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January 7th, 2011 | Published in [Blog \(http://bdtharp.com/archives/category/blog\)](http://bdtharp.com/archives/category/blog) | [12 Comments \(#comments\)](#)

This is one author who has covered a lot of ground in several genres. I think you'll enjoy getting to know Karen McCullough.

What parts of you and your background feed your imagination? The quick and easy answer is all of it. Everything I've ever done, everywhere I've ever been, everyone I've ever known—it's all part of me and feeds the stories brewing in my head. The more thoughtful answer probably has more to do with a couple of things about my upbringing. First of all, I'm a city girl. I was born in a suburb of NYC, raised there and in the Boston area. I think most of my books reflect that I'm more comfortable in an urban/suburban environment than a rural one. Then there's also the fact that my parents were prodigious readers. We always had lots of books around the house. I remember flying through their collections of Agatha Christie, Rex Stout, Ngaio Marsh and many others after I'd graduated from Nancy Drew and The Hardy Boys.

Tell us a little about the very first story you remember writing? I think I was eight or nine when I wrote a mystery story inspired by my reading of Nancy Drew. It was three loose-leaf pages long and copiously illustrated.

Creative people are often creative in other ways, besides writing what else does the muse encourage you to do? I design websites and e-book covers for my day job, so that's another outlet for my creativity. And, like many authors, I've been a musician. I used to sing and play guitar with a couple of groups, but my voice is gone now (two sinus surgeries did it in) and I don't have the time to practice the guitar anymore.

What genre(s) do you like to write? Lots of them! I write mystery, romantic suspense, fantasy, paranormal, and romance. A Gift for Murder is mystery with a slight romantic element. My previous release, Heart of the Night (Red Rose Publishing) was a paranormal romance.

Tell us a little about your novel, its plot and the main character(s). My current novel is a mystery titled A Gift for Murder, and it's being published in hardcover by Five Star/Gale Group this month. It's set at a trade show. My amateur sleuth is the assistant to the director of the Market Center, where the shows—and the mysteries—take place. My logline for the story is "Cut-throat tactics are common at trade shows, but murder goes way beyond business as usual." I have a lot more information about the book, the characters and setting at my newest website: <http://www.marketcentermysteries.com> (<http://www.marketcentermysteries.com/>). Obviously I'm projecting this book as the start of a series.

Are any of the characters like you and if so in what way? I heard another mystery writer use this line about her series detective, so I'm adapting it for myself. *Heather McNeill, the heroine of A Gift for Murder, is a younger, prettier, wittier, and braver version of myself.*

What genre(s) or author(s) do you like to read? Mystery, romance, science fiction and fantasy top the list, but I read everything in sight, including those old magazines in the doctor's office. About the only genres I don't read are horror (with a few exceptions) and Westerns. Some of my favorite authors include (but the list isn't limited to): Mary Stewart, J.R.R. Tolkien, Barbara Michaels/Elizabeth Peters, Ellis Peters, Jim Butcher, Charlene Harris, Lois McMaster Bujold, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Andre Norton.

Where and when do you find the best ideas or inspiration for your stories? In truth, I'm not sure. It seems like ideas are always popping into my head. Songs, TV shows, stories in the newspaper or magazines, incidents people tell me about can all spark ideas, and all go into the incredibly messy information dump in my brain to get mixed and matched with other ideas. I'm not always sure exactly how the stories that emerge get strained out of that inspirational pea soup, but somehow it works.

If there was a message you could share with other writers what would it be? First of all, you'd better be writing for the love of the creative process rather than to get the trappings of literary success. If you achieve any bit of those trappings (and the odds are stacked against you!) you'll find they're not as exciting as you thought they'd be. Second: Unless you're writing purely for your own pleasure, you'll need to grow a thick skin and have a good support structure helping you out. This business is full of rejections. Whether it be from agents, editors, marketing directors, or reviewers, it's a rare, rare author who hasn't been rejected

many, many times. And third, and more upbeat, I hope: Persistence pays. At a workshop I once attended, science fiction author David Gerrold said, "No one can write a million words of bad prose." You can argue the facts, but his point, of course, is that writing is an art and craft you learn by doing. Occasionally authors do sell their first complete novels. More often it's the third, or the eighth, or in the case of at least one author I know, the twenty-second. In my case, the first novel I sold was the sixth complete novel I'd written.

Where can readers go to learn more about you and your work? My main website is at <http://www.kmccullough.com> (<http://www.kmccullough.com/>). I have a site for my Market Center Mysteries at <http://www.marketcentermysteries.com> (<http://www.marketcentermysteries.com/>), and my web design site is at <http://www.karenswebworks.com> (<http://www.karenswebworks.com/>).

(If you'd like to comment just click on the title of this blog and it will open a comment page.)

About the author



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12 comments ↓

[#1 \(#comment-9531\) Alice Duncan \(http://www.aliceduncan.net\)](#) on 01.07.11 at 7:07 PM

Great interview, BJ and Karen! One of my characters is like that for me, too (younger, prettier, braver, etc.). It's fun to have a makeover, at least in fiction

 [#2 \(#comment-9532\) Karen Fenech \(http://www.karenfenech.com\)](#) on 01.07.11 at 7:13 PM

Karen and BD, I enjoyed the interview.

Karen, congratulations on the forthcoming release of A Gift For Murder!

[#3 \(#comment-9534\) Jacqueline Seewald](#) on 01.07.11 at 8:19 PM

I enjoyed knowing more about Karen, a fellow Five Star/Gale author. Much success with your new mystery novel!

[#4 \(#comment-9558\) Cecil Ticas \(http://duunot.eu\)](#) on 01.08.11 at 2:38 AM

Can I just say what a relief to find someone who always knows what they're talking about on the internet. You categorically know how to bring an issue to light and make it central. More people need to read this and understand this side of the story. I cant believe youre not more popular because you definitely have the gift.

[#5 \(#comment-9797\) Karen McCullough \(http://www.kmccullough.com\)](#) on 01.11.11 at 6:42 PM

Thank you, Ladies! Thanks, B.D., for having me here!

[#6 \(#comment-9817\) rampe mobile \(http://5com.ro\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 6:44 AM

WONDERFUL Post.thanks for share..more wait ...

[#7 \(#comment-9826\) anime manga \(http://romanga.ro\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 11:41 AM

That is really intriguing. It provided me several ideas and I'll be writing them on my web site shortly. I'm bookmarking your website and I'll be back. Thank you again!

[#8 \(#comment-9842\) admin \(http://bdtharp.com\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 4:48 PM

I don't mind a bit.

[#9 \(#comment-9845\) admin \(http://bdtharp.com\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 4:49 PM

You're welcome and thanks for stopping by.

[#10 \(#comment-9847\) admin \(http://bdtharp.com\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 4:50 PM

Uh oh. I have no clue. I'm so sorry.

[#11 \(#comment-9851\) admin \(http://bdtharp.com\)](#) on 01.12.11 at 4:53 PM

Happy to share new authors.

[#12 \(#comment-15274\) Van Rustad \(http://www.wearealheros222.com\)](#) on 03.28.11 at 3:57 AM

Just thought i would comment and say neat design, did you code it yourself? Looks great.

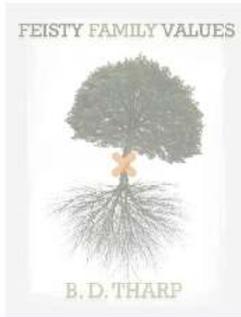
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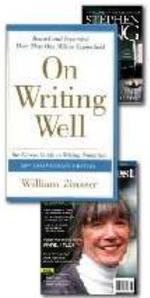
"Papa John's Customer Appreciation Day (Saturday) - Wichita on the Cheap — Wichita on the Cheap <http://t.co/VGRm6zS> (<http://t.co/VGRm6zS>) via [@WichitaCheap \(http://twitter.com/WichitaCheap\)](http://twitter.com/WichitaCheap) "

"Check out the BD Blog and interview of Historical Fiction Author: Barbara Fleming."

"Pls help me welcome Historical Fiction Author: Barbara Fleming on my blog tonight <http://bdtharp> (<http://bdtharp>) . Her path to writing is an interesting one."

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by Markus Zusak
★★★★☆
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