

## Shouting with my fingers!

By Maggie Nash

When I started writing I used to read “the call” stories with awe. Stories involving messages on answering machines, of lots of screaming and blabbering over the phone while patient editors waited on the end of the line. One day that surreal experience will be mine, I confidently told myself. Then, of course, I quickly descended to my usual mindset of wondering if I’d ever be good enough. Oh, the sighs...I can tell you!

Then as I became a more experienced writer and heard my friends and acquaintances get these calls I wasn’t only in awe...I was downright jealous! Don’t get me wrong...I was thrilled for them, but at the back of my mind it was a toss up of feeling happy for my buddies or feeling guilty for wishing it was me...does this make me a bad person?

No, I hope not, but what it meant to me was that I was determined to get there. I wasn’t giving up. And it paid off for me when I sold my first book last Sunday morning. Yay Me!

So how did it all happen?

Well it wasn’t actually a “call”. It was an email...though no less exciting! I’d been in editing hell for about a month and I was waiting on the word from a couple of friends who were giving the book a last read through. When I got the word that they thought it was okay, I submitted the requested full manuscript by email to my publisher. This was seven in the evening on the Friday night. I tried to stop thinking about it because realistically I knew it would be a couple of weeks at the earliest before I would hear anything. But I still checked my email all that night. The Executive editor emailed to let me know she had it and how she was looking forward to reading it. I had a really good feeling.

Still not thinking I’d hear anything for some time yet, I spent the next day checking the email anyway, telling myself what an idiot I was. But I couldn’t seem to stop myself, silly me. But on Sunday morning when I turned on the computer on my way to the kitchen to put the kettle on for a cup of tea and opened my email, there staring me in the face was an email from Gail...the editor. Oh my God...was this good or bad news? It was too soon wasn’t it? Or was it? Was this a good sign? Or bad? My hands were shaking as I clicked on the email to open it. But I had to do it. It seemed to take forever to open but —

Holy mackerel! She loved the book and could she buy it? It was only 36 hours after she'd received the book that she made the offer!

Hearts really *do* slam chests...and gasping happens! True...I have the bruised sternum to prove it! And my youngest son tells me I gasped so loud it woke him up! I was actually going for a low key response given that the family was still asleep, or so I thought. Ha! But not for long...I made a bee line to the bedroom and woke up the husband...then found a couple of sons awake and told them...I even messaged number one son in his room on MSN! The next three hours were spent emailing and phoning everyone I could think of to tell them the news and then answering the overwhelming number of congratulatory messages and emails I received. Romance writers all over the world are the most supportive people I know.

I really was shouting with my fingers!

And I never did get that cup of tea.