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Vol. 2, No. 2, January 10, 2020

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In this issue:

- New Release: Secret in the Tower, by Charity Bishop
- Short Story: Inspiration on Pike's Peak
- Reading Roundup: Books from the 1920s

## From the Editor

In a [November issue](#), I mentioned how our writing group pulled up a character generator and came up with a unique character for us each to write a short story about. I know I enjoy reading about how other authors end up developing their own characters, so I shared how this turned out for me. That week, I wrote about the process of how 'chatty teacher who is always dreaming of the future' turned into Annie Brewster and how her story ended up being set in Colorado Springs during the summer of 1893.

In lieu of an author interview this week, I'm posting the story that I wrote to the phrase created by the character generator – Inspiration on Pike's Peak. I wanted to add more about the actual trip up to Pike's Peak and what happened that day, but as the story was already over 2,000 words, I wrapped it all up a little quicker than I'd like. Someday I may come back to the story and add more to it.

Voting is almost over for our first Short Story Contest. Voting ends Sunday night at midnight. So if you haven't read the stories and voted on your favorite...go do it now. The voting is really close on all three stories – **so your vote matters!**

[Here's a link to the stories.](#) Vote on your favorite by emailing your vote to: [trishasnewsletter@yahoo.com](mailto:trishasnewsletter@yahoo.com)

*Trisha*

[texastrishafaye@yahoo.com](mailto:texastrishafaye@yahoo.com)

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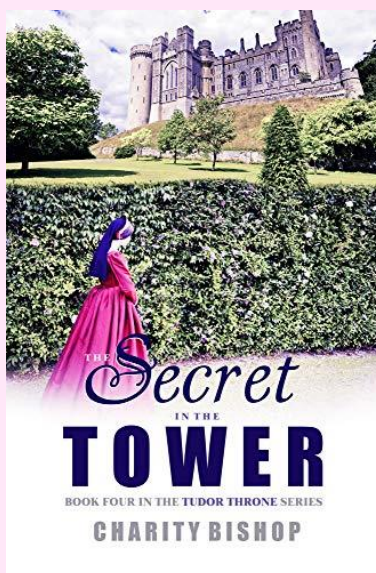
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New Release

## Secret in the Tower

Charity Bishop

Charity Bishop was our spotlighted author in the May 31, 2019 issue. [You can read her interview here.](#) She has a new book out! Just released is *Secret in the Tower*.



England lies on the brink of war with the king's enemy at large.

The Duke of Suffolk has sought protection in the Dutch empire, leaving King Henry desperate to secure his extradition at any cost. Emperor Maximilian drives a hard bargain, which imperils his ability to provide for the newly widowed Katharine of Aragon. He also faces treason in his court, since not everyone has forsaken the queen's treacherous cousin.

To appease the Spanish, Henry offers them a castle on the Thames, but there, not is all as it seems. The arrival of his royal comptroller coincides with a rash of thefts. Suspicious and fearful of the king's intentions, the Spanish cling to their last hope, that Katharine can find a way to reforge the broken alliance. But her idea may not meet with the king's approval.

When the ambitious young Thomas More brings a stranger into their midst, the turbulent skies over Durham House fill with uncertainty. Secret meetings, shadows in long corridors, and a sinister plot unfold beneath the shadow of The Tower.

## Inspiration on Pike's Peak

Colorado Springs, Colorado  
Summer 1893

"Ella! Ella! Over here." Annie Brewster wove her hand high over her head, frantically signaling to her friend on the other side of the street. When Ella kept walking, Annie hopped off the boardwalk and scurried across the street, dashing in front of an oncoming team of oxen.

"Watch where you're going, Miss." The driver navigating the dusty roads of a young and bustling Colorado Springs pulled back on the reins, slowing the oxen before they barreled into Annie.

Annie hurried along the road, calling out her friend's name, each time a bit louder than before.

Ella finally paused and turned. Her face lit up with pleasure when she saw Annie. "What a delight. I haven't seen you for ages. What are you doing with yourself this summer? Missing the children?"

Groaning, Annie cupped her cheeks in her palms and shook her head, her reticule dangling from her wrist. "Gracious, no. Those tykes plumb wore me out. I'm happy to have a few months off to recuperate. I never knew that teaching could be so challenging. Why, some of those older boys are full of devilment – looking for trouble any way they can find it. Although, a few of the girls are just as mischievous. There's a few though...why, they're a treasure to have as pupils. Wanting to learn and improve their minds. Those are the ones that make this profession worthwhile. And what of you? We must get together and share a meal. I haven't seen you for far too long. You free tonight? Join me for supper? Maybe at—"

"No, I'm sorry, dear. I can't join you tonight. My friend is in town, visiting all the way from Massachusetts and—"

"Isn't that where you went to school? Is she staying with you? Has she been to Colorado before? How does she like it? Is she a teacher too? Why, I don't believe—"

Ella held up her palm and smiled. "Whoa! Hold your horses. Slow down. You're asking questions faster than I can answer them."

Dropping her eyes, Annie scuffed the toe of her boot in the loose dirt, abashed at letting her exuberance get the best of her. "Sorry. I do get carried away sometimes, don't I?"

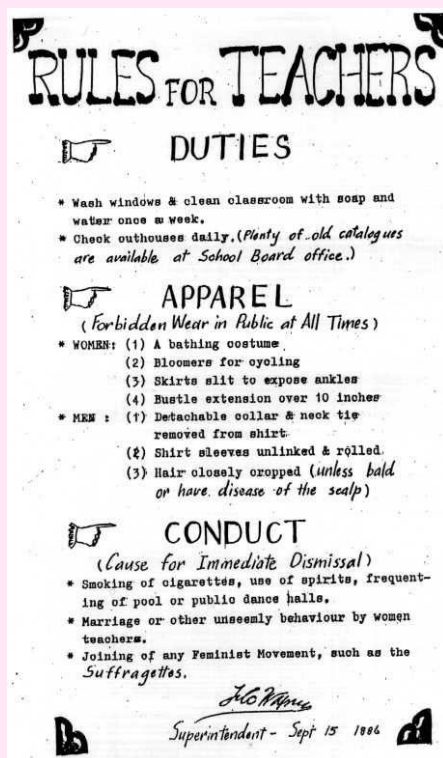
Ella reached across and laid a hand on Annie's forearm. "Don't fret about it. How long have I known you? And I've always known that your mouth can race like the rain pouring down in a toad-strangler. Say, are you free Saturday?"

Bobbing her head up and down, Annie used her body to affirm that she was, afraid to open her mouth and spout off more babble.

"Perfect. Katharine's hired a wagon to take several of us to Pike's Peak. All teachers. When I dine with her tonight, I'll ask if you can join us. I think you'd enjoy meeting the others. I'll drop you a note and let you know."

That evening Annie paced her small boarding room, too restless to sit and read as she usually did in the evenings. When she found herself talking to herself as she wandered back and forth, she dimmed the flame on the kerosene lamp and readied herself for bed. But once the lamp was extinguished, she lay under the covers still wide awake. Pikes Peak. She'd never been up there. She'd admired its beauty during the past year that she'd lived in the town nestled at its base. She'd always wanted to travel, but so far hadn't made it outside the boundaries of the state she was born in.

There were so many things she dreamed of doing in her life. Teaching had been one of those dreams. She'd achieved that one, earning top marks in her classes at college. She was proud of her accomplishment, even on the days when teaching wasn't quite what she'd thought it would be. She should make more of an effort to go out on her own and see more of the world. The thought had never crossed her mind to hire a wagon to take her places she hadn't seen before.



She'd love to join the local chapter of Suffragettes, too. She had several friends that had been to marches in this fight to achieve equality in the voting booth. But her contract had a clause in it prohibiting her from joining such organizations. No bloomers for cycling allowed either. And no bathing costumes. Some things simply were not fair.

She knew she couldn't dare flaunt the rules and join the Suffragettes, despite her contract. With the state's economy plummeting and so many people out of jobs after the Sherman Silver Purchase Act was repealed, this was no time to try to see what she could get away with.

Although, she took some consolation that the tide against women was turning. Just a few months earlier, a woman, Lone T. Hanna, was elected to the school board in Denver. If that could happen and other women could achieve lofty ambitions such as that, there were hopes for other women to do the same.

Not that being on the school board was one of her dreams. Annie had lots of desires for the future, but holding an official office wasn't one of those. Definitely traveling, seeing more of this

glorious country. At least she imagined it was glorious, just from what she heard from others. Not that she'd seen with her own eyes. Yet.

And maybe writing. Having something published in a magazine would be magnificent. Her pulse quickened and her breath deepened as she imagined being a published author. Ever since she'd read *The Yellow Wallpaper* in *The New England Magazine* the year before, written by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, she longed to use her schooling and knowledge to write a story.

With her thoughts racing, it took a long while for her eyes to finally drift into slumber. When she finally awoke in the morning, the street below was already bustling with activity. She rushed about, dressing and pinning her hair up, hoping that there was still some breakfast left downstairs.

Stepping into the dining room, the landlady pursed her lips and sent a frosty glare in Annie's direction. "Tis an inappropriate time to appear for your morning meal. I was just about to take the platters all back to the kitchen."

"Sorry to have overslept, Mrs. Murphy. It won't happen again."

"A young lady left you a note. It's sitting on the mantle."

After the retort about her arrival time, Annie thought it prudent to sit and eat first, before reading the note that she expected was from Ella. It didn't take her long to consume the meager offering. The scrambled eggs were dry and tasteless, the bread dry from sitting out so long, and the milk no longer cold.

Unable to choke down another bite, Annie thrust the plate back and hurried to the mantle. Tearing open the thick ivory envelope, she smiled with delight when she read the words her friend had left for her.

*Annie,*

*Katharine would love for you to join us Saturday. Meet us in front of  
Brogan's Feed at eight o'clock sharp.*

*Bring something to nibble on. We'll most likely be gone the entire day.*

*Yours, Ella*

*P.S. Wear comfortable walking shoes*

What to wear? What to wear? Oh, the dilemmas a girl faced in these current times. Decorum was most important. Yet, a trip high up in the mountains? Via wagon? A girl must be comfortable too. And comfortable shoes? Annie looked down at her button-up boots. Even though they were fashionable and oh so adorable, these were not the ones for mountain climbing.

She spent the next two hours pulling every garment she owned out and trying them all on. Finally satisfied with an outfit that seemed appropriate for the company she'd be keeping, all teachers according to Ella, but yet attire that would afford her some movement as they journeyed up the steep mountain road, she laid the garments carefully across the chair in the corner.

Tucked in the back of the wardrobe, she discovered a long-forgotten pair of her oldest boots. They were scuffed and worn – not fit for public display. But they were broken in enough that they'd be comfortable to wear all day and climb about on the mountainside. And if she returned home with them in even worse condition, it wouldn't matter in the least.

When the sun began to peek over the horizon, brightening the main avenue of Colorado Springs, Annie had been long awake, anxious for an exciting day participating in a new activity with new people.

Dressing promptly she hurried downstairs, arriving just as her landlady was laying out breakfast.

Bearing her usual pursed mouth and face that seemed to see no joy in life, she greeted the first boarder to enter the dining room. "Why, Miss Brewster. I'm surprised to see you up and about so early."

"Good morning, Mrs. Murphy. I'm meeting some friends for a ride up to Pikes Peak today. I've never been up there. We're meeting at the feed store...and...I'm just so excited about seeing some new sights...and,

I..." Breaking off in embarrassment, Annie hesitated before continuing on. "Sorry. I'm sure you're not interested. I just tend to get so enthused sometimes that I just rush on and can't seem to stop my mouth."

A brief grin flashed across Mrs. Murphy's countenance before disappearing. "I hadn't noticed, dear."

"No? I'd thought...oh, never mind. I'll just be quiet now."

Annie lifted the lids to the dishes on the sideboard and thought with amazement how much fresher the food was when she was the early bird to dine. The thought crossed her mind to say something about it, then she squelched that idea in a moment flat before the words flew out of her mouth.

After filling her plate, she sat and began nibbling, before remembering another item she needed to take care of before meeting her friends. "Mrs. Murphy..." she began hesitantly. "Would it be possible if I could perchance take a biscuit or two with me today? We're to take something to eat as we'll be gone all day."

The furrowed frown Annie saw first on Mrs. Murphy's face filled her with dread. Then, to her amazement, Mrs. Murphy's brow smoothed out, an unaccustomed wide grin displaced the frown and a rare twinkle lit up her eyes.

"A biscuit or two won't give you the sustenance you need for the day ahead of you. Let me go speak with Cook and we'll come up with a proper luncheon you can take with you. Maybe even a cookie or two." With a flounce of her skirts, she disappeared into the kitchen.

By the time Annie cleaned the last bite from her plate, Mrs. Murphy appeared with a small tin milk bucket filled with goodies wrapped in a linen napkin. "Here dear, this should see you through the day. I believe Cook added enough oatmeal cookies that you can share with your friends, too."

Unsure as to what caused this change of heart in her landlady, Annie took the bucket and murmured her thanks, afraid to question the reason for this unexpected generosity.

The clock in the corridor struck a quarter to the hour, and Annie raced out the door, not wanting to be late arriving at the feed store a few blocks away. Hurrying down the boardwalk, she was glad to see her friend Ella standing in the midst of four other women.

Introductions over, the women climbed in the prairie wagon and off they went. Annie sat in back next to her friend Ella. Usually full of prattle, on this trip, she was fairly mute, spending her time listening to the other four teachers talk away.

She spent most of her time glancing at her host, Katharine, almost enamored of her. She listened about how Katharine was an English professor at Wellesley College and her experiences in the classroom. She heard about the train trip she'd had coming to Colorado Springs and the sights she saw – spacious skies and amber waves of grain she called them. She heard about her visit to the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago –she referred to the "White City" with its promise of the future contained within its gleaming alabaster cities. She heard snippets about various magazines and publications she'd had works printed in.

Annie felt so insignificant and humbled. Yet, she also felt inspired and foresaw that she could accomplish great things if she so desired.

When they got near the top of the mountain and they had to leave the wagon and make the rest of the journey on mules, Annie didn't grumble or complain. She was in awe of her new-found idol. When



Katharine stood high atop Pikes Peak and gazed in wonder at the majestic view, Annie felt the contagion of enthusiasm surround her.

Katharine's face was suffused with joy as she turned to the others and exclaimed, "I simply must write this all down. When I get back to the Antlers Hotel tonight, I feel inspired to write a poem about all this wonder."

A few weeks later, Ella invited Annie to supper with the ladies before Katharine returned home. That night, Katharine read aloud a few of the lines of the poem she'd written when they returned from their day at Pike's Peak.

"I call it 'Pike's Peak.' You're the first to hear it, although I shall be searching for a publication that will print it."

She held the papers in front of her and began reading, "Oh, beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain. America! America! God shed his grace on thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea."

Two years later, Annie was even more excited when Ella rushed into her room, waving a church periodical over her head. The Congregationalist as published Katharine's poem in their Fourth of July edition that year.

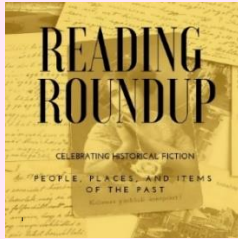
Many years later, in 1910, when Katharine's words were combined with music by Samuel A. Ward - originally written for a hymn - and published as a song 'America the Beautiful', Annie was just as excited. Through the last seventeen years, Annie had gone on to follow her own dreams and ambitions and had achieved much success on her own merits. But when she heard the song now being played as a popular patriotic song, she was instantly taken back to that summer day in 1893 when she was a young 23-year old new school teacher and she'd been with Katharine 14,000-feet up at the top of Pikes Peak – the day of the songs inspiration.



The Antlers Hotel, where Katharine Lee Bates penned the words to American the Beautiful (a poem first called 'Pikes Peak', after she returned from a day trip in a wagon (and by mule) to the top of Pikes Peak.

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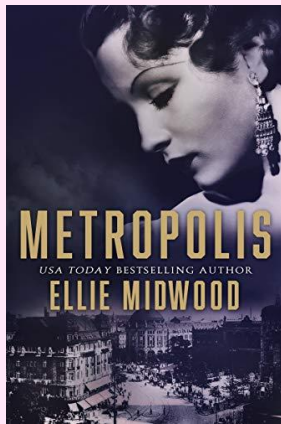
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# The 1920s

## Metropolis

### Ellie Midwood



Weimar Berlin, 1924

Unemployed actors, profiteers, cabaret girls, and impoverished aristocracy – out of this wild set of characters populating Weimar Berlin, Margarete Gräfin von Steinhoff belongs to the latter category. Having lost everything due to hyperinflation, she considers jumping into the freezing waters of the Spree rather than facing the humiliating existence shared by millions of her fellow Germans. However, a chance meeting makes her change her mind at the last moment and offers her a chance to rely on the help of the metropolis itself, where anything can be sold and bought for money and where connections are everything. The bustling nightlife of cosmopolitan Berlin, with its casinos and dance halls, brings good income for the ones who don't burden themselves too heavily with morals.

After a New Year's Eve party, Margot finally meets her ever-absent and mysterious neighbor, Paul Schneider, who makes a living by producing a certain type of film for his rich clientele. Under his guidance, Margot discovers a new passion of hers – photography and soon, her talents are noticed by the prominent newspaper, Berliner Tageblatt itself. But being an official photographer of the most celebrated events of the La Scala and most famous Berlin theaters no longer satisfies Margot's ambitions. As soon as the chance presents itself for her to get involved with the cinematography on the set of "Metropolis" - the film with the highest budget ever produced by the UFA – Margot jumps at it, without thinking twice. At the same time, Paul becomes involved with a rival project, "The Holy Mountain," which stars an as yet unknown actress and an emerging director in, Leni Riefenstahl. As the two women meet, professional rivalry soon turns into a true friendship, fueled by their passion for cinematography. However, due to the economic woes facing Germany, both projects soon run out of money and now, both film crews must go to extreme lengths to save their respective productions.

Set against the backdrop of a decadent, vibrant, and fascinatingly liberal Weimar Berlin, "Metropolis" is a novel of survival, self-discovery, and self-sacrifice, in the name of art, love, and friendship.

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