



Vol. 2, No. 33, August 14, 2020

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday to you all!

We have a winner for the short story contest. I know, I know – this week we were supposed to have all the story entries so everyone could vote on their favorite. But I think the summer heat, Covid delirium, and perhaps lack of a better prize affected the story writing muses and we only got one entry. So instead of voting, we're already announcing the winner ... Marion Tickner!

I'm very happy with the results and I think you will be too. Keep reading to see Marion's entry – The Fate of the Touring Car. I think you'll agree with me, that her story is perfect to go along with the prompt picture. Congratulations on a wonderful, well-written, and entertaining story, Marion!

This week we're chatting with another fantastic author. Joyce E.S. Pyka takes the elements of history and mixes it up with some murder and mayhem to come up with some delightful tales. Keep reading to find out more about her and her writing, and how a spicy red dress worked its way into a story.

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Linda Ulleseit, Christina Baker Kline, Ruth Kozak, Renata Stankova, Tiffani Angus, and a lot more!

Trisha

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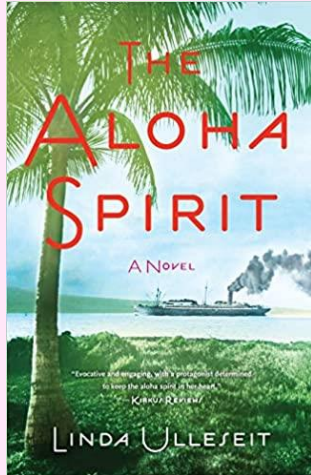
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New Releases

[Aloha Spirit](#)

Linda Ulleseit



The spirit of aloha is found in Hawaii's fresh ocean air, the flowers, the trade winds . . . the natural beauty that smooth the struggles of daily life. In 1922 Honolulu, unhappy in the adoptive family that's raised her, Dolores begins to search for that spirit early on—and she begins by running away at sixteen to live with her newlywed friend Maria.

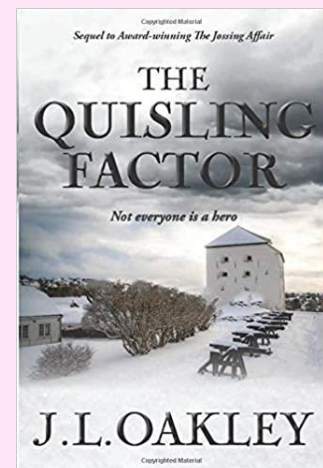
Trying to find her own love, Dolores marries a young Portuguese man named Manolo His large family embraces her, but when his drinking leads to physical abuse, only his relative Alberto comes to her rescue—and sparks a passion within Dolores that she hasn't known before. Staunch Catholics can't divorce, however; so, after the Pearl Harbor attack, Dolores flees with her two daughters to California, only to be followed by both Manolo and Alberto. In California, Manolo's drinking problems continue—and Alberto's begin. Outraged that yet another man in her life is turning to the bottle for answers,

Dolores starts to doubt her feelings for Alberto. Is he only going to disappoint her, as Manolo has? Or is Alberto the embodiment of the aloha spirit she's been seeking?

[The Quisling Factor](#)

Janet Oakley

Treason. Espionage. Revenge. In the aftermath of WWII, ex-intelligence agent Tore Haugland tries to adjust to life in his newly freed country with the woman he loves. But he still has to testify against a Norwegian traitor -- one of the monsters of the German occupation -- whom he helped to capture. When mysterious notes threaten Haugland and his family, he must choose between protecting them or bringing to justice the man who tortured him and destroyed the village that hid him. Challenged by injuries and recurring nightmares, he will have to rely on his former training and old Resistance friends to rescue his wife from the traitor who will do anything to keep Haugland from testifying.



Short Story Contest Winner

The winner is -

Marion Tickner

For her story:

The Fate of the Touring Car



The Fate of the Touring Car

Marion Tickner

The Great War was over. “The War to end all wars.” Victory won!

When Olin was finally back in the good old USA, he bought a car and drove home to Upstate New York. He and his family had a good laugh as Olin’s car was identical to his father’s touring car.

Olin wanted to have a good time before he settled down. He met some girls at the dances, took one to the movies, but it was in church where he met Elise and knew that she was the girl for him.

Elise didn’t need to be entertained as did the others. She was satisfied to take walks, go out in a boat, or just sit on her front porch and talk. At the time there was another young man vying for Elise’s attention, but when Olin asked the question, she said yes.

In the meantime, there was much to do before the wedding. Being a carpenter in trade, Olin set to work to build a house for his wife. In the course of planning for the wedding, Elise suggested that they visit her cousin who lived in New York City and wouldn’t be able to come for the ceremony.

It happens all the time. During a wedding, pranksters tie tin cans on the rear bumper of the groom’s car and write “Just Married” on the rear window. On the day of the wedding, Olin packed his car, but instead of parking it at the curb in front of the church, he left it around the corner. After all, he didn’t want to drag tin cans all the way to New York.

As the married couple walked out the front door of the church in a rain of rice, Elise grabbed Olin’s arm. “What happened to your car?”

Olin’s mouth dropped open. He stood there and stared.

It did look strange indeed. There sat a car in the middle of the road. Olin didn’t see any tin cans, but the front had been seriously damaged. The wheels weren’t what you’d call cross-eyed—they were just the opposite. Both wheels were facing outward. Is there an optical term for that?

Olin felt a tap on his shoulder. “I’m sorry, Buddy. Somebody parked so close behind you that we had to drag your car out into the road to ... well, decorate.”

Olin had a puzzled look on his face. Then it turned into a smile. He said, “Thank you for telling me, George. Do me a favor, will you? Go find my father and tell him. After all, it’s his car.”

Author Spotlight: Joyce E. S. Pyka

A step back in time – a little bit of history – and a lot of mystery! Books don't get better than that. Joining us here today is Joyce E.S. Pyka, an author proficient at combining all the necessary elements for good stories in the past, with the spicy elements of murder and mayhem mixed in.



Hello, Joyce E.S. Pyka! We welcome you as our spotlighted author today. Your two books in the Willow Woods series, with a third almost ready, are labeled as Victorian Mystery Books. Can you tell us a little bit about what inspired your first book, *Fallen Angel*?

I loved reading mysteries as well as character driven stories. I'm also a professed history nerd, so I knew that someday I would combine the three. Several years ago, I started researching the best cozy murder mysteries (gotta' love that oxymoron). I literally dissected the books chapter by chapter, analyzing what made them so popular. I wanted my series to be interesting and entertaining with a challenging puzzle to solve, but also a place to learn a bit about history and grow along with the characters that readers would want to revisit.

On my daily commute to work, I had the privilege of driving through the national landmark village of Riverside (just outside of Chicago). It was the perfect location; a picturesque village, close to a major metropolis, perfect for the cozy feeling of the genre that would also allow my heroine, Kat Livingston, to expand on her adventures in the city.

Why did you want to set this series in the early 1900s?

Often referred to as the Century of Progress, the 1900s were just that, an era of great change. As the series moves forward in time, I will have plenty to write about. Each book will take place in the consecutive year prior to the one before it. I suppose if I make it out of the first decade of the 1900s, I'll have to rename the series.

How Kat Livingston, your main character, evolve into being?

I wanted a strong woman, who could move comfortably around in society and yet be a member of the working classes. She needed to grow as a person through her experiences as well as to be able to have one mystery adventure after another. Due to circumstances beyond her control, Kat is thrust from a place of privilege, and forced to earn a living. Such a change in lifestyle allowed that character a unique opportunity to view the world through a different perspective. Once concerned about parties, fashion and etiquette of the early 1900s, she is forced to open her eyes to more serious issues and exposed to a world she never knew existed.

Most of us writing historical fiction only have to deal with trying to get the historical facts and ambiance correct. You've added the element of mystery to your books. Does that complicate the writing process?

Yes, it does. You have to make sure that the mystery solving skills and forensics correlate to what was available at the time. If you are taking your readers on a mystery solving journey filled with clues, red herrings, misleads and more, then you owe it to them to not only be historically accurate, but that all these element mesh together in a plausible manner.

On Facebook, you posted a photo of a sumptuous red, velvet silk gown and mentioned that that was the inspiration for the description of Book 3, *Cover to Cover*. How was the gown an inspiration, and how did you find the beautiful gown?

Since this is a novella and much shorter than my previous books, I wanted to set the tone for a holiday story within the first chapter. This spicy red dress in elegant velvet reflected Kat's dual personality. She's a total fashionista of her day and a former member of Willow Woods high society, but with the pluck of a modern (new) American-Victorian woman – no subtle winter blues for this gal.

While hunting for a "House of Worth" gown, possibility the most influential house of fashion during the Victorian era, I came across this photograph.

Your third book, *Cover to Cover*, is slated to be out this fall. Can you give us a little teaser about the book, and let us know when we can look for it?

Kat attends a New Year's Eve party with her Uncle Zachery. As midnight approaches, all the guests raise their champagne glasses for the traditional countdown toast. Little do they realize; they are about to ring in more than just the New Year.

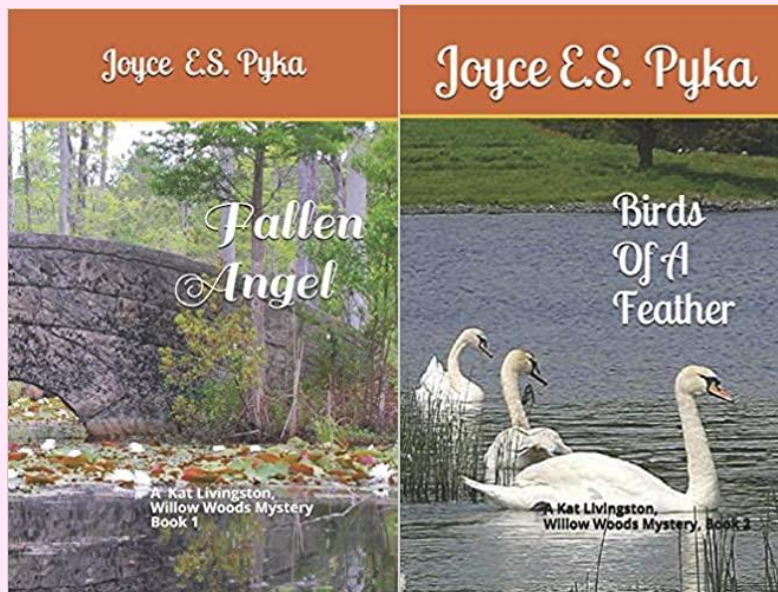
On Facebook, I have a favorite group – Good Deed Factory – and a favorite page – The Pay it Forward Effect. Especially in these days of strife and division, I try to consciously look for the good in life and the good in people. This group and page help promote the positivity of good deeds that take place all around us.

I saw that with you this past June, when you donated all the proceeds from your Kindle ebooks, paperback books, and Kindle Unlimited earnings to your local food pantry. I really admire you for doing that. And while this topic doesn't relate to reading or writing historical fiction, it does relate to you as an author and person. Can you share a little bit about what prompted that action and how it transpired in your life?

I feel very fortunate to be able to write my way out of reality and into a better place, especially during these recent times. For me it is a wonderful therapy. I felt the need to help with what I do.

Like most people, I have had a life full of ups and downs. During the down times, I learned, firsthand, what a struggle it is to find money even for the bare necessities. At the root of that is the most basic need of all – food. If you are hungry, nothing else matters. This is why I chose my local food pantry.

Thank you for joining us today, Joyce. We appreciate your time. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your books and we'll go follow and friend you.



You can find Joyce's books here:

[FALLEN ANGEL: A Kat Livingston, Willow Woods Mystery](#)

[Birds Of A Feather: A Kat Livingston, Willow Woods Mystery Book 2](#)

You can find Joyce here:

<https://www.instagram.com/joycepyka/>

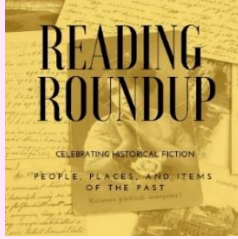
<https://www.facebook.com/JoycePykaAuthor/>

BIO: I was always a storyteller. As a young child on hot summer evenings, the neighborhood children would gather on our front porch to escape the heat (not every house had air-conditioning back then - LOL). While we sipped cherry cokes or lemonade, they asked me to make up stories for them. As life went on, I continued to read with a passion as well as write. However, I didn't take up the craft with serious effort until a while ago. Better late than never as they say.

Thank you for this opportunity!

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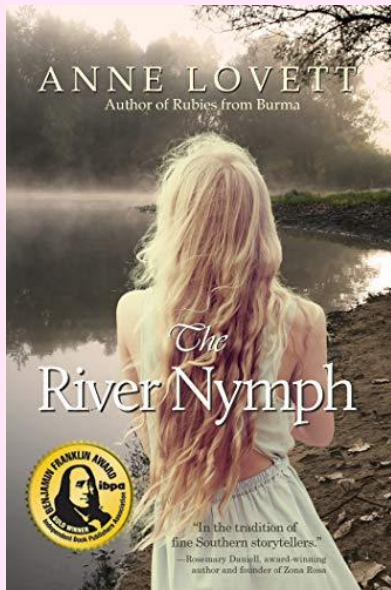
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The 1920s

The River Nymph

Anne Lovett



A fleeting glimpse of a girl bathing brings love at first sight. But will they ever meet again?

Georgia, 1924. Fourteen-year-old Tenny is determined to change her fate. After running away from bleak prospects to a tiny town, she fights to find a respectable place to stay. But with scant belongings and little money, she's soon battling for survival in a world of dangerous men.

Pete could never forget the vision of the pretty girl he saw washing in a river. But the aspiring medical student has grand plans for his future, and pursuing the affections of the town belle is his biggest goal. Yet when he eventually catches his bride-to-be, it may not lead to the blissful union he imagined.

Cleverly lying her way into nursing school, Tenny's blossoming friendship with the young doctor-in-training ends in heartbreak when he marries another woman. But after Pete's life is turned upside down with an invalid wife and a needy newborn, it's Tenny he leans on for support.

Will their hearts turn aside, or will they take a second chance for real love?

The River Nymph is a heartfelt women's fiction novel. If you like emotional journeys, well-researched settings, and strong-minded heroines, then you'll adore Anne Lovett's Southern historical saga.

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