

I had the good fortune to write a blog for CATAROMANCE website on March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010. I'd like to share it with you.

### **It's Never Too Late!** By Lynne Marshall

Hello! Let me start by telling you all a bit about myself. I am one of six US authors writing for the Harlequin Mills & Boon Medical Romance line based in England, and while medicals are a staple of the UK romance market, we don't get much notice here in North America. We often call ourselves Harlequin's best kept secret.

### **Midlife Crisis**

Why did I choose this blog topic? – I didn't start writing until forced by a late midlife crisis. Me a writer? Ha! I was the girl who studied her split ends in English Lit in high school instead of completing my essay. I zoned out any time we had to diagram a sentence. English language structure completely baffled me. That might explain what made me wait so long, but, in truth, a few things came together between my midlife hot flashes to pave the way for my new and secret endeavor: My teenagers didn't need me as much, I cut down to part time at my day job as a registered nurse, but most of all, I had a couple of characters bouncing around inside my brain that promised to make my head explode if I didn't let them out and put them on paper. So under the most unlikely circumstances, I began to write. Not for anyone else – just for me. I discovered that writing wasn't a passing fancy; that I looked forward to my time spent each day writing my thoughts longhand, then transferring them to the computer each night. I discovered I could stick with my story to the end. I've mentioned before at my website that my poor husband thought I was having an online affair because I kept my pursuits to myself, and he couldn't figure out why I spent so much time on the computer. He was truly relieved to find out I was writing a book, and probably thought, "OK, that's safe enough. Nothing will ever come of this." Little did he know...

**It is never too late** to follow your dreams. Women return to school in midlife, they take journeys around the world, they run for political office, or take acting lessons, or music lessons. Middle aged women try out for their local community theater, they take up ballroom dancing, get involved in charities, run soup kitchens, or they become entrepreneurs and open small businesses. Dreams give us hope. They keep life interesting. I know how sweet it is to follow a dream, one that I was too embarrassed to admit to anyone because it was so far fetched that it couldn't possibly come true. Yet I followed it anyway.

### **Each phase of the journey was the reward**

The path was straight enough, but it all led uphill. This was not an easy jaunt around the park; it took perseverance, effort and time. I had to learn new skills, invest energy and money. Once I finished my first novel I realized I knew squat about what to do next. I

discovered Romance Writers of America, and my local chapter of RWA – Los Angeles Romance Authors. I studied the genre and honed my craft by taking workshops and attending conferences. I volunteered in my local chapter and at national conference. I wrote four more novels, and by the third and fourth manuscripts, I started making it to the finals and winning chapter contests. I discovered this special subgenre called *Medical Romance*®™ and met one of the UK editors at national conference and became energized all over again, then wrote my first category romance. It was rejected, but the editor asked me to keep submitting, and I did. This time, my second book hit within the mark and after a round of revisions – **six years** after beginning my journey into the world of fiction – I was offered a contract! If anyone had told me during one of my midlife hot flashes that one day I'd be a published author of ten books, I would have scoffed then tried to choke them out – after all, I was having a hot flash! ☺ And I would have laughed hysterically. Maniacally!

**Shh! Don't tell anyone!**

So I ask, what is your secret? What is that dream you've been carrying around inside that is fighting and scratching to get out? No matter what it is, remember – **It's never too late to follow your dream.**

About the Author: Lynne Marshall [www.lynnemarshall.com](http://www.lynnemarshall.com) has written ten books for Harlequin Mills & Boon's Medical line. Her current March 2010 release – **The Boss and Nurse Albright** is the first in her Santa Barbara trilogy, and is only available at the Harlequin website and is now available in e-book format at Amazon and Barnes and Noble websites.