



Vol. 2, No. 14, April 3, 2020

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From the Editor



Hello all! Pages of the Past is one year old this week!

This week we have three stories that were submitted for the Flash Fiction Spring Contest. Read the stories and vote for your favorite!

Voting is open until midnight, April 12th. (Details follow)

The winner will be announced in the April 17th newsletter. The winner will receive a \$50 gift card!

Thank you to all who entered, despite the confusion that our world is experiencing at this time. I know many lives are in turmoil as the world copes with this devastating virus.

To celebrate our one-year birthday, I was working on a special thank you to all the authors that have been our guest over the past year. The newsletter length was already eight pages and with all the authors listed, along with a short snippet from their interview, it was going to be a massive newsletter. I decided to break it into two. So, this issue is just the contest entries. Later today I'll send a second newsletter out to highlight all our wonderful authors.

Happy reading and even happier writing!

Trisha

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Flash Fiction Spring Contest

Following are the stories submitted to the Pages of the Past Historical Flash Fiction contest.

Read the stories and vote on your favorite. One vote allowed per person. Voting ends April 12, 2020 at midnight. The winner will be announced in the April 17th Pages of the Past newsletter.

Send your vote to: trishasnewsletter@yahoo.com

The stories were written to one of these three picture prompts:





Story #1 – Sleep by Lindsay Downs

Story #2 – Eleanor and Her Ladies Take Full Control by Allen Hott

Story #3 – Mr. Coolio...Not! by Kathryn Wilson

Story #1

Sleep

by Lindsay Downs

I know my mother's time on earth is coming to a close, so I try to spend as much time with her as possible.

Everyday for the past month I would walk into her private room at exactly nine o'clock. Before coming over today I had found the specific storage box she wanted me to bring.

"Morning mom. How did you sleep last night?"

"Not very well. I had to sneak a nip from the brandy you brought me the other day. Even still I'm afraid I won't wake up in the morning."

"Mother, trust me you're to ornery not to get up."

She chuckled. "You're right but still when you get to be my age that'll be in your thoughts as well."

"If you don't mind, I'll worry about that in a few years. What would you like to do? Look through the scrapbooks?"

"Not yet. Take your old mother out to the patio so I can enjoy a little sun before I'm called home."

Pushing her wheelchair out the side door I went to a table away from the other residents. From her silence I suspected she wanted to talk about something. What, I had no idea, so I waited enjoying the warm morning sun.

"Son, of all the events you'd witnessed over the years in DC, which one is your most memorable?"

The protests against the Vietnam War. The President John Kennedy funeral. The Martin Luther King Jr. "I have a dream" speech. 9/11 when terrorists tried to destroy the Pentagon.

Each in their own way, plus many more events, stand out in my mind. "I'd have to say the dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial then the Vietnam Women's Memorial. Can I ask why you want to know?"

"Before I answer your question can you answer one for me?" Mom said.

"Certainly."

"Why, of all the happenings, did you choose those two?"

"If you recall I lost a good friend in the Vietnam War. As for the second one, eight military nurses died during the fighting and many more civilian women were also killed. Even now, the men who die in battle are remembered while the women more often than not are relegated to second place citizens, which is wrong."

"I agree with your choices. Maybe someday, there will be a monument or memorial which honors the women who made the ultimate sacrifice."

Looking across the glass-top table I saw my mother close her eyes, not from fatigue I hoped, but thinking about some episode in her life. Her breathing slowed which panicked me until I saw her take in a deep inhalation.

"Are you tired mother? Do you want to go in to rest?"

"Not to lie down, I'll be able to do that for eternity when I am dead. I want to look at one of the scrapbooks," she replied.

Back in her room I got the requested item from the carton I'd brought and set the album in her lap. I waited while she searched through the pages. She stopped looking and took out a newspaper clipping yellowed from age.

"Of all my memories, this is my most fondest."

She handed me the page. A photo of her standing in front of the First Lady, Eleanor Roosevelt. The caption gave mother's name, her age and date. Eighty-four years ago today. I glanced over to her as she took a breath. Her face turned ashen. The picture slipped from her limp hand to the floor.

I knew she was gone.

The End

Story #2

Eleanor and Her Ladies Take Full Control

by Allen Hott

Someday that young lady with the hat and frown would look back and realize that she was in the right place at the right time. Yes, to think that she was right in front of and touched by the first female to ever be president of the United States of America! It seems hard to believe but when all the mourning was over for Franklin D. Roosevelt, the United States Congress overwhelmingly appointed Eleanor Roosevelt to be the 33rd president of the country.

Basically, it all started when Harry Truman the vice president in position to take over had been found guilty of a multitude of criminal offenses. Most of those somehow seemed to not only being a

participant in illegal activities but also in most cases Truman instigated and led the offense. Many had no idea that he was that type of person but in looking back at his career there were many indications of fraud or worse.

And since Eleanor not only was highly thought of as a person and American but she had done many of the presidential duties over the last months while FDR struggled. He had been ailing for some time not only with the aftereffects of polio but also with some form of tuberculosis which seemed to be the final straw. She definitely knew how to run the country but now she would run it her way....as a very strong, powerful woman!

Now when Eleanor did move into the highest seat in the land, she was not only highly qualified but also had well planned how to put together a perfectly designed assemblage to handle the work ahead.

Perhaps it is more than coincidental that she is standing behind the young lady. In fact, Eleanor had placed more women in power than had ever before been in place in any government. Eleanor's thinking was that men had just recently led this country not only into a tremendous depression but after fighting through that they marched the country into World War II!

In naming her daughter, Anna, as Vice President Eleanor felt certain that Anna's background in writing and fighting for women's rights was a definite factor. Plus, she had been a tremendous help to her mother throughout her father's presidency.

However further surrounding Eleanor were mostly younger women with various attributes for their positions. They were all fairly belligerent and willing to fight for the rights that Eleanor was proclaiming for women.

First off and perhaps most acceptable was Blossom who assumed the position of Secretary of Defense. She could freeze most males by her icy stare. There was no question as to what her position was and everyone better listen.

Right by her side was Buttercup, a true tomboy, who could fight extremely dirty and always, come out ahead. She took over the financial section since collecting taxes was one thing she loved, and taxpayers hated her methods which may have put her in jail if she weren't above the law!

This small group gave Eleanor more than the power she needed to deal with not only the politicians in power but also with civilians who might believe they knew more than her and her group. Not so much power to the people but perhaps power to Eleanor and her hardy female entourage.

The End

Story #3

Mr. Coolio...Not!

by Kathryn Wilson

Mrs. Brashears up and announced the three students that could stay after class and help decorate the Easter Egg tree for the class. "Harold. Priscilla. And..."

Betsy held her breath. She tucked her crossed fingers under her legs, willing her name to be next.

Please, please, let it be me.

The students held their breath, waiting for the last name to be called.

Mrs. Brashears examined all the expectant faces. "The third helper will be...Betsy."

An elated grin plastered itself across Betsy's face. Just being in the classroom with the intoxicating fragrance of paste, books, and freshly sharpened pencils gave her a heady rush. But the best part of it all was...Harold!

Harold was such a dreamboat. Betsy had a rich fantasy life that included Harold. He was going to be her boyfriend. He would carry her books. He'd hang out with her after school. He'd walk her home. When she was old enough, they'd go to dances together. And, one day they'd get married.

She wasn't quite sure what all that entailed. She was sure it involved kissing somewhere in there. Just the thought of a peck on the cheek from handsome Harold sent a raging blush of red up Betsy's cheeks. She quickly ducked her head and pulled her hair over the sides of her face to try and hide what she was sure was tell-tale evidence of her crush.

Soon the last bell rang, and Betsy sat across the table from Harold. She kept trying to think of clever things to say that would captivate and mesmerize the man of her dreams. The few words she did manage to utter came out as garbled nonsense.

Not that it mattered. Harold only had eyes for Priscilla. 'Prissy-Priscilla' Betsy would call her in her diary entry that night.

But the next day brought renewed hope. She passed Harold on the way into class.

He looked her in the eye and said two words. "Hi, Betsy."

That's all it took. She didn't feel her feet on the ground for the rest of the day. She floated home, instead of walking. She couldn't wait to write in her diary that night.

The week of Easter break only fueled her daydreams. They were meant to be together. It was destiny. It was fate.

When school resumed a week later, she rushed to school. She spied Harold hanging out with his two buddies by the monkey bars. She sidled up to him and started to speak.

He turned and glared. "Get away from me, Four-Eyes."

Betsy wished the ground would swallow her up. She wished she could just die on the spot.

But she didn't.

She survived the day somehow. And the next week.

Many years later, Betsy pulled her old diary from a trunk. She blew the dust off and gently opened the cover with her gnarled, arthritic fingers. In a flash she was right back in fifth grade. She thought of Harold. Last she'd heard, he was on wife number four. Or was it five?

It didn't matter. She had found the love of her life. Melvin. He wasn't quite as handsome as Harold, but he brought a twinkle to her eye and blush to her cheek. He'd been a loving and faithful husband for over sixty years until he earned his just reward. He'd been a kind and doting father. He'd been a good provider. He may not have been the Mr. Coolio that Harold thought he was, but Betsy knew she'd ended up with the best man after all.

The End

Vote for your favorite store. One vote allowed per person.

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Send your vote to: trishasnewsletter@yahoo.com

I hope you enjoyed the stories submitted for the flash fiction contest. Pages of the Past is a weekly newsletter celebrating historical fiction. Each week has an article about writing historical fiction, an author interview or other special segment, and a featured book or two from different historical periods.

Sign up here to receive your own newsletter each Friday. It's free! You'll only get the newsletter. We never share the email addresses with anyone else and won't bombard your inbox with a slew of other offers. You can also join us in our Facebook group.

Happy reading!

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