

This post is specifically for my readers. I was going to make this announcement in a couple of weeks, but judging from the heavy volume of emails and PMs I keep receiving it's become apparent that I need to make my announcement now.

First of all, I want to thank all of you from the bottom of my heart for 16 years' worth of wonderful. I don't think there are words to properly convey just how much I treasure each and every one of you for the individual souls you are. You've cheered me on during the highs and been my rock during the lows. I've tried to do the same for you and I pray that's how I'll be remembered.

I'm pretty sure most (or all) of you are aware that I am the creator and, alongside my mother, the owner of Ellora's Cave Publishing. I'm also fairly certain most (or all) of you are aware of the gossip on social media that has plagued me for 2+ years now and which ultimately resulted in a rapid decline in my physical and mental health. It's not that I hadn't endured gossip before—haters go hand-in-hand with the territory for whatever reason—but until the triggering event of 2+ years ago I was mostly able to ignore it. When my professional and personal reputation came under such heavy attack as to affect my right to earn a living, ignoring it was no longer a viable option.

In the beginning I tried to reason with some of them—total strangers who spent hours online hurling the most vulgar of insults and accusations at me based on rumors. Defending myself was analyzed by the sharks out for blood as “the bitch doth protest too much” and not defending myself was equally reprehensible and thus treated as an admission of guilt. In other words, I was literally damned if I did and damned if I didn't.

When I struck back in the only way left to me—legally—an author I didn't know, had never met, and had no personal or professional connection to, rallied her fellow gossips and whipped them into a witch-hunting frenzy, which spread through the internet like a virus. Now I was not only being labeled a crook and con artist, but also a demon in human skin who was hell-bent on taking away their “freedom of speech”.

Reason and logic had no place in the new cyber ethos this author—Courtney Milan—created. Everything was hysteria-based and bizarrely emotional. Facts were treated as poisonous darts to be ducked and dodged, unworthy of consideration much less having merit. The attacks against

me increased exponentially as I was relegated to being a *thing*—a villainous caricature of evil with the cold heart of Cruella Deville, the deadly narcissism of Snow White’s wicked stepmother, and the calculated scheming of a serial killing sociopath. (Not to get political, but Bill Maher did an excellent piece concerning strong women being demonized. The similarities are REALLY eerie. You can see that short video [by clicking here](#).)

At any rate, as a result of CM’s efforts, disrespecting me became vogue in certain romance writing circles. The initial two accusers I had soon became three, three turned to four, and so on. Most of them “knew” a lot of authors I had stolen from; very few—maybe 4 or 5 amongst the thousand authors I’ve published—claimed to be one of them. Every day the ante was upped as new converts were made. The brave few who had the temerity to defend me were summarily ripped to cyber shreds until they either went radio silent or took on the view of the “social justice warrior” witch-hunters who made it clear they would not stop until I suffered. I was mocked, laughed at, threatened, harassed, body-shamed, health-shamed, and told to kill myself. I was labeled insane, stupid, and an evil genius all at once.

It was, hands down, the most emotionally and physically draining hell I’ve ever endured. All the while, sales at Ellora’s Cave continued to dwindle—mostly due to Amazon’s [“Gazelle Project”](#), but further exacerbated by the reader boycotts CM’s witch-hunt spurred.

The zealots shared one common desire in particular: they wanted to see me punished. Curiously, the specific word *punished* was used over and over and over again. They didn’t want to see a trial with facts; they were certain of their agreed upon conclusion and wanted me either thrown into a prison cell or, as one self-proclaimed Christian author stated, “dragged from her home, stripped of everything, and forced to beg on the streets! I want every possession she’s ever owned taken from her! I want everything she ever was, thought she was, or aspired to be shattered into pieces!”

While I put quotation marks around the words the Christian author spouted to indicate all of that hatred came from that one complete stranger in particular, it’s not an exact quote. I read her post so many times, trying to figure out what it was about me that could inspire such extreme volatility, that I used to be able to recite it word for word. Although the points are still intact in

my memory, I'm happy to report the exact quote no longer is. Which brings me—almost—to my announcement...

There came a point where I lost all hope. Not only were they interfering with my ability to earn a living, but they were interfering with the right of innocent Ellora's Cave authors to earn their livings too. EC's employees suffered as well, the ever-looming threat of the unemployment line hanging over their heads and causing a hitherto upbeat work atmosphere to devolve into a place fraught with worry and tension. And then there was my daughters... my two everything's. I had busted my ass every day to secure their futures; I was obsessed with ensuring they would never have to know the uncertainty and desolation of poverty, thereby ensuring they would never have to do any of the soul-sucking things that poor women often find themselves having to do just to survive. Suddenly everything I'd worked so hard to accomplish was under attack—and I was losing.

It was then that I decided the best and only solution left to me was to end my life. I wasn't suicidal because I wanted to take the easy way out; my thinking process at the time was that since all the hatred was aimed at me and I was the one they wanted punished, maybe they would leave EC alone—and thereby by mother and daughters alone—if I was dead. I don't know if that sounds rational, but then nothing about the situation was rooted in logic.

For the next two weeks or so I carefully planned my suicide. Living in Los Angeles at the time, I knew I wouldn't have to put any of my family members through the trauma of finding my body. I didn't want my (then) housekeeper Rosa to find me either because she loved me like a daughter and I knew it would be too much for her. My best friends, Nick and Christian—two brothers who had become like my own brothers—were the remaining candidates.

Nick was already battling his own demons and trying hard to stay clean from a meth addiction. It didn't exactly help when he too came under attack by the witch-hunters, accused of some insane bullshit for the crime of being my friend. In fact, their callous words led to a relapse... and one that nearly killed him. In my mind at the time that only served as further proof that everyone I loved would be better off if I was dead.

It came down to Christian. I knew finding my body would be difficult for him, but he was the only one I felt was capable of recovering from it. I hated what I was planning to put him through,

but by this point I was 100% convinced it was the best decision for everyone. I continued with my plans; I researched which method had the lowest probability of failure, meticulously studied diagrams of the human brain, and then decided on the date, time, and area of the house. The only thing left to do was create individual videos for the people I loved most and then, finally, write “the note”.

The note gave explicit instructions to keep my manner of death (suicide) a secret for as long as possible because I didn’t want those wretched people to have the satisfaction of knowing they were responsible for the ending they clearly wanted. I told my family to brace for the very real possibility that Deidre Moen—one of my worst stalkers and someone capable of hacking data—would likely hunt down my autopsy report and use my death to bring herself more attention. Even if that happened, I wrote, this was still the best and really only solution.

Unlike the note, the videos were upbeat. They emphasized happier times and my favorite memories with each person. I cried a lot off camera, but I managed to keep my smile and composure while on it. I chose not to wear makeup for the videos because only Jaid wore makeup—Tina, the person they loved, had no use for it.

The decision to end my life obviously did not come to fruition. I don’t want to get into the details surrounding how that came to be because it’ll only dredge up emotions best left buried... or at least buried for now during a time when I’m currently dealing with too many. The point that I’m ultimately trying to get at is this: it took me a long time, many tears, several setbacks, and a battered body to climb out of that mental abyss. I don’t ever want to feel like that again. Those women had called me crazy so many times that I eventually believed I was.

By the time I made the decision to end my life, I had come to deeply and genuinely believe there was something innately flawed and ugly about me. No other explanation for so much hatred from so many people I’d done nothing to harm made sense. Some of those women were complete strangers; some of those women were EC authors I’d worked tirelessly to launch and promote. I’ve never swindled anyone in my life—it’s not something I am capable of doing—so I came to believe it was just... *me*. “It can’t be *everyone* else,” I recall telling my mother, “Life doesn’t work like that.” She assured me that wasn’t true. “Honey,” she said, “They are not

everyone else. They are microscopic gnats in the grand scheme of things—loud gnats, but still just gnats.”

It took time, effort, a lot of praying, and innumerable late night talks with my mom, Christian, and Nick before I could make peace with reality. For all I thought I understood about misogyny, it took 2+ years of living in pure hell to truly reconcile the fact that everything I’d endured boiled down to that one aloof concept. I may not ever understand that kind of intense hatred, but I at least recognize it for what it is now. Which, finally, brings me to that announcement...

Three days ago I sent out an email to EC’s authors notifying them that Ellora’s Cave is in the process of closing:

Ellora’s Cave Publishing: Final Announcement – October 3, 2016

My mom and I would like to thank the vast majority of you for 16 incredible years. The first \approx 13 of them were life-changing and genre-changing for all of us. We made history together, which is a feat most people will never be able to lay claim to. I’m honored and proud to have been a part of this heady accomplishment—a victory for female sexual autonomy that no one can take away from us. For this reason and so many others, it is with a heavy heart that my mother and I have made the decision to begin the process of closing Ellora’s Cave Publishing.

We did everything we could possibly do to turn things around—my mom more so than anyone—but it simply wasn’t meant to be. Between the oversaturation of erotic romance titles available, the financial devaluation of said titles, and being buried in Amazon’s search engines, the prospect of the market once again turning in our favor is grim at best, impossible at worst, and requires government intervention either way. We don’t want to leave you in limbo based on such unfavorable odds. We have gone around and around trying to figure out the least complicated way to get your rights back to you...the best compromise we have to offer follows on page 2.

My mom and I will be closing this chapter of our lives with many fond memories. For every utterance of false gossip hurled our way, we have three times as many happy moments to counter them with. In other words, thank you for being a part of Ellora’s Cave. We are choosing to hold onto the wonderful memories and carry them with us into whatever comes next. It has been an honor and a privilege to work with you and for you.

Warmly,

Tina and Patty

P.S. We realize our announcement, while likely not unexpected, still leaves everyone with questions concerning their books, especially rights reversions. Bear in mind when reading the remainder of this email that EC is now (a) down to a staff of 2 and (b) doesn’t have the people power to continue answering emails, which is why (c) we need a couple of months to accomplish closing down in the most efficient way possible. We don’t want to leave anyone’s rights in limbo—which could definitely happen if we don’t take the time to individually revert them back to you—so please read carefully from this point forward.

Most of our authors were quite graceful about it—professional, understanding, and sweetly nostalgic. They thanked us for years of hard work that brought a great deal of prosperity and fame to many of them. Most authors even took the time to assure us that they knew my mom and I were good people; they told us they had never once doubted our integrity and lamented the Goliath that is Amazon... and the Satan that is social media.

Truth be told, my mom and I shed some tears. We had nearly forgotten what it felt like to be treated with appreciation. Even if those authors wouldn't risk becoming the next target of a witch-hunt by publicly speaking out, it was comforting to know that privately, in their hearts, they had never stopped believing in me.

It was a peaceful night. It was the most serene evening I'd had in years. By the next morning, however, the gnats began to swarm...

Immediately the same old lies cropped up, accusing my mom and I of mismanagement at best and embezzlement at worst. Here's the thing: **I will not go through this again.** (1) We explained to all the authors that reverting so many rights is not a fast process and that removing a huge number of titles from vendors goes even slower. The vendors understandably require a lot of advanced notice when they are asked to remove a massive amount of titles all at once. We are not swindling money from anyone. For God's sake, we wouldn't be closing to begin with if their titles were making money! (2) The same authors carrying on about mismanagement had no problem at all with our abilities when times were great—you know—those 13.5 out of 16 years. The management never changed; Amazon, social media venom, and basic human decency did.

The same gnats now giddily swarming in renewed gossip are the very authors who damaged EC and thereby their fellow authors to begin with. The fake "bittersweet goodbyes" they are posting all over the internet are nothing more than bullshit aimed at driving attention to them at the expense of my mom and myself...again. They are horribly abusive beings who enjoy cyber-lynching people because having a common target enhances their sick social bond.

My mom and I could have taken the easy route and just closed down, but that's not who we are. We don't want to punish the many to exact revenge on the few. We don't want to leave the majority of our authors in the position of having to beg vendors to remove their books when they have no proof they own the rights to them. As far as republishing goes, Amazon will let you Xerox

your asshole and sell it as a book, but New York cares about the legalities. In other words, we want our authors to have their formal reversion letters before we close so they can move on and make deals expediently and headache-free.

At any rate, I wanted you to have the backstory on what's going on because my next statement would otherwise seem harsh. Maybe to some it will still feel harsh, but I'm putting my health needs first for a change. To put a fine point on it, there are NOT two sides to this story. I will no longer tolerate any person who in any way enables the depravity and spin of the gnats. Commenting on a gnat's "*notice meeeee!*" post with even something like, "I'm glad you are getting your rights back" translates to me as you are someone willing to enable an abusive person's shade at my expense. They are not deserving of pity. The only ones deserving of it are the ones who will never ask for it. You likely don't know who many of them are because they are professional, worthy human beings who don't involve themselves in desecrating another person's reputation, career, and dignity.

As readers, you have the right to buy any book you choose and interact with as many authors as you choose. That's great and I fully support it. I have never felt the diva's need to be anyone's favorite author, but I do feel the need to be treated with dignity. That's why—and this may sound harsh—any enabling that shows in my Facebook newsfeed will be dealt with by clicking the unfriend button. I won't block you... I only do that to the gnats. You are more than welcome to follow me and comment on my public posts. I just have to protect myself by protecting my feed. I don't read blogs for a reason so I don't want the blogs brought to me.

I haven't run across this scenario with a reader—only with authors I've since dumped—and I hope I never do. I just want you to understand where I'm coming from so there are no hurt feelings or misunderstandings later on down the road. This isn't a situation where it's tolerable to chalk what's happened up to differing, equally valid views. Whatever delusion those sick authors talked themselves into believing doesn't negate the fact they accused me and my mom of horrid things we did not do. There was no mismanagement, there was no extortion... there was the Gazelle Project and there was a witch-hunt. It's as simple and as sick as that.

The last part of this mini dissertation revolves around the issue of my retirement as an author. I'm getting this question a lot and I don't want to leave anyone in suspense. Unfortunately, the answer is I just don't know.

At this moment—today—I couldn't be more out of love with erotic romance if I tried to be. But that's today. It's difficult to know how I will feel once Ellora's Cave is closed and the stress associated with it is no more. I hope I find that passion again... I truly do. I created Ellora's Cave because I wanted to write and nobody would publish me. While I feel blessed by and proud of the 16 years of devotion I put into the business of building other authors' careers, I never got a chance to enjoy the luxury of focusing on my own. So yes, I very much hope my passion returns. It would be an incredible gift to feel that spark again while simultaneously being able to focus solely on my own writing career.

Whether or not fate affords me that ability, I am committed to—at minimum—finishing the Trek serial. It is too close to completion, and you, my awesomely wonderful readers, have waited far too long, to even consider a full retirement until I deliver on that promise. That said, the next installment will not be ready until springtime. Right now I have two immediate foci that override all else: closing Ellora's Cave and reclaiming my physical health in as much as I reasonably can, especially given where it's now at. I am, to be perfectly blunt, not well. Some of the damage is irreversible, but some of it isn't. I want to focus on the latter with the hope it'll mitigate the effects of the former.

In terms of my mental health, I'm actually doing pretty damn good. The sheer relief I feel in knowing this chapter of my life has a visible end-point has lowered my stress level significantly. I look forward to being a private citizen again; I look forward to not being muzzled.

I also look forward to being able to speak up for other adults and teens who've been cyber abused and [work toward legislation that will criminalize defamation](#). If a grown woman in her forties with a longstanding record of resilience can be pushed to suicidality by social media sickos, I can't begin to imagine how teenagers with little life perspective are expected to overcome it. This shit has GOT to be stopped, period. Cyber abusers must be ostracized rather than encouraged, period.

So that is where I'm at with things. It's probably too much information, but I've always been a TMI type of person. I have no filter, as I'm often told, but I see that as a good thing. It means you can take me at my word because I'm one hell of a shitty liar :-)

At any rate, that's (finally) it. I will keep you updated as updates happen. Oh and one final bit of advice? Never forget that people who gossip *to* you will eventually and invariably gossip *about* you.

Much Love,

Tina/Jaid

