Hard Love & Software

MEREDITH WILD'S HACKERS FINALLY GET THEIR HEA

By Jennifer Peters

When Meredith Wild began self-publishing her Hacker series in 2013, she was so busy running a software company that she couldn't begin to imagine what would happen if her books took off. Now, she's a full-time author who recently sold her series to Forever. They released Wild's first four novels in paperback in April and have the series closer, *Hard Love*, coming out this month. We spoke with Wild about what it was like to craft a love story that takes place in the tech world, how it feels to finish her series on a high note and what she's up to next.

Hard Love is the end of your much-loved Hacker series. What does it feel like to be wrapping up this series? Finishing the *Hard Love* manuscript was definitely bittersweet. I'm looking forward to telling more stories outside of the series, but Blake and Erica have been with me through this whole crazy publishing journey, so it's a little emotional sending them off into the sunset.

When you started the Hacker series and wrote that first book, Hardwired, did you know how long you wanted the series to be and where you wanted things to go? *Hardwired* was my first book, so I wasn't sure I was going to be able to finish it, let alone turn it into a five-book series. By the time I came to the end of the first book, though, I realized that I couldn't finish the story with just one. I tentatively planned for the series to be a trilogy, but by the end of *Hardpressed,* I realized that Blake and Erica had way more trouble to get into and that the series would have to go to five.
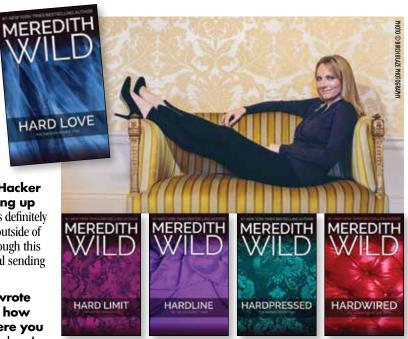
I typically only had a loose idea of what would happen one book ahead of the one I was writing, but storytelling in that pantster sort of fashion was actually really fun and felt very karmic in a way. I was constantly amazed, especially in *Hard Love*, how details that I'd included in the previous books became relevant in completing the series.

What was it like translating your experience with Silicon Valley into a novel? How have other tech employees reacted to the books? Having experience in the tech industry made writing Erica's startup world much easier. Clozpin was based on a site that I'd built with my team a few years ago, and a few characters from Erica's staff were inspired by my coworkers and their colorful personalities! The storyline around the business is fictionalized, but I think most of the events are plausible and the setting is realistic in terms of tech culture.

I have met a lot of women who work in tech who are big fans of the series. It's really great to connect with readers who can relate to that world and what it's like to be a female in a male-dominated industry.

Blake and Erica have been through hell and back. So ... what can we expect for them in Hard Love? In *Hard Love*, you can expect to see more of Blake's point of view, including some more insight into his past and how that plays into challenges they face in this book.

Blake worries throughout the series that his kinks are shameful and that he's hurting Erica. Why is it so hard for him to accept his desires? Will marriage (and a possible HEA) make him come around? I think that Blake and Erica's ongoing dialogue about limits has been an important part of their growth as a couple. I don't know if there's ever a HEA when it comes to intimacy — it should be an ongoing conversation. Desires, like the people who have them, can change and evolve. Blake and Erica are no different and marriage will definitely add in a new dimension to their sexual relationship in *Hard Love*.

What does it feel like to be ending the series on such a high note? You've been picked up by a traditional publisher, are in talks to create a television series based on the Hacker books and had a long line of readers anxiously awaiting your autograph at BookCon. Having fans alone is a bit mind-boggling because I'm just a regular human! But knowing that so many people are eager to read whatever stories I come up with next is incredibly flattering and motivating. Those are the people I write for, and when I'm struggling through a writing project, that determination not to let down the people who've given me such incredible support is often what pushes me through. I owe a lot to my readers. They are an enormous part of why all these writing dreams are coming true.

What are you working on next? I'm currently working on a stand-alone novel, the details of which are TBA! ✧

For more information about Meredith Wild and the Hacker series, visit MeredithWild.com.