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My Life as the Best Friend of a Writer by Maryjo Faith Morgan

I love her, mind you. We've been friends a long time now. We've shared many of life's most staggering events. We've burped each other's babies, celebrated anniversaries, and mourned family members' passings. We've seen employers come and go, waited for pathology results, and discreetly ignored nasty birthdays. Honor bound to state unequivocally when a hair style or a hemline needs to go south, we never sugar coat the truth. Our souls have an open door policy. Neither would refuse the other an airport shuttle, no matter what the departure or arrival time.

We speak to each other almost daily, except when she is off on one of her adventures. Then I receive regular updates on postcards that read, "I am writing this somewhere over the Atlantic..." And I learn how to dial a new country code.

It does tax my patience a bit when the phone rings while the bedside clock blares 5:30 at me. I can tell right away she's been at the keyboard all night. Her wired voice jolts me awake as if I'd stuck my finger in a socket. "Hey Jude... I woke you? Uh, forgot we're living in the same time zone again." She does not even take a breath. "Didn't you tell me that when you guys went on vacation about 12 years ago you stayed in a cabin on a lake up north? What was the name of that place? And where was it that you did that rain forest canopy thing?"

At dark thirty she's verifying geography for a story and needs my input? Sigh.

She says I'm her "first read." Sometimes she's so jazzed, she calls me at work and tells me to print off the e-mail she just sent. That means she's hoping I have

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time to take a break and tell her what I think. Oh boy. This could be anything; I've learned not to read those at my desk.

I'll get busy, as one often does when at work... when the phone rings ten minutes later I cringe. "Well?" "Well what? Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't get to it yet..." She'll apologize for bothering me again, but I can tell by the urgency in her voice that she needs to know... now. What can I do? I read it right then, with her listening on the line. When she hears me sniff, it is as if she's got a stop watch on the other end. "Gotta rework that. Too much exposition too soon. You shouldn't be crying until the next paragraph. Thanks, Jude!" Click. And there I am, at my desk with my mascara down to my chin. Ya gotta love her.

When out on errands she's as likely to plop exotic flowers of lime and lavender on my desk as a fresh batch of spicy hummus; she doesn't need a specific occasion other than "Today there's air in my lungs." Whatever.

She's kept my copy of Balcony People for the last five years, claiming that she was going to do something with it... still doesn't know what yet. Truth be told, we have been in each other's "balconies" forever, cheering each other on through successes and stumbles, joys and sorrows. So it doesn't really matter, I know where the book is if I ever need it. Same is true for any number of tomes she's tucked under her arm on the way out my door. "I just want to look at this more closely, ok?" Sure. Saves me the recycling.

Sometimes she addresses packages to me, "To My Muse" or "My Fecundating Friend." Try explaining that one as presents are handed out from under the Christmas tree...

I can be cleaning the house on a Saturday morning when she bursts through the door. "Hiya Sweetie!" After a quick hug she is rooting around in my pantry. "I need some interesting serving bowls or a colorful platter for a photo shoot I'm doing to go with a recipe column. Oh. Here. Can I borrow this one?"

What can I say to her, "No"? So it's an heirloom from my husband's side. I'll keep my fingers crossed and hand her a towel to wrap it for the ride across town. She's still rummaging. "Did you see my column last week? The editor didn't cut the 'glassware courtesy of...' part this time. Your name was there, correctly spelled and all. I'll make sure you get a copy."

I don't do it for the notoriety, and I could care less to see my name in print. What I do love is seeing my friend in her element, doing what she does best. Creating, describing, and pulling her readers into that fabulous inner world of hers. I've been there a lifetime, and I don't mind sharing it, as long as her readers don't crowd me out.

Maryjo Faith Morgan, a member of Colorado Authors' League enjoys hiking, tandem biking with her husband, California's beaches, and traveling Europe. Her stories have been published in several Chicken Soup and Cup of Comfort anthologies. She freelances for magazines, newspapers, businesses, and websites.



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