



...stride a mechanical bull in Branson, Mo.,  
...Dailey can back her million-dollar smile  
...with royalty statements to match.

...photographs by Thomas S. England

**IN HIGH-RIDING JANET DAILEY'S  
ROMANCES, HEROINES GRAPPLE WITH  
HONOR ALMOST AS MUCH AS WITH MEN**

CONTINUED

## She likes to call her genre 'hard-core decency'

The world's second most popular female author—and No. 5 overall—is so unrecognized that there's talk of her doing an American Express commercial. But then Janet Dailey specializes in paperback romances with titles like *Touch the Wind*, *Ride the Thunder* and the current bodice ripper, *The Hostage Bride*. The literati scoff that her theme never changes: a conflict between the heroine's virginity and her libido. In a typical Dailey passage, the hero "let her writhe and twist for a few minutes more before the cloud of dark chest hairs settled over her feminine peaks."

Yet Janet's mastery of what she calls "hard-core decency—I don't get detailed, I get sensuous" has enabled her, at 37, to position herself just behind Harold Robbins, Barbara Cartland, Irving Wallace and Louis L'Amour in a recent ranking of best-selling authors. In only five and a half years, Dailey has published 62 titles that have appeared

in 17 languages and 90 countries—and sold 80 million copies.

Part of her \$1 million-plus annual income, of course, owes to sheer output. Janet, who says "working two years on a novel would drive me up the wall," hammers out her 190-page "little books" in eight-day blasts, 230-page "novels" in 14 days and the "big books," 360 pages each, in six weeks. Adhering to a formula helps. "Every scene," she says, "is either between the man and the woman, or is the woman talking about or thinking of the man." And typically Dailey's heroine is beautiful, innocent and young, her hero strong, experienced and older. Confides Janet: "In every one of my books, I've replayed my own courtship."

But the role played by her husband of 14 years, Bill Dailey, 52, has been more than that of character model. He goaded Janet into writing her first book, and when her career blossomed gladly became her Svengali-cum-servant. In addition to negotiating her contracts, Bill helps research backgrounds and, he says, "keep her schedule, make sure she's not disturbed, check that eyes that start out blue stay blue through the whole book



—I do everything for her but the final typing." Agrees Janet: "Bill and I are a team. You can't be Rodgers and Hammerstein when you are only Rodgers."

Much less Janet Ann Haradon, born a farmer's daughter in Early, Iowa. "In a



From their party boat, Janet and Bill survey Lake Taneycomo, Mo., on whose shores they're remodeling a home.

dence, Iowa, she knew she wanted to be a novelist, Dailey says, "but none of my teachers could convince me I needed a college education." So at 18 Janet moved to Omaha to live with older sister Shirley and went to work as a secretary for a construction company owned by entrepreneur Bill Dailey.

The son of a carnival tattoo artist, he was then on his third marriage (he has five children). Though Dailey says with pride that "Janet was a virgin" when they met, they were soon living together. Two years after his divorce they wed, and Janet became his partner in the company. By 1974 they'd done well enough to retire, buy a mobile home and trek westward. On the trip Janet, a devotee of Barbara Cartland's passion pulps, remembers how she "kept saying, 'Gee, I could write one of these.' Finally Bill got a little angry and said, 'Well, why don't you get off your butt and do it?'"

Armed with portable typewriter, a dictionary and a book of babies' names, she produced *No Quarter*

*Asked*, and became Canadian-based Harlequin Press' first American-born writer. She and Bill stayed on the road because Janet wanted to make the *Guinness Book of World Records* for having "written a novel set in every one of the 50 states." Though she admits, "I just couldn't do much with Delaware," when Harlequin prints her next—No. 58 of 61 contracted books—she'll have reached her geographic goal.

Today she's also writing for Silhouette, and in August her *This Calder Sky* will launch for Pocket Books a four-book saga of a Montana cattle dynasty. The Daileys, who've settled in the Missouri Ozarks, hope to diversify by producing a syndicated C&W TV show and by creating a \$100 million amusement park in nearby Branson, Mo. Also under study are movies, soap operas and even Janet Dailey signature jeans. But they well know the bottom line of her success. "I decided to make her the No. 1 writer in the world," says Bill. "I've made her No. 5 and we are still going strong." Indeed, Janet writes faster than her three publishers can publish. She's nine ahead now, which, Bill adds, "is like another million in the bank."

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small town you have to rely on your imagination," observes Janet. To spark hers, she haunted the local library, devouring epics by authors like Edna (Giant) Ferber and Lloyd (The Robe) Douglas. After high school in Independ-