



art • DAVE ARKLE

Jackie Collins

I love writing. It's my passion. I so enjoy creating characters from every walk of life. Straight, gay, rich, broke, blond, brunette, black, white, beige, tall, short, old, young—and my male characters—hung, of course! Hey, don't judge me. I have a choice, so I'm taking it! Who said size doesn't matter? Not that I'm a size queen. Uh, not that I'm a queen—but some of my best friends are, and they tell me everything! Oh, yes, I do mean everything! Some of the true-life stories would make you blush...or maybe not.

I have always written gay characters in all of my 27 novels. Not because I thought it was the politically correct thing to do, but because I write about the world around me, and my world very much includes the gay community.

In my latest novel, *Poor Little Bitch Girl*, I bring back Lucky Santangelo and her hot son, Bobby. This is the seventh book that features Lucky. In the first Santangelo novel, *Chances*, Lucky had a gay brother, Dario. He was such an interesting character to write. His dad, Gino Santangelo, was a major gangster, so Dario felt he could never come out. Lucky was always there for him, his supporter and best friend.

Gay characters drift in and out of my books, sometimes playing a major part, sometimes not. Most contemporary writers seem to totally ignore the fact that there are many gays of many colors—too bad; it's their loss. As a storyteller I wish to create a colorful canvas of everyone around me.

I have never understood bigotry of any kind. It's so petty and mean and pointless to judge someone because of their sexual orientation. One of my most popular characters is Cole De Barge, a drop-dead-gorgeous, gay, African-American fitness trainer. Cole is the younger brother of Natalie De Barge, and



both of them have appeared in several of my novels, including *L.A. Connections*, *Lethal Seduction* and *Lovers & Players*. Cole has a huge (No! Not what you think!!) following. I think he has the body every man would aspire to have, and he's also nice, as well as being devastatingly handsome. Cole is always getting caught up in affairs with older men, then realizing that he is the male equivalent of arm candy—kind of the “blonde with the big tits” syndrome. I am looking forward to finding the right partner for Cole in one of my future novels.

Fortunately the gays are making their mark on mainstream TV, and not as the usual cliché characters. The lawyer on *Brothers & Sisters* is a perfect example of a fully rounded and flushed-out character! He's in a great relationship, and his family *never* questioned his choices. The gay couple on *Modern Family* is more far out, but totally fun.

Don't we all long for the day when there is no more prejudice and every single person can live their life the way they choose?

Yes. That time *will* come. And the sooner the better. ●

Jackie's latest, Poor Little Bitch Girl, will be available everywhere February 8