



Vol. 3, No. 9, February 26, 2021

- Short Story Contest
- Bonds Between Warring Countries
- Author Spotlight: Marina Osipova

From the Editor



Happy Friday! Is winter over yet? I'm ready for spring. After the not-so-fun extreme cold weather in Texas, coupled with seven days of no running water due to a frozen, burst pipe and plumbers working around the clock trying to get to all the repairs needed around the state, and nine days of no internet, I feel like I've paid my dues this winter!

But there are some pluses, we've been inundated in a rare occurrence of flocks of robins by the hundreds in search of food. That is a sight that I will remember fondly for a long time.

This coming April Pages of the Past turns two years old! To celebrate, we're having a flash fiction contest. Write a short story, 400-600 words, to one of the three photo prompts. The winner will win a \$50 gift card! The deadline for entries is March 19th. Details and photos follow on the next two pages.

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Renata Stankova, Tom Palmer, Malve von Hassell, Peter Turnham, Carmen Radtke, Florence Kraut, and more!

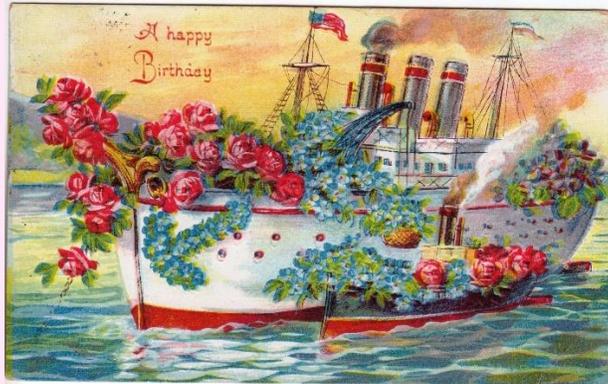
Trisha

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Happy Birthday Short Story Contest

Happy Birthday to Pages of the Past!



It's Flash Fiction Contest Time! Enter your flash fiction story for a chance to win a \$50 gift card.

Write a 400-600 word story to one of the three pictures below. Email your entry to texastrishafaye@yahoo.com with 'CONTEST ENTRY – (title of your story)' in the subject line.

Entries are due by midnight, Friday, March 19th.

The stories will be printed in the April 2nd newsletter. A PDF will be compiled with all the stories and posted on Facebook, allowing others a chance to read the stories and send in their votes. The contest will run until April 12th at midnight. The winner will be announced in the April 16th newsletter.

The winner receives a \$50 gift card.

Use one of the three photographs below as a prompt for your story.





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Bonds Between Warring Countries

Two countries – warring with each other. The war was bigger than simply two countries fighting. The whole world was at war, with countries on each side of the battle. But Germans and Americans were definitely not on the same side. Our troops were killing theirs. Their troops were killing ours.

Yet, here in America, bonds between Americans and Germans were forged that lasted for the rest of their lives.

It was 1944. The war raged around the world. Here in America, several POW camps were built, to house the thousands of prisoners from other countries. In Algona, Iowa, a town built around a farming community, a POW camp was built. Initially it held Italian prisoners, but after a few months they were moved, and German prisoners were held in Algona.

While some of the prisoners were SS officers and dedicated Nazi's, most of the men were simply German citizens fighting for their country because they'd been ordered to. They were men who loved their families and were honest, hardworking men.

Many of the prisoners worked outside of the camp in many capacities, helping local farmers with their crops. They were paid for their work, at the rate of ten cents an hour, payable in Canteen coupons.

Fifty years after the war ended, a book of memories was compiled. Several people from Algona shared memories of long-lasting friendships that had formed between Americans and Germans.

Vuanita Rentz shared how she was a secretary at the medical supply building of the camp. At the rear of the building carpenter supplies were stored. Civilian carpenters often had to retrieve supplies from the area, and they were often accompanied by a German POW. One man, Werner Meinel, used to stop and talk to Vuanita as best he could. She remembers how he hated the Nazi party.

Years after the war was over, Werner moved to Plymouth, Massachusetts. He was doing freelance photography in Alaska and on the way, he stopped in Algona to look up old friends from that long ago time.

Vuanita had married, so Werner wasn't aware of her married name and they didn't meet up on that trip. But when she saw his story and pictures in the local newspaper, she contacted him. They renewed their friendship and remained friends until Werner's death in August 1992.

Betty Geering Stephens Black shared how she worked with medical supplies and worked with a German Corporal, Heinrick Terhardt. He spoke English and they often chatted together. After the war was over and he returned home, he wrote to tell her that they'd lost their home, but his wife and two children were safe. Betty sent several CARE packages to the Terhardt's, along with clothing for the children. To thank her for her kindness, he returned a handmade model of a German chalet.

Other stories exist that tell of lifetime friendships formed between Americans and Germans. Wars exist, but sometimes the bonds between people can overcome the war that lies between them.

Author Spotlight: Marina Osipova



Today we're thrilled to be chatting with an author with many stories to tell, Marina Osipova. Welcome, Marina!

Thank you, Trisha, for giving me a chance to share the information about myself and my books with your followers.

Marina, your books you have out all seem to be set in the 1930s and 1940s. What was the inspiration that led you to write in these timelines?

It's not an easy question for me to answer explicitly. The 1930s were the years leading to WWII (The Great Patriotic War as it was called at the time of the Soviet Union's existence and still is called in Russia and in the post-Soviet territories.) The 1940s were the war itself and the years of struggle that followed. Is it that the memory of the Soviet people who fought and shed their blood to save my country from Nazi enslavers runs in my blood? Is it that as a Russian, I inherited the horror and memory of that time? Is it that I was raised in an atmosphere of respect and genuine admiration of our heroic people? Perhaps all of that and much more. As a writer, I want to tell the whole world about how my countrymen suffered and endured but came out victors. There is another reason for me to write about the Great Patriotic War: Thanks to *The Nightingale*, *Lilac Girls*, *The Indigo Rebels* and other brilliant books, the stories of European women in their fight against the occupation of their countries has become broadly familiar. In every book of mine a woman is a central character, and I believe ordinary Russian women who had to endure four years of Nazi invasion deserve the same recognition as the women of these other stories.

Tell us about one of your favorite characters from one of your books.

Ah, another difficult question. They all are my favorites. I've spent so much time with them, living and suffering with them, sharing their rare joys, enduring the difficulties of their lives—be it in war or in peacetime. Still one of them, the main character of the novella *Order No.227 From Stalin With Love* is especially dear to me: Jakov Antonovich Krivenkov, my maternal grandfather who, in the words of one of the readers, "did his best at living his life with compassion, heart, and human connection." Telling his story to the world fills me with pride.

What challenges have you found with writing historical fiction?

For me, the biggest challenge is accuracy. Although the subject I'm writing about is familiar and close to my heart, to be true to the facts requires long hours of research. For every book, I read a significant number of non-fiction materials and memoirs of contemporaries to present a picture based on facts.

Of your four books, were any easier or more challenging to write?

The biggest challenge I've encountered was writing my first published book, *The Cruel Romance* (there were two other books before which I decided to bury in the chaos of my pc). It took me three years. Each

new book seems easier to write. I wrote the novella I mentioned earlier in one breath. It took only three days—and happened to be the most significant for me and my family.

How do you fit writing into your life? Do you have any routines that you try to abide by?

Writing itself has become a routine (the most favorite) for me, and it's my life that adheres to it (smile). Even more, I can say that my life fits into my writing perfectly.

Trisha, you are an accomplished author yourself and have a true following. Good luck with your books, and I wish many more wonderful stories for your readers, which I'm sure they eagerly await!



YOU CAN FIND MARINA OSIPOVA'S BOOKS HERE:

<https://www.amazon.com/Cruel-Romance-Novel-Love-War-ebook/dp/B0794VPFRW>

<https://www.amazon.com/Dare-Birds-Sing-Book-Love-ebook/dp/B07N2BDF91>

<https://www.amazon.com/Too-Many-Wolves-Local-Woods-ebook/dp/B08FGHWKPK>

YOU CAN FIND MARINA OSIPOVA HERE:

<https://www.amazon.com/Marina-Osipova/e/B0778W8MHS>

<https://www.marina-osipova.com>

BIO: Marina Osipova was born in East Germany into a military family and grew up in Russia where she graduated from the Moscow State Institute of History and Archives. She also has a diploma as a German language translator from the Moscow State Institute of Foreign Languages. In Russia, she worked first in a scientific-technical institute as a translator then in a Government Ministry in the office of international relations, later for some Austrian firms. For seventeen years, she lived in the United States where she worked in a law firm. Eventually, she found her home in Austria. She is an award-winning author and a member of the Historical Novel Society.