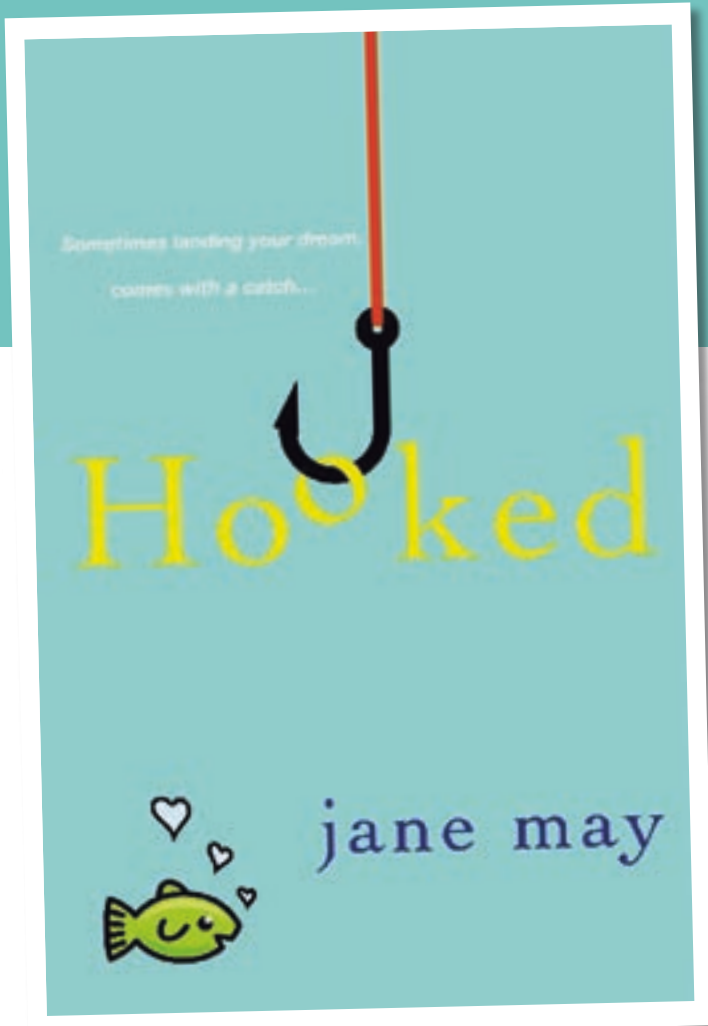


Hooked to the Key:

Author Jane May Gets Inspired by Island Life

BY TARA KAI



What prompted you to use Miami as a backdrop for your novel, *Hooked*?

Miami is known as the “city of magic,” which, in my warped mind, made it the perfect setting for a reinvention of a classic fairy tale, don’t you think?

You do have a point there. How does Key Biscayne fit into the equation?

My main character, Woody, lives with his eccentric old aunt Katherine in an un-remodeled, weather-beaten two-bedroom Mackle house. With its prime water view and spectacular sunsets, the place is worth about eight million bucks. As a tear down!

So I assume you were familiar with the Key before you began writing your story.

No, funnily enough. In all the years I’d been coming down to Miami to visit my mom, for some reason, I had never ventured farther than the Seaquarium. I knew Key Biscayne lay at the foot of the mountainous William Powell Bridge, but that was the extent of my familiarity with the place. Anyway,



a few years back when the plot of *Hooked* was still in its embryonic stage, an American Airlines pilot treated me as well as other New York bound passengers to an aerial view of a curvaceous beauty of an island. A four mile long strip of land with its residential area sandwiched between thick, brilliantly green vegetation. As if Mother Nature intended to keep urban sprawl in check. With creative wheels spinning, I began to do some armchair research about Key Biscayne and its fascinating history. Followed by a five day visit. It was a rough assignment, but these are the sacrifices writers have to make.

Tell us about your experience in Key Biscayne.

Feeling very much like William John Matheson back in 1902, I, too, fell under the spell of “his island.”

Jane May, the proud mother of two grown kids, Rissa and Ilan, shares a New York apartment with a mutt who was the inspiration for her first novel, *Doggy Style* (the story of a couple’s relationship as seen through the eyes of their dog). Jane will be signing copies of *Hooked* at the Miami International Book Fair (November 9-11, 2007) and will read from her novel at Books & Books in Coral Gables on January 20 at 4:00 p.m. Check her website - www.janemaybooks.com - for more local readings to come.

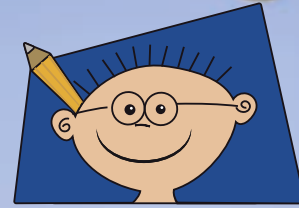
Lilabet Warner, a local resident as well a broker with Caldwell Banker, found me a small, dog-friendly apartment on Sunrise. Shopping and the beach were within walking distance. And speaking as one who has spent way too much time stuck in Miami traffic, this was a much appreciated benefit!

Anyway, every morning I rollerbladed around Bill Baggs Park, in amongst the mangroves and along the Bay to get a feel for the natural splendor that is The Key. Next, I had to find the "right" Mackle home where I imagined Woody would live. A rather difficult task considering many of the original track houses are gone. There I was, driving around street after street, about one mile an hour. The top down in my rental car, a fearsome eleven pound mutt in the front seat, and me hanging out the window, snapping photos. Luckily nobody called the cops.

My next assignment was to find someone to give me a tour of the island from the Bay side. Thanks to several very friendly natives, I was introduced to Captain Jim O'Neil who has been living on the island for fifty plus years. Well into his seventies and extremely fit, Jim picked me up on his motorcycle and then headed for the Key Biscayne Yacht Club where we then boarded his boat, the Queen B. Not only did I get a "fish-eye" view of all the McMansions lining the shore, but my notebook was filled with plenty of juicy stories about the good old days on The Key. Jim also turned me on to a local environmentalist, Mabel Miller whom I interviewed by phone. There is a lot of Mabel - including those pigtails - in Woody's aunt Katherine, by the way. During a return trip to Miami I must mention that Dr. Alan Creed, a local chiropractor, took me sailing on Biscayne Bay in a small boat, very much like the one Woody uses in order to romance his love interest.

How did you come up with the idea for *Hooked*?

It is loosely based on one of my favorite Brothers Grimm fairy tales, "The Fisherman and his Wife." I decided to jettison this fable of greed-gone-wild into the 21st century and gear it for adults. In *Hooked*, the "elderly fisherman" has become Woody, a 28 year old sailor who works as an assistant dockmaster at the Trade Winds Yacht Club which is, in fact, modeled after the Coral Reef Yacht Club in Coconut Grove. Woody is a simple lad who spends his free time refurbishing a wooden boat he plans to sail around the world. Solo. That is, until he falls for Madalina, a gorgeous Romanian waitress. Unfortunately, Woody's knowledge of the female psyche could fit into the knapsack of a flea. Just as he is about to turn his back on love, help arrives in the form of an enchanted "prince" - as in *Raymond Prince*, a philandering used-car salesman whose wife condemned him to swim with the fishes. Literally. But as the hero of *Hooked* will discover, sometimes landing your dream comes with a catch. ☺



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