



Vol. 2, No. 25, June 19, 2020

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## From the Editor

Hello all you wonderful historical fiction lovers! It's been a strange year so far – yet, nothing stranger than anything we've all read about in those glorious books of the past.

Yes, today's issue is coming out a day late. It's always released on Friday. Thursday morning my stepmother in Arkansas passed away. So, Thursday afternoon instead of coming home and finishing up the newsletter, I was on the phone, and crying and all that goes along with hearing devastating news. So here we are, a day late. But I've also figured out that the world doesn't stop spinning if an issue comes out late. One benefit of Covid is that it's shown us what truly matters in life.

This issue is a little different than others. We always start with an article that pertains to writing historical fiction in some manner. I've been publishing articles in an A to Z fashion as we work our way through the alphabet. But I wanted to interrupt the sequence by one week to push the 'R' post down a week. It's going to be 'Roaring Twenties' and I want that article to coincide with the week where we're interviewing Anne Louise Bannon about her series set in the 1920s. So, we have a 10-question trivia game this week instead of an article.

Also, we don't have our usual author interview this week. Instead there's a list of 50 top historical fiction books as a challenge to see how many you've read. I didn't compile the list (or the trivia), so links are included where I got them from. Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with DK Marley, Anne Louise Bannon, Gini Grossenbacher, Pamela Nowak, Joyce E.S. Pyka, and more!

*Trisha*

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# Historical Fiction Trivia

## BACK IN TIME

<https://www.funtrivia.com/submitquiz.cfm>

1. "I, Claudius" starts with the title character calling out his full name. Tiberius Claudius Drusus Nero Germanicus This-that-and-the-other acts as the first person, but of course it was not Claudius who had this autobiography published in 1934. Who was the true author of this novel and of its sequel "Claudius the God"?

- Philip Gardiner
- Robert Graves
- Fiona Gibson
- Kristina Goikotxea Langarika

2. Tolstoy's novel "War and Peace" is set against the Napoleonic wars. Which of the following characters is one of the protagonists in "War and Peace"?

- Boris Godunov
- Alexei Vronsky
- Pierre Bezukhov
- Fyodor Karamazov

3. In "Pillars of the Earth" by Ken Follett, the protagonist is Tom Builder. What is the magnum opus Tom Builder wants to realise?

- Trajan's Column
- Sydney Opera House
- Eiffel Tower
- A Gothic cathedral

4. "For Whom the Bell Tolls" is a novel set in Spain, during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Which American journalist authored "For Whom the Bell Tolls"? He also left us a novel based upon his experiences during the First World War, when he drove ambulances in Italy.

- Ernest Hemingway
- Aldous Huxley
- George Orwell
- Siegfried Sassoon

5. James Clavell wrote several novels set in various epochs in Asia. Which of the following novels is set in Japan around 1600, the dawn of the Edo period?

- Whirlwind
- Tai-Pan
- Shogun
- Gai-Jin

6. The Australian author Colleen McCullough dedicated a series of seven books to the last century of the Roman Republic. The first book, "The First Man in Rome", concentrates on the decade 110-100 BC, and it sketches the rise of a plebeian to his sixth consulate - something never heard of, for normally one could only be appointed as consul once in a lifetime. Who was this first person to concatenate six consulates?

- Pompey
- Marius
- Crassus
- Lepidus

7. In Umberto Eco's "The Name of the Rose", a British friar travels to an Italian monastery where several monks die under suspicious circumstances. What is the name of the friar who finally unravels several mysteries?

- William X of Aquitaine
- William Henry Andrew Frederick of Gloucester
- William Legge, 10th Earl of Dartmouth
- William of Baskerville

8. Sarah Dunant refers in her first historic novel "The Birth of Venus" of course to the famous painting by Sandro Botticelli. Dunant describes the relationship of a young model and her painter, and uses the historic setting to unravel several murders. Where does the action take place?

- Frankfurt, Germany
- Florence, Italy
- Freiburg, Switzerland
- Funchal, Portugal

9. Time for a French historic novel. Emile Zola left us a novel in which he described a coalminers' strike in the north of France. What is the title of this book?

- Les misérables
- Germinal
- La reine Margot
- La condition humaine

10. One of the most striking novels on the trench war, was "Im Westen Nichts Neues" - translated into English as "All Quiet on the Western Front". Who was the author?

- Rainer Maria Rilke
- Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock
- Christian Johann Heinrich Heine
- Erich Maria Remarque

**THE ANSWERS:**

1. Robert Graves
2. Pierre Bezukhov
3. A Gothic cathedral
4. Ernest Hemingway
5. Shogun
6. Marius
7. William of Baskerville
8. Florence, Italy
9. Germinal
10. Erich Maria Remarque

How did you do?

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## Historical Fiction Challenge: How Many Have You Read?

Here's a challenge for you – here's a list of 50 Best Historical Fiction Books. How many have you read?

I didn't put the list together. There are many other lists of the 'Top 50' or 'Top 100', so this is far from the only list out there. And, to be truthful, if we each composed our own lists of what we thought were the 'top' books, each list would be different.

Out of curiosity, I'm wondering how you all fare with this list. I didn't score too well. I only got 9 of the 50, and to be honest, a few were read so many years ago that I couldn't begin to tell you what the book was like. (Unlike my niece who devours books...*and* can tell you the plot line many years later. Yes, you, Chelle Belle!)

There's a caveat on one of them – Number 6 – which appears to be only in Spanish, so I doubt many here will be able to check that one off their list. (If you can, extra brownie points for you!)

I discovered an interesting thing as I worked on the list. Not all the authors were credited on the original list, so I went to Amazon looking up author names for about half the books. As I read about some of them as they were on the screen, many looked fascinating and I'd definitely read it. Others...not so much. Some were not in a style, or time period, or plot line that I'd be interested to read. But as readers and authors, isn't that the best part? That we have so many different interests and likes? The world would be awfully boring if we were alike.



### Top 50 Best Historical Fiction Books

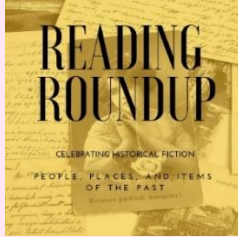
<https://www.listchallenges.com/top-50-best-historical-fiction-books>

1. Memoirs of a Geisha, Arthur Golden
2. Gone With the Wind, Margaret Mitchell
3. The Pillars of the Earth, Ken Follett
4. The Other Boleyn Girl, Philippa Gregory
5. The Red Tent, Anita Diamant
6. A Menina Que Roubava Livros, Markus Zusak
7. A Tale of Two Cities, Charles Dickens

8. Girl With a Pearl Earring, Tracy Chevalier
9. The Book Thief, Markus Zusak
10. Shogun, James Clavell
11. The Thorn Birds, Colleen McCullough
12. The Clan of the Cave Bear, Jean Auel
13. The Historian, Elizabeth Kostova
14. The Name of the Rose, Umberto Eco
15. Snow Flower and the Secret Fan, Lisa See
16. World Without End, Ken Follett
17. Dragonfly in Amber, Diana Gabaldon
18. The Scarlet Letter, Nathaniel Hawthorne
19. The Color Purple, Alice Walker
20. The Shadow of the Wind, Carlos Ruiz Zafón (Author), Lucia Graves (Translator)
21. Lonesome Dove, Larry McMurtry
22. The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows
23. Cold Mountain, Charles Frazier
24. Roots: The Saga of an American Family, Alex Haley
25. The Three Musketeers, Alexandre Dumas
26. I Claudius, Robert Graves
27. Year of Wonders: A Novel of the Plague, Geraldine Brooks
28. The Drums of Autumn, Diana Gabaldon
29. The Crucible, Arthur Miller
30. Atonement, Ian McEwan
31. Sarah's Key, Tatiana de Rosnay
32. The Killer Angels, Michael Shaara
33. One Hundred Years of Solitude, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Gregory Rabassa
34. The Alienist, Caleb Carr
35. The Fiery Cross, Diana Gabaldon
36. A Breath of Snow and Ashes, Diana Gabaldon
37. Katherine, Anya Seton
38. The English Patient, Michael Ondaatje
39. Like Water for Chocolate, Laura Esquivel
40. Exodus: A Novel of Israel, Leon Uris
41. The Witch of Blackbird Pond, Elizabeth George Speare
42. The Alchemist, Paulo Coelho
43. The Queen's Fool, Philippa Gregory
44. Perfume, Patrick Suskind and John E. Woods
45. Here Be Dragons, Sharon Kay Penman
46. Fall of Giants, Ken Follett
47. The Sunne in Splendour, Sharon Kay Penman
48. Pope Joan, Donna Woolfolk Cross
49. The Boleyn Inheritance, Philippa Gregory, Georgia Maguire
50. The Scarlet Pimpernel, Baroness Orczy

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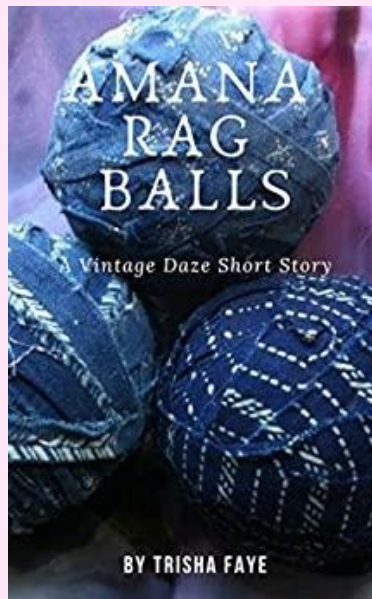


## The 1800s

### Amana Rag Balls

A Vintage Daze Short Story (ebook only)

Trisha Faye



While Elsie is happy with her life in Middle Amana, Iowa, she is not looking forward to what lies ahead. When the children turn fourteen, they are assigned work in the community. She dreads the thought of assigned to cooking in the kitchens. The Council's unexpected decision leads Elsie along a different path – one filled with weaving, looms, and lots of indigo colored rag balls.

This fictional short story is created around a set of three indigo rag balls discovered in an antique store in Bedford, Iowa. They came from an attic in Amana and prompted the tale of what might have occurred over a hundred years ago, when these rag balls were a staple of Amana's community life.

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