



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday to you all!

There have been a lot of new releases in the past few months – and more on the way. It's so exciting seeing all the historical fiction works being offered. After six months of a world in turmoil, it's reassuring to see that writing has still been taking place. With all the uncertainties about whether we can go or have to stay, who is healthy and who is not, where masks are needed and where they aren't, it's nice to know that there are still books in our lives. No matter what else is going on around us, we can always pick up a book and escape into the pages of a delightful tale of another time.

This week we have a returning guest author – Charles Dickens. He joins us to talk about how some of the real-life people that he knew became characters in his writing. And here we thought that was a technique that we used in today's times. Nope, that method has existed for many years, long before any of us were writing. Keep reading to see what he has to say.

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

Trisha

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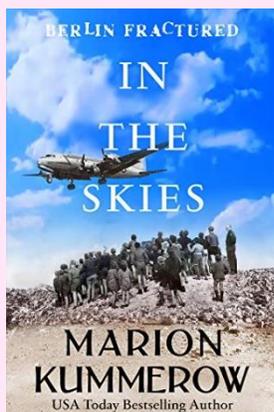
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New Releases

In the Skies

Marion Kummerow



The year is 1948. The city is Berlin.

The post-war elation is rapidly losing its glow. Soviet "assistance" begins to resemble a dictatorship, food and supplies grow scarce, and the conflict-ravaged city struggles with basic survival.

In an atmosphere of universal suspicion and fear, Zara's life is harder than most. As the daughter of a Nazi war criminal, her every step is monitored by the new ruling powers.

Despite her father's sins, she manages to carve out a slice of hope. Emigrating to Western Germany, she finds work, purpose, and - most importantly - freedom.

And now she risks losing everything she has built.

Glenn is a maverick in the US AirForce. Flying is his life - he isn't looking for romance. When he first encounters Zara, it seems like just another harmless flirtation. But there is something about her - something that breaks through to his battle-hardened heart.

When Glenn's plane crashes in Soviet territory, he's taken to their hospital - and if he refuses to give up state secrets, his life could be the forfeit.

Zara has information that could save the man she loves. But how can one woman succeed where the US AirForce has failed? By giving up her own flesh and blood.

Taken Too Soon

Edith Maxwell



Quaker midwife Rose Carroll must turn her investigative skills on her own family when a young woman's murder stuns a New England community . . .

Following a long betrothal, midwife Rose Carroll and her beloved David are finally celebrating their marriage with friends and relatives, when a most disturbing telegram interrupts the festivities: the young ward of Rose's aunt has suffered a mysterious death, and Rose's help is needed urgently on Cape Cod. Reluctantly agreeing to mix her honeymoon plans with murder, Rose embarks on an investigation that will expose family secrets and a community's bigotry.

As Rose does her best to comfort her aunt in her loss and also learn as much as possible about the poor young victim's death, she discovers that each new clue points to a confounding list of suspects: a close friend of the victim who may have harbored secret resentments, an estranged brother of David's with an unsavory reputation, and the son of a Native American midwife who supposedly led the young woman astray. And as Rose grows closer to identifying the perpetrator, the solution will rattle her assumptions about her own family and faith . . .

Author Spotlight: Charles Dickens

This week we welcome a returning guest to Pages of the Past – Mr. Charles Dickens. Mr. Dickens [joined us last Christmas](#), where he spoke about how he got his start in writing, and of course, shared a bit about his phenomenally popular book, A Christmas Story. Not only was A Christmas Story written in 1843 and has never been out of print since (This December marks the 177-year point), but the first run of 6,000 books sold out in SIX DAYS!

There was so much he had to share with us, that he returned as a [guest this past March](#) to talk about how much of his early writing was written in installments.

He returns this week so we can chat a bit about using real people as inspiration for our characters.



Thank you, Mr. Dickens, for taking the time to come back and talk to our Pages of the Past readers.

I daresay it was not any trouble to return at all. Time I have got ample supply of now. All the time in the world and more than I'd ever thought possible. Why, the only thing vexing me at the moment is how I wish I could lay a physical touch on a quill. The stories I could be writing with all this available time. Alas, the means to write the stories down now alludes me. And those who could transcribe the thoughts are far and few between. I don't suppose...

I wish I could help you out with that, Sir. But I fear that my schedule is packed solid right now. I hardly have time to devote to my own stories at the moment. Speaking of stories, we were going to talk about characters in this interview. I know as I'm writing, I find that I keep drawing on the people I know and love – and

some I *don't* love – to use their quirks and personalities as fodder for developing my own characters. I wonder if that's something that's a new development in the writing field, or if authors have done this through the ages?

Oh, my dear, if I can call you 'dear' and not sound like a stodgy old man. From what I overhear in conversations that I sometimes pop down from the heavens to listen in on, is that certain endearments are frowned upon now. I gather young ladies don't like being called some of the names that were common in my lifetime. So, I mean no disrespect.

None taken. I'm simply honored that you've granted me this special interview opportunity.

Anyway, I digress. You asked me about using real life people as inspiration for characters. No, that is not a new development. Why, several of my own characters were based on real-life people that I knew. And, like you mentioned, some I loved, and some I...didn't.

What was an instance of using someone you loved?

Two examples come to mind, both involve two women I loved, albeit in very different manners. When I was a youthful fellow, not yet in my prime, still learning the ways of the world, I met a sweet girl and fell in love for the first time. It was back, oh, most likely around 1830. Maria Beadnell was her name. A lovely vision, a young woman that fell from the angel's arms to Earth. Alas, her parents were not as accepting of this young romance as the sweet Maria and I were. They disapproved of my earnest courtship of her and sent her away to Paris to attend school. That was the end of our young love, but I was able to keep memories of her alive when I used her as the model for Dora, in David Copperfield.

And the second woman?

Ah, the other was a true and endearing love, but for one who was as a sister to me. Several years after my love for Maria was nipped in the bud, I met my Catherine, the mother of my ten children. We married in 1836 and set up household in Furnival's Inn. After our first child was born, Charley, in January of 1837, I took a three-year lease on a place in London. 48 Doughty Street, I believe. Funny how these old dates and addresses pop into the mind like that.

That still happens. We can be 50 or 60 years old and still remember our first address, or our first telephone number.

Telephone number?

Never mind. It's a new-fangled thing. I shouldn't have interrupted. Please, continue with your tale.

I recall the date because it was just a few months after young Charles entered our lives that Catherine's younger brother Frederick and her younger sister, Mary, moved in with us. Mary was a delightful 17-year old girl and I felt like I'd gained a younger sister myself. I became quite attached to her. Unfortunately, she became ill and after a brief period, she died. I held her in her final moments, as she drew her last breath. I was devastated. My grief overwhelmed and took away the power of the pen. I couldn't write for some time. In fact, I missed the deadline for the June installment of Pickwick Papers and had to cancel my Oliver Twist installment that month as well.

I had fashioned a character after Mary, Rose Maylie. In my plot, I'd planned to kill her off later on in the story. However, after her own untimely death, I found I could not continue as I'd planned. I also pulled on my memories of Mary later in creating Little Nell and Florence Dombey.

Was that all the times you used real-life people to partially develop your characters.

It most certainly was not. Many of my characters were birthed from characteristics of people I knew. When I was a youngster, my Father, for good cause, was detained in debtors' prison in Southwark, London. As was the practice at the time, the wives and youngest of children joined him there. I was 12-years old at the time, so boarded with a family friend, Elizabeth Roylance. She was an impoverished old woman, long known to our family. I later immortalized her, with a few alterations and embellishments, as Mrs. Pipchin in Dombey and Son.

Later, I resided for a time in the back-attic in the house of an agent for the Insolvent Court, Archibald Russell. He was a fat, good-natured, kind old gentleman with a quiet old wife, and a lame son. This dear family provided the inspiration for the Garlands in The Old Curiosity Shop.

In Oliver Twist I even used the name of a helpful lad from my younger days. With my Father in debtor's prison, I was forced to leave school and work ten-hour days at Warren's Blacking Warehouse. Hence, my penchant for berating the cruelty of child labor and conditions of poverty. But those are tales for another time. At the blacking warehouse, I earned six shillings a week from pasting labels on pots of boot blacking. It was a horrid job for a child. I had to cover the posts of paste-blackening; first with a piece of oil-paper, and then with a piece of blue paper; to tie them round with a string; and then to clip the paper close and neat, all round, until it looked as smart as a pot of ointment from an apothecary's shop. When a certain number of grosses of pots had attained this pitch of perfection, I was to paste on each a printed label, and then go on again with more pots.

My first day I had no clue as to how to perform the steps in this process. Downstairs, two or three other boys were kept at similar duty. One came up to the little recess I was put to work at upstairs. The lad appeared in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on that first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and tying the knot. His name was Bob Fagin and I took the liberty of using his name many years later in Oliver Twist.

These have all appeared to be people you liked or admired in some fashion. Are there others, as we've alluded to earlier, that weren't liked that ended up in your stories?

Perhaps not as much as 'not liked', but certainly unpleasant circumstances and experiences have been included in my writing. My own views on poverty, education, and the machinations and bureaucracy of the legal system show up in many of my plots. Even my early experiences of my employment at the blacking warehouse and the harsh working conditions influenced my interest in the reform of labor conditions.

I spent about two years at Wellington House Academy in Camden Town, until March of 1827. It was not a good school. Much of the haphazard, desultory teaching, poor discipline punctuated by the headmaster's sadistic brutality, the seedy ushers and generally run-down atmosphere, are embodied in Mr. Creakle's Establishment in David Copperfield.

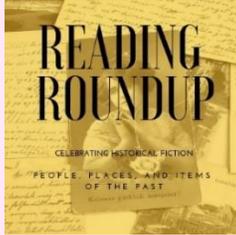
As authors, we have a whole lifetime of not only people, but experiences, environments, and situations to use to draw upon for our fiction for settings, plot points, and characters.

I fear, however...that my energy is lagging, and I must depart. I feel myself being drawn away from this earthly realm for the time being and I must return to my heavenly dwelling.

Then, we shall let you go, before you vanish mid-sentence. We appreciate the time you have taken to stop by and share more about your writing and how you drew upon known people to create some of the characters in your many beloved works. Thank you, again, Mr. Dickens for visiting with Pages of the Past.

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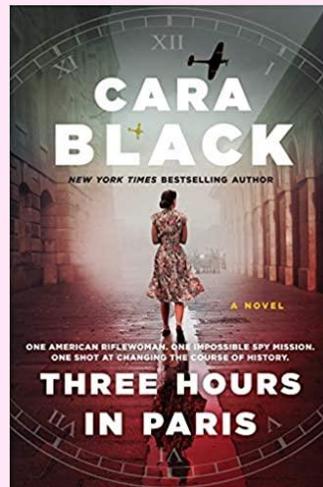
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The 1940s

Three Hours in Paris

Cara Black



In June of 1940, when Paris fell to the Nazis, Hitler spent a total of three hours in the City of Light—abruptly leaving, never to return. To this day, no one knows why.

The New York Times bestselling author of the Aimée Leduc investigations reimagines history in her masterful, pulse-pounding spy thriller, *Three Hours in Paris*.

Kate Rees, a young American markswoman, has been recruited by British intelligence to drop into Paris with a dangerous assignment: assassinate the Führer. Wrecked by grief after a Luftwaffe bombing killed her husband and infant daughter, she is armed with a rifle, a vendetta, and a fierce resolve. But other than rushed and rudimentary instruction, she has no formal spy training. Thrust into the red-hot center of the war, a country girl from rural Oregon finds herself holding the fate of the world in her hands. When Kate misses her mark and the plan unravels, Kate is on the run for her life—all the time wrestling with the suspicion that the whole operation was a set-up.

Cara Black, doyenne of the Parisian crime novel, is at her best as she brings Occupation-era France to vivid life in this gripping story about one young woman with the temerity—and drive—to take on Hitler himself.

*Features an illustrated map of 1940s Paris as full color endpapers.

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