

Marisa Kane



Looks to the Sweet Side

COVER STORY

By Jenna Caputo

Photos by MarkBolles.com

Everything about Marisa Kane exudes romance. From her dreamy upbringing to her musical background, from marrying her college sweetheart to her optimistic view on life, and even right down to writing her own romance novel, Marisa Kane knows all about the softer side of life.

As a child growing up in Port Ewen, a small village in the Hudson Valley that sits between the river and a creek, Marisa always enjoyed reading. She could also be found playing with her dollhouse or on a swing tethered

to a massive oak tree. From Marisa's description, her childhood setting could easily be from a romance novel itself: "The swing swung out over the slope of our backyard, which backed up to an oak forest. It was heaven. If I walked far enough through the woods, I could come to a rocky peak above the creek. It was never more beautiful than in the snow. There was a little stand of fir trees surrounding the rocks. Heavenly. I also loved to help my mother and our neighbor in their gardens. I grew up surrounded by flowers."

She developed a passion for singing

and sang all throughout school. Advised to pursue music (specifically opera) as a career, she attended Saint Rose in Albany on a partial scholarship for music. She was a beautiful singer, but realized she didn't have the competitive nature or killer instinct needed to make her hobby into a profession. "As often happens with hobbies or interests you love when you are young, as soon as you try to make something a profession or become too serious about it, you lose the joy," she remarks. "That was true for me in terms of music and performing. I sang constantly in high

school and college. I had the soprano solo in Anton Bruckner's 'Te Deum' my senior year with The College of St. Rose Masterworks Chorale. My senior recital was in five languages, and for the finale I did 'Quando M'en Yo' from *La Boheme*. It seems like another person after all this time. One who could hit high C. Now? Er... not so much."

Not really sure what to do without music, she decided to apply to law school and started on a new track at Albany Law. "I don't know why I thought I wouldn't need a competitive nature or killer instinct for law school. I didn't last long. I completed the first semester and even went back for the second semester. I think I made it a week before I withdrew and signed up for paralegal school. It was a much better fit for me in terms of temperament and I didn't have to live with singing lawyer jokes."

Marisa can't remember a time when she didn't have a secret wish to write a romance novel, but she never even considered writing as a serious vocation until after both her children were in school. "If memory serves, I did have a couple of English teachers in high school who recommended it to me as a possible major in college. As my husband's grandmother was fond of saying, 'too soon old, too late smart.'" Despite her lack of formal training, she felt the need to seize the



opportunity once her youngest child went to kindergarten. So she sat down to write.

Inspiration wasn't a problem since she already had a lot of characters spinning around in her head. She

of character-driven, contemporary romance stories. "They are charming, warm-hearted versions of reality," Marisa says, "They are sentimental and sweet, but not saccharine. They're light, easy-reading that you can pull up on your favorite e-reader and finish in a weekend."

She draws much inspiration from two of her favorite books, *Little Women* and *The Wind in the Willows*. "They are beautifully crafted stories

about characters and I'm a character-driven reader as much as I am a character-driven writer. It's just my nature to be that way. They made me want to create characters that become real to me and take on a life of their own. Characters that begin to write

Love is the oldest – and best – story going. It motivates people like nothing else. It is at the heart of everyone's being. To love and be loved is the greatest purpose a life can have.

knew she needed to get focused and be disciplined. It worked. Her first novel, *A Match Made in Heritage View*, was published in May of 2016. The second novel in the series, *Engaged in Heritage View*, is due out this April. The Heritage View series is comprised

Living in Clifton Park We Know How Bad Your Water Is

**A-1
BARTON
Water Conditioning Inc.**

25 Years In Business in the Capital District
Locally Owned
Rated #1 in Customer Satisfaction

NEW INSTALLATIONS OR RENTALS
Water Conditioners Water Softeners
Reverse Osmosis Drinking Systems

Contact us today for all your water conditioning needs. We look forward to working with you!
1-800-518-PURE (7873) | Cell: 518-365-4784 | a-1bartonwaterconditioninginc.com

themselves." That inspiration must be working. With her second book out this spring, she's already working on the third and is hoping to have it published in 2018.

Marisa writes under the pen name of Annie Stiles. She doesn't use the pseudonym for secrecy so much as a way to create a mental separation and persona. The name is homage to her family. "The Annie came from my middle name, Ann, which I share with my mom who is an avid reader and lifetime bookworm," she explains. "She passionately and delightedly encouraged my love of books and was my very first reader. The Stiles is a twist on my maiden name. I played around with the letters. The initials A.S. for Annie Stiles are also my father's initials, and he has no middle name so Annie doesn't either. I get my flair for romance and drama from my dad."

Sometimes romance can be looked on with scorn – whether it's a book, a 'chick flick', or a view on life – but no one can deny the appeal in general. It also happens to be the top-selling genre of popular fiction year after year. So just what is the appeal? Marisa gets right to the heart of it all. "There is very little time in the modern world to be sentimental, whimsical or even just

simply optimistic. Love is the oldest – and best – story going. It motivates people like nothing else. It is at the heart of everyone's being. To love and be loved is the greatest purpose a life can have, in my mind. And, aside from that loftier concept, it is truly fun. What gets more airtime than romance? Movies, music, television – everyone loves a good love story. Even the best dramas or thrillers manage to weave in a love story."

Marisa's real life is filled with love as well. Her husband, Matt, is her biggest supporter. "We were college sweethearts and he knew I could do this before I knew it. What better hero could I write than that?" she says. They have two children, Max (9) and Molly (7), who are proud and enthusiastic about their author mom. Their family also has 2 cats – Daphne and Duncan. "And yes, we realize that Matthew, Marisa, Maxwell, Molly and Duncan and Daphne is a lot of alliteration for one household," says Marisa. "It's a little sappy and cute, but what can I say? I'm a romance novelist!"

Besides romance and her family, Marisa still enjoys classical music and especially loves to listen to it during her commutes to and from her current day job as a copyeditor for the New York State Bar Association. She spends a lot of time in her garden, carrying on the tradition from her youth. "People always say gardening is the ultimate act of faith and optimism, which I believe is true. But, I also believe it is the ultimate marriage of the past and the future, and the purest way to celebrate the present. Plus, have you ever smelled a peony? Heavenly." She is also passionate about her faith, reading, golf, feeding the birds and



dessert. "Definitely dessert," she says.

The tagline on her website reads, "Rose-colored glasses are standard issue." While some may be sheepish to admit they enjoy the softer side of life and being in love with love, Marisa says it's ok every now and then to put on those glasses. "Life can be tough sometimes, and there is nothing wrong with putting on those rose-colored glasses to see the sweeter side. If you do that often enough, you might not need the glasses anymore. Watch the sappy movie, sing the cheesy love song, and yes, read the romance novel!"

She may be a romance writer, but you'll find that she's not into big Valentine's Day gestures. That's because she has a true romantic's heart when it comes to expressions of love. "Love is for every day, not a special occasion, and romantic gestures should be inspired not required. Does that sound too romance writer-y?" she laughs. "But I wouldn't say no to some truffles, either." Dessert it is then. The sweet side of life always wins out.

The Annie Stiles Heritage View books are available on Amazon or through her website at www.anniestiles.com. ■

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at jcaputo@bestversionmedia.com.

Lauri Morrissey
with Over 35 Years
OF EXPERIENCE in All Facets of Real Estate
Serving the Greater Capital District,
Specializing in Clifton Park and Surrounding Areas

I welcome your inquiries, for assistance with selling your home, or purchasing a home of your choice.
Looking forward to working with you!

Lauri Morrissey, GRI
Licensed Associate Real Estate Broker
President's Council
Cell: 518.376.3636
Office: 518.371.1137
LMorrissey@RealtyUSA.com

★★★★★
Five Star Associate Broker

Zillow
trulia realtor.com