. It works for the stalker's perspective and it works for the romance angle.

***Charles: How do you feel about not only writing a first book but receiving the positive reactions to it?***

Patricia: It's a validation I thought would never come. For years, I've hunched over a computer creating imaginary people, places and worlds. As writers, we connect with our stories. We get them. But as the rejections seem to breed rejections, we wonder if anyone else will ever get them or if we're writing for an audience of one. Then Karen Thomas, who's no longer with Kensington, told me she enjoyed the story. I thought, wonderful. It will be on the shelf. Fantastic. It didn't really hit me that she not only enjoyed it, but she got it, until I saw the cover image and read the back cover copy. I was floored. The cover image is perfect, and the back cover copy captures the story. Now I'm writing for an audience of two. If I could add a couple thousand to that, I think I'll be set.

***Charles: Patricia, I would like for you to tell all of our new and beginning authors about contracts and what should they look for before signing it?***

Patricia: Question everything you don't understand or don't agree with. Even if you're working with an agent, it's *\*your\** signature on that legal document. Contract negotiations start before you submit your work to an agent or an editor. Contract negotiations start with the writer deciding what he or she wants from his or her career. You hear it all the time, writing is an art, but it's also a business. What are you willing to accept from a publisher? Are you prepared to walk away if you don't get it? You have to answer all of these questions – and more – before you shop your work because you have to be prepared when you get the offer. One thing that comes to mind is the option clause in which the publisher reserves the right of first refusal for your next book. Whoa. For how long do you want to be tied to this publisher? There are a lot of reasons you and your agent must establish parameters for the option clause. My agent and I restricted Kensington's option clause to something like, "next full-length work of contemporary romance suitable for Dafina." That means, for example, Kensington doesn't have first right of refusal for my three-part epic fantasy, since it's not a contemporary romance.

***Charles: Is there anything new on the horizon for you? Where can we find out more about the great Patricia Sargeant?***

Patricia: I don't know about that "great" part, but thank you very much for the compliment. There's some information on my Web site, [www.patriciasargeant.com](http://www.patriciasargeant.com), which I try to update regularly. I'm working on my second romantic suspense for Kensington's Dafina line. The heroine is a newspaper reporter and the hero is a fire investigator. They start as enemies but become allies when a string of arsons becomes a series of murders. I'm enjoying the story and these characters. Once I submit the second manuscript to Kensington, I'm going to return to my mystery series. The series is set on a fictitious Caribbean island. It's primarily a mystery, but it has romantic and paranormal elements. I'm very excited about it. It gives me an outlet to share my Caribbean culture, the legends and lore. And then, I'll return to my epic fantasy, which takes place on planets in another galaxy. There are spiritual elements to this story, and it explores the cyclical nature of history and time.

***Charles: It's been a pleasure interviewing you Patricia. Is there anything you would like to say in closing?***

Patricia: The pleasure has been mine, Charles. You ask great questions. I hope I've done them justice. I would like to say to aspiring authors, keep writing, keep studying the market and your craft, and keep submitting your work. Don't ever give up on your dreams. And I would like to thank you very much for providing this platform on which authors can share experiences and goals. It's true that art is a solitary expression. That's why communities such as the one you host are so valuable. Thank you very much!