



Vol. 2, No. 7, February 14, 2020

In this issue:

- Pauline's Valentine
- Love Stories from the Past
- Reading Roundup: Books from the 1900s/1910s

From the Editor



Happy Valentine's Day! To celebrate this holiday, I'm sharing an article that was published in *Prairie Times* last year, 'Pauline's Valentine'. Pauline (1890-1974) was an elderly woman next door where I was born and raised. After her death, I was able to choose what I wanted from the house. I took old postcards and photographs, along with a few small cookbooks, which I still have to this day. The Valentine is among that collection of treasured tidbits, one Pauline received when she was 21-years old.

And of course ...books. This week – books about love stories from the past. Happy reading and even happier writing!

Trisha

texastrishafaye@yahoo.com

[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>

Pauline's Valentine

Previously published in *Prairie Times*, February 2019



Pretty picture. Paste. Wide burgundy ribbon. Scissors. Narrow, fringy burgundy ribbon. Tassel. To My Valentine pictures. Cardboard backing. All items ready and accounted for.

Snip snip. Paste. Cut again. Paste some more.

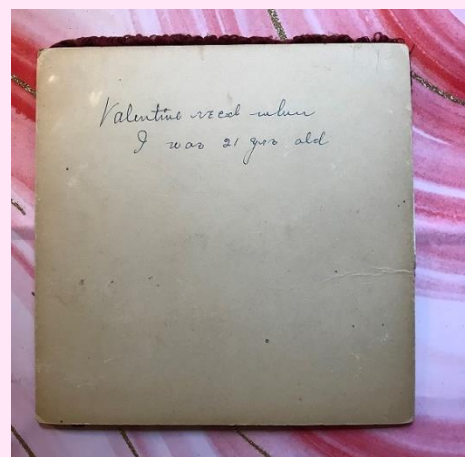
Someone sat at a table 107-years ago, laboriously piecing together a handmade Valentine for Pauline.

Who? I have no idea. I don't know if it was a young woman, constructing a treasured Valentine for her dearest friend. I don't know if it was a dashing young man, crafting a special memento for his heartthrob. They never signed their handcrafted creation.

The only record of this special gift is an inked note on the back in Pauline's handwriting: "Valentine rec'd when I was 21 yrs old".

I never knew Pauline when she was a classy woman cloaked in a fur stole and muff, sporting a wide-brimmed fashionable hat. The evidence lingers on a picture postcard she sent her friend Arlie Shinkle in December 1910. I never pictured her young and vibrant, receiving Valentine's from admirers.

In the 1960's, Bea and Pauline were simply two old ladies that lived next door to us in Glendora, California. They were both in



their mid-to-late 70's – positively ancient to a girl that hadn't reached the age of 10 yet. Despite the age difference, I adored my elderly neighbors.

I spent more time playing in their yard than I did in mine. Both women were housebound by then and I took full advantage of my backyard privileges. I climbed the orange trees and captured bees. I crawled under the overhanging pyracantha bush and discovered newts living in the damp newspapers I'd left overnight my secret fort. When the apricots ripened, my siblings and I could eat until our bellies were full.

Even though Pauline rarely went outdoors anymore, the garden still bore traces of her love of flowers. Rose bushes galore filled the backyard, surrounded by a hedge of lush, beautiful snowball flowers.

They stacked their old newspapers on a patio swing, enclosed by a zippered canvas covering. All this avid reader had to do was unzip the cover, climb in, and the comics at my disposal kept me busy all afternoon. It got even better. All it took was one knock on the door and I could camp out in their living room for hours. A beige upholstered swivel chair was mine to claim, right next to the four-tier lawyer's bookcase filled with a delightful array of books. Hours were lost as I read my way through their bookcase while Bea sat at the dining room table reading the newspaper or going through her mail, her large magnifying glass in hand.

Pauline spent most of the day in bed, a small black and white television keeping her occupied. Sometimes I'd sit in her room and talk and visit, somewhat mystified by the large collection of prescription pill bottles filling her night table. Occasionally she would venture out of her room and invite me to join her in a snack of canned peaches, served in small green petalware dishes.

In 1969 my dad was transferred to Toledo and that ended the daily association with my beloved old ladies. Another move or two found us back in southern California, but miles from my Bea and Pauline. Pauline died in 1974, followed by Bea the following year, on Valentine's Day.

As Executress of Bea's will, my mom had the task of going through the house and getting items ready for yard sales. Pauline had married for a short time long before we knew her, but neither of ladies had any children. Bea's nephew who lived out of state received the proceeds from the sales and the sale of the house. We children were able to choose items we wanted as mementos. I was in High School at the time, but even though I was a smart-alec teenager, I knew what I wanted. Old pictures and postcards!

Here it is, over 40-years later, and I still periodically pull out my treasures. I look through the scrapbooks of old pictures. I read the postcards Pauline sent to her friend Arlie over a hundred years ago. And I caress the soft fabric ribbon trim on a Valentine's card that Pauline got when she was 21-years old.

I doubt Pauline ever knew that Valentine's Day would grow into the massive retail celebration it is today. The Greeting Card Association calculates that 145 million Valentine's Day cards are sent every year, and that number doesn't include classroom valentines. An estimated \$18.6 billion is spent on Valentine's Day. About 224 million roses are grown for this day of love.

Things have changed a lot in the last 600 years. History.com reports that the oldest known valentine in existence today is a poem by Charles, Duke of Orleans that he wrote to his wife in 1415 while he was imprisoned in the Tower of London following his capture at the Battle of Agincourt. That's a lot older than Pauline's Valentine.

I wonder if today's mass-produced declarations of love will survive the passage of time as Pauline's 1912 Valentine did. Will we lovingly cherish these sonnets and save them till the end of our days? Will our loved ones treasure these mementos from days long past?

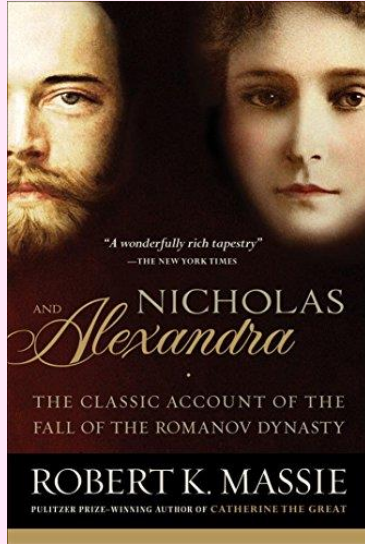
Not knowing the answer, I'll simply cherish this token from so long ago, a remnant of Pauline's life that I never knew about.



[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>

Love Stories from the Past



Nicholas and Alexandra

In this commanding book, Pulitzer Prize–winning author Robert K. Massie sweeps readers back to the extraordinary world of Imperial Russia to tell the story of the Romanovs’ lives: Nicholas’s political naïveté, Alexandra’s obsession with the corrupt mystic Rasputin, and little Alexis’s brave struggle with hemophilia. Against a lavish backdrop of luxury and intrigue, Massie unfolds a powerful drama of passion and history—the story of a doomed empire and the death-marked royals who watched it crumble.

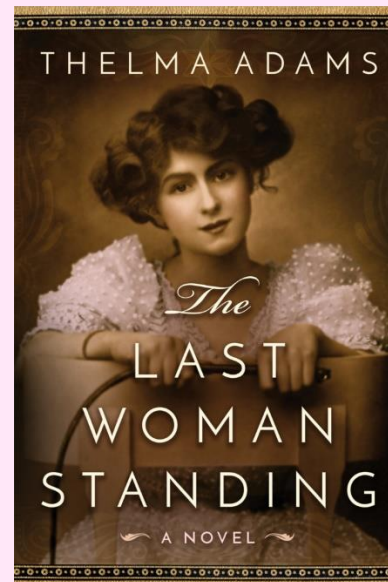
BONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Robert K. Massie's Catherine the Great.

The Last Woman Standing

Two decades after the Civil War, Josephine Marcus, the teenage daughter of Jewish immigrants, is lured west with the promise of marriage to Johnny Behan, one of Arizona’s famous lawmen. She leaves her San Francisco home to join Behan in Tombstone, Arizona, a magnet for miners (and outlaws) attracted by the silver boom. Though united by the glint of metal, Tombstone is plagued by divided loyalties: between Confederates and Unionists, Lincoln Republicans and Democrats.

But when the silver-tongued Behan proves unreliable, it is legendary frontiersman Wyatt Earp who emerges as Josephine’s match. As the couple’s romance sparks, Behan’s jealousy ignites a rivalry destined for the history books...

At once an epic account of an improbable romance and a retelling of an iconic American tale, *The Last Woman Standing* recalls the famed gunfight at the O.K. Corral through the eyes of a spunky heroine who sought her happy ending in a lawless outpost—with a fierce will and an unflagging spirit.





The French War Bride

At her assisted living center in Wedding Tree, Louisiana, ninety-three-year-old Amélie O'Connor is in the habit of leaving her door open for friends. One day she receives an unexpected visitor—Kat Thompson, the ex-fiancée of her late husband, Jack.

Kat and Jack were high school sweethearts who planned to marry when Jack returned from France after World War II. But in a cruel twist of fate, their plans were irrevocably derailed when a desperate French girl overheard an American officer's confession in a Parisian church.

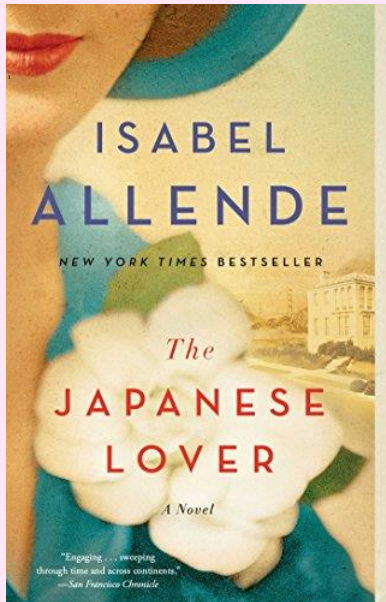
Now, Kat wants to know the truth behind a story that's haunted her whole life. She thinks finding out how Amélie stole Jack's heart will finally bring her peace. As Amélie recalls the dark days of the Nazi occupation of Paris, *The French War Bride* reveals how history shapes the course of our lives...for better or for worse.

A Memory Between Us

Major Jack Novak has never failed to meet a challenge--until he meets army nurse Lieutenant Ruth Doherty. When Jack lands in the army hospital after a plane crash, he makes winning Ruth's heart a top priority mission. But he has his work cut out for him. Not only is Ruth focused on her work in order to support her orphaned siblings back home, she carries a shameful secret that keeps her from giving her heart to any man. Can Jack break down her defenses? Or are they destined to go their separate ways?

A Memory Between Us is the second book in the WINGS OF GLORY series, which follows the three Novak brothers, B-17 bomber pilots with the US Eighth Air Force stationed in England during World War II.





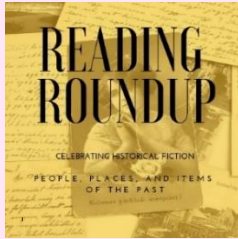
The Japanese Lover

In 1939, as Poland falls under the shadow of the Nazis, young Alma Belasco's parents send her away to live in safety with an aunt and uncle in their opulent mansion in San Francisco. There, as the rest of the world goes to war, she encounters Ichimei Fukuda, the quiet and gentle son of the family's Japanese gardener. Unnoticed by those around them, a tender love affair begins to blossom. Following the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the two are cruelly pulled apart as Ichimei and his family—like thousands of other Japanese Americans—are declared enemies and forcibly relocated to internment camps run by the United States government. Throughout their lifetimes, Alma and Ichimei reunite again and again, but theirs is a love that they are forever forced to hide from the world.

Decades later, Alma is nearing the end of her long and eventful life. Irina Bazili, a care worker struggling to come to terms with her own troubled past, meets the elderly woman and her grandson, Seth, at San Francisco's charmingly eccentric Lark House nursing home. As Irina and Seth forge a friendship, they become intrigued by a series of mysterious gifts and letters sent to Alma, eventually learning about Ichimei and this extraordinary secret passion that has endured for nearly seventy years.

[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

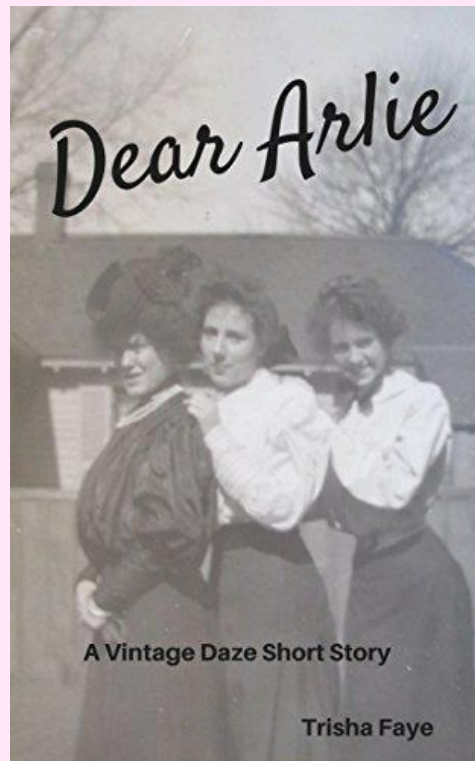
Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>



The 1900s/1910s

Dear Arlie

Trisha Faye



Arlie Shinkle is turning 20. She enjoys spending time with her friends - but George is what's really on her mind. Step back to 1911 as we peek in on Arlie's life to see if she does indeed get the man she has her eye on. This Vintage Daze Short Story is inspired from a collection of real life postcards sent from Pauline Washburn to Arlie Shinkle, along with photographs from Pauline's scrapbook.

[Get Pages of the Past delivered to your inbox every Friday!](#)

Join us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/184527085517941/>