



Vol. 2, No. 11, March 13, 2020

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From the Editor



Hello all!

There's ONE WEEK to go! One week left to submit your short story and have a chance at winning a \$50 gift card! Are you thinking of a short story to go with one of the three pictures above? You could be the winner of a \$50 gift card! Check out the [Details here](#).

And yes, you'll see by the date on the newsletter that this is coming to you a day late. It should have gone out yesterday, Friday the 13th. But I can't blame the date as the cause for the lateness. I even have no excuse as I was home Thursday and Friday afternoons, having shorter days at work than normal. I'm going with the reason that right now, I'm just ...discombobulated.

I think the whole world is right now.

While I'm not particularly worried or terribly concerned, I'm still feeling cautious. I was supposed to be a speaker at a writer's conference next weekend. I should have been preparing all week for my presentation on personal essays. But the conference was cancelled. Along with a slew of events all over north Texas – and the nation.

For good cause. I see the social distancing practice as being a good one right now. Goodness knows, I don't want to end up being one of the statistics – nor do I want any family or friends to be there either. But between all the changes taking place in society right now, albeit they're most likely temporary, and the

empty grocery store shelves, and the confusion about a virus that many are trying to get a handle on...it just feels like the world has been turned upside down.

So instead of having two afternoons where I was productive and got a massive amount of work done, I dithered it away doing who knows what.

But, in trying to see the gratitude in a stressful world, I'm happy that no one I know has contracted this illness. I'm thankful there's no product that we're out of at home that could cause us to panic. We have food on the table. There's more time to read and write and garden. And I'm thankful that I don't live in Italy, or one of the other locations where it's much worse than what we have here.

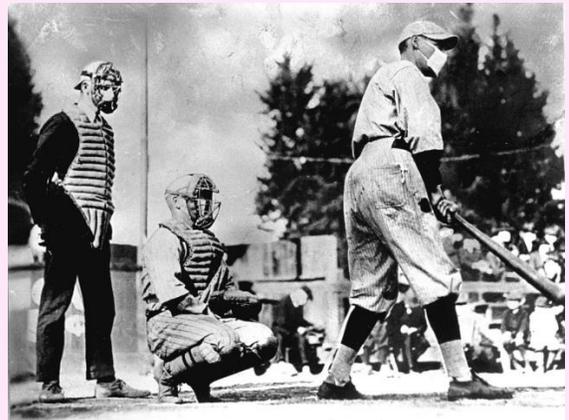
Looking at the waist high stack of books in my TBR pile, this could be a good thing. Looking at my backlog list of tasks I'm behind on, this could be a good thing. Seeing the lists circulating on Facebook about all the things that have NOT been cancelled, like the outdoors, the family time, the reading time, the time to pursue other creative ventures – this can all be a good thing.

With us celebrating historical fiction, these days remind me of the stories and historical tidbits I've read about the influenza epidemic in 1918. It's like deja-vu a hundred years later. And don't we all love a good bit of history?

Stay healthy and safe!

Trisha

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Edwardian Era

As historical fiction authors, many of us are drawn to certain eras or decades to set our tales in. And some hop about in time, effortlessly moving from one period to another without a hitch. In looking at different time periods, and as today is an 'E' day, we're taking a peek at the Edwardian Era.

While a shorter time period, and not as well-known as the Victorian Era, the changes that took place in this time are necessary to know if you're going to set a story here. The Victorian period covered a longer span of time – from 1837 to 1901, the years Queen Victoria was on the throne. The Edwardian Era, the time her son King Edward VII reigned, was from 1901 to 1910, sometimes extending to the start of The Great War (WWI).

So, what was different between these two eras? Samuel Hynes described the Edwardian Era as “a leisurely time when women wore picture hands and did not vote, when the rich were not ashamed to live conspicuously, and the sun really never set on the British flag.”

During this time, women still wore very tight corsets, or bodices, and dressed in long skirts. However, this was the last time when women wore corsets in everyday life. When more afternoon tea parties began being held, especially in the upper classes, corsets fell out of fashion and flowing feminine gowns decorated with lace, tulle and feather boas became the rage. Long kid gloves, flat pancake hats- bigger in size and decorated with feathers and plumes- and lace embellished parasols were more popular than the heavier, ankle-length, dark velvet gowns of the Victorian Era.



A cartoon in *Punch* (1911) compares changes in fashion between 1901 and 1911. "The dowdy voluminous clothes of the earlier date, making the grandmother an old lady and the mother seem plain, had been replaced by much simpler looser wear producing a sense of release for all three females.
(From Wikipedia)

Women's suffrage societies and marches saw a proliferation during these years. The campaigning became more noticeable and large parades were common, despite women often being arrested at these events. The visibility of the cause seemed to energize the movement, which is a whole entire topic on its own.

Literature began to change during these years. Novels and short stories proliferated and popular genres seemed to morph from 'highbrow literature' to popular fiction. Many authors that wrote during this time are still popular and well known names today, such as Rudyard Kipling, A.A. Milne, James Joyce, Beatrix Potter, George Bernard Shaw, and others.

One site, [Two Worlds](#), posted a piece about 'A look at the Edwardian Era and World War I.' Their take of how the Edwardian Era was different from the Victorian Era sums it up as this:

"So the difference between the Victorian Era and the Edwardian Era in its strictest meaning, is that the Victorian Era was the time in which Victoria was on the throne (1837-1901) and the Edwardian Era was the time in which her son, Edward VII was on the throne (1901-1910). But as history tells us, the spirit of the age is what defines an era, not just the monarch. There are some things that both eras have in common, but there are some major differences. The Edwardian Era was different in its morals, having a more lax standard in its code of conduct, compared to Victorian society, which was incredibly conservative. Furthermore, the Edwardian Era is when we start to see more and more implementation of the standard inventions used in our modern world today. By the late 1890's it became more common for homes of the middle to upper class to have electricity, phones, indoor plumbing, and even a car. These are but just a few examples of course, but the Edwardian Era is one of the finest examples in modern history of an era truly in the crux of two very different worlds."

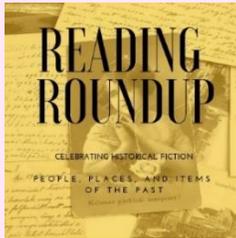
Does all of this give us all we need to know to go write a story set in Edwardian times? No, definitely not. There's still a lot of research needed. But hopefully this gives you a few clues about pieces you'll need to research and know to incorporate tidbits into your tale, making for a believable and enjoyable story.

Happy writing – in whatever era you choose to write about!

If you want to know more about what it was like living in these years, there's a video segment on YouTube, filmed in 1973, where Mary Parkinson chats with three ladies who grew up at the turn of the century as they discuss what Christmas' were just after the turn of the century. [Christmas in early times](#)

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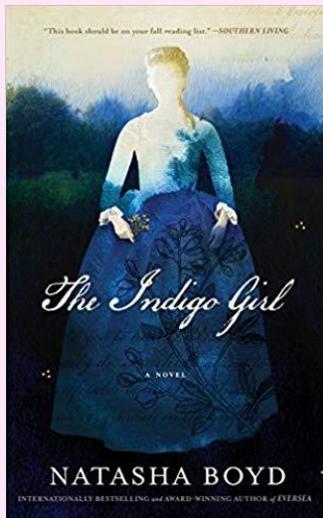
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The 1700s & Before

The Indigo Girl

Natasha Boyd



The year is 1739. Eliza Lucas is sixteen years old when her father leaves her in charge of their family's three plantations in rural South Carolina and then proceeds to bleed the estates dry in pursuit of his military ambitions. Tensions with the British, and with the Spanish in Florida, just a short way down the coast, are rising, and slaves are starting to become restless. Her mother wants nothing more than for their South Carolina endeavor to fail so they can go back to England. Soon her family is in danger of losing everything.

Upon hearing how much the French pay for indigo dye, Eliza believes it's the key to their salvation. But everyone tells her it's impossible, and no one will share the secret to making it. Thwarted at nearly every turn, even by her own family, Eliza finds that her only allies are an aging horticulturalist, an older and married gentleman lawyer, and a slave with whom she strikes a dangerous deal: teach her the intricate thousand-year-old secret process

of making indigo dye and in return -- against the laws of the day -- she will teach the slaves to read.

So begins an incredible story of love, dangerous and hidden friendships, ambition, betrayal, and sacrifice.

Based on historical documents, including Eliza's letters, this is a historical fiction account of how a teenage girl produced indigo dye, which became one of the largest exports out of South Carolina, an export that laid the foundation for the incredible wealth of several Southern families who still live on today. Although largely overlooked by historians, the accomplishments of Eliza Lucas influenced the course of US history. When she passed away in 1793, President George Washington served as a pallbearer at her funeral.

This book is set between 1739 and 1744, with romance, intrigue, forbidden friendships, and political and financial threats weaving together to form the story of a remarkable young woman whose actions were before their time: the story of the indigo girl.

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