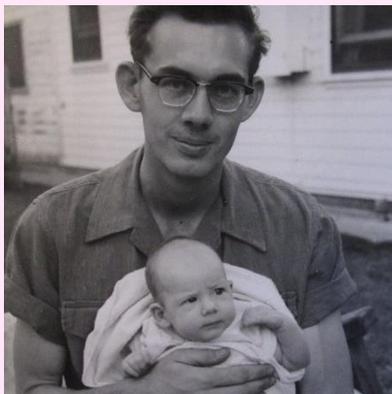




Vol. 3, No. 26 June 25, 2021

- New Releases: *Into the Unknown*, *The Amber Crane*
- Characters from Real-Life
- Author Spotlight: Rebecca D’Harlingue

## From the Editor



Hello historical fictions lovers! Happy Friday. By the time you get this newsletter, I’m on the road and headed to my dad’s house in Arkansas for a few days. A very few days. Much too short of a visit. I’m meeting my sister and niece there for a late Father’s Day celebration. We couldn’t be there a week earlier for the big day itself. Drats. That’s the downside of working part-time for Hallmark cards. The money is appreciated, but come major holidays, I’m working in a store stocking cards instead of visiting with the loved ones I’d rather be with.

This is my dad and I. Just a few years ago. No, this isn’t his first Father’s Day, as I arrived five days too late for Father’s Day that year. But it’s not taken too long afterwards. (We’ve both aged just a tad since then!)

So, while I’m off and visiting for a few days, I’ll leave you with this issue here to peruse. We have two new releases this week, both from talented authors that have been our guests here at Pages of the Past before. Take a look and see if you’d enjoy them. Next, I’ve recycled a short article that I wrote a few years ago about how characters from real-life find their way into our stories. Then, keep reading for a delightful chat that we’re having with our guest this week, Rebecca D’Harlingue.

We’ll see you next Friday, which will be the first of our monthly issues for a short time. Stay tuned for future issues –In issues ahead we have author interviews scheduled with Gail Ward Olmsted, Malve von Hassell, Alex Schulz, Mary Armstrong, and more!

*Trisha*

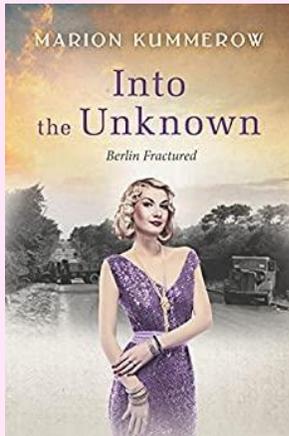
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## New Release

### Into the Unknown

#### Marion Kummerow



Two lovers, separated by politics. How far is one woman willing to go to save the only love she's ever known?

Bruni, a singer and entertainer in Berlin after World War 2 thought she had it all: a career, raving fans, good friends, and an American soldier she loves.

But good things aren't always meant to last.

When her fiancé is injured in a hit-and-run accident and flown out to Wiesbaden, Bruni knows that she must do everything in her power to find him. If he leaves Germany before they are married, she might never see him again. But this is post-war Berlin, and the Soviets have throttled all traffic between the city and West Germany by land and by water. Her only way out is to find a truck driver willing to smuggle her across the Soviet occupied zone.

Enter Otto, a good-hearted small-time criminal. In a bid to do his part against the Soviets, he smuggles food and goods across the border while making a simple living doing it. So when a Bruni offers him to a generous sum to give her a lift across, he doesn't think twice.

However, Bruni is not the only forbidden cargo on board. When Otto discovers that his truck has been planted with stolen antiques, he knows that this journey will be no simple feat. Especially when he has the Soviet army on his tail.

Can these two unlikely allies find a way to escape the death sentence that follows them? Will Bruni be reunited with her only true love?

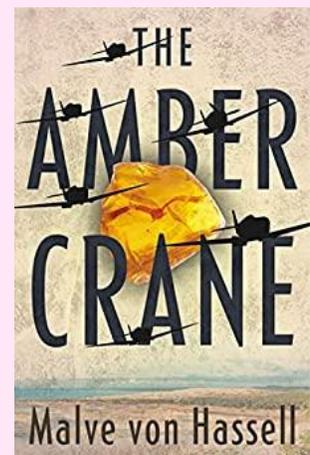
### The Amber Crane

#### Malve von Hassell

Chafing at the rules of the amber guild, Peter, an apprentice during the waning years of the Thirty Years' War, finds and keeps a forbidden piece of amber, despite the risk of severe penalties should his secret be discovered.

Little does he know that this amber has hidden powers, transporting him into a future far beyond anything he could imagine. In dreamlike encounters, Peter witnesses the ravages of the final months of World War II in and around his home. He becomes embroiled in the troubles faced by Lioba, a girl he meets who seeks to escape from the oncoming Russian army.

Peter struggles with the consequences of his actions, endangering his family, his amber master's reputation, and his own future. How much is Peter prepared to sacrifice to right his wrongs?



## Characters from Real-Life



With authors, this is a common procedure. The characters in our tales often inherit some semblance of traits from those in our real-life sphere. It may only be in bits and pieces – one quality from one person, the persona of another, the looks of still another. We whip the fragments together as if in an authorly blender and, voila. Presto! A new person exists.

Sometimes the attributes of our fictional – or not so fictional – characters are even less disguised.

This practice of borrowing snippets from our everyday life to infuse our writing with realistic people or places is not a new occurrence. Charles Dickens also ‘borrowed’ parts of his real-life experience for his stories and books.

In Shmoop’s study guide on Charles Dickens, they report that Dickens met Maria Beadnell in 1830 and fell in love. Apparently, Maria’s parents were well-to-do and weren’t enamored with the barely 18-year-old young Dickens who was working as a freelance reporter at that time. They sent Maria off to school in Paris in their attempt to discourage the young couple. Their efforts succeeded and the relationship ended in 1833. However, it appears that Maria appeared again twenty years later “in Dickens’s thinly-veiled, not-so-nice portrayal of her in *Little Dorrit*.”

However, according to Wikipedia, it reports that “...his first love, Maria Beadnell, thought to have been the model for the character Dora in *David Copperfield*.”

Not having read either work, I’m not qualified to agree or dispute either claim. But now I’m intrigued and may look both works up to see if the characters in both books are similar or not.

In *The Life of Charles Dickens*, he does admit to using a real name in *Oliver Twist*. “One of them came up, in a ragged apron and a paper cap, on the first Monday morning, to show me the trick of using the string and typing the knot. His name was Bob Fagin; and I took the liberty of using his name, long afterwards, in *Oliver Twist*.”

Another young woman showed up in several of Dickens’ characters. After he married Catherine Hogarth (Kate) and they started their family, Dickens’ brother, Frederick, and Catherine’s sister, Mary, moved in with them. Dickens was fond of his 17-year-old sister-in-law and grieved for her after she died in his arms after a brief illness in 1837.

“Dickens idealized Mary – the character he fashioned after her, Rose Maylie, he found he could not now kill, as he had planned, in his fiction, and, according to Ackroyd, he drew on memories of her for his later descriptions of Little Nell and Florence Dombey.”

If Dickens can do it, so can we. Although, I have a feeling we authors are already ‘borrowing’ from real life without Dickens’ permission. Maybe we shouldn’t give away our trade secrets though. Now, the people we know will be reading our works with a closer eye and wondering...Hmmmm, *is this me?*

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## Author Spotlight: Rebecca D'Harlingue



Welcome to Pages of the Past Rebecca D'Harlingue! We're excited to see that your debut book, *The Lines Between Us* that was only released in September 2020 is already racking up the awards. It was a finalist in the Best New Fiction category for both the International Book Awards and the Best Book Awards. It is a finalist in the Historical Fiction category in the Foreword INDIES Book of the Year Awards. It won in New Fiction in the Independent Press Awards. And now, it is a Finalist in Literary Fiction for the National Indie Excellence Awards. We applaud you for these awards. We're excited to see a new book already garnering praise like this.

**As your writing journey began, what drew you to write historical fiction?**

I've always loved reading historical fiction, and I studied Spanish literature in graduate school. In seventeenth-century Spanish theater, there are plays that we call honor plays. In them, a man's honor depends very heavily on the virtue of the women in his family. If that honor is stained, even through no fault of her own, the man must restore his honor, even if it means killing the woman. One day it just came to me that I would like to write a story about a woman in that position, and what she might do in that place and time.

I think that historical fiction can help to fill in the blanks about people whose lives were undervalued, and so not recorded. I love to think about women who might have been.

***The Lines Between Us* links two stories, over three hundred years apart. How did the idea for this book come to you?**

Once I had the idea for the young woman, Juliana, in the seventeenth century, I wanted to somehow connect that story with someone in the present time. I thought that this would help to make her story more immediate and would give me a chance to reflect on her journey, through the reactions of the contemporary character, Rachel. It would also be a way to examine the effects of family secrets, since Rachel was told nothing of the papers until she found them after her mother's death.

**How much research was necessary to write the portion of the book that was based in 1661 Madrid, Spain?**

I had some knowledge of the period from my studies in Spanish literature, which I use in the novel, as Juliana reflects on some of the contemporary plays. I had a general understanding of some of the mores of the time, but I still had a lot to learn about the political atmosphere and the everyday lives of the people of the period.

**Tell us about one of your favorite characters from *The Lines Between Us*.**

There are three main characters in the novel, Juliana and Rachel, whom I've already mentioned, and also Ana, who is Juliana's aunt. The novel actually begins with Ana, and we get to know something of her before we even meet Juliana. It is Ana who will read the first of Juliana's diaries, and Ana who will try to discover what happened when Juliana disappears. Ana is a widow, who lost her husband a year earlier, and at the beginning of the novel she has discovered a journal of her husband's. This begins the series of family secrets which will play such a large part in both timelines.

**What challenges have you found with writing historical fiction?**

While fascinating, the research can also be intimidating. There is so much to try to understand about the historical period. It is more than just getting things like clothing, food, and transportation correct. It is also critical to capture the spirit of the time. What were the beliefs of most people? What assumptions did they make about life? Really, how did it feel to be alive in that place and time?

The other difficulty with writing historical fiction is that one can easily get carried away and go down some rabbit holes when doing research. While interesting, that can be a real time killer.

**In linking the plotlines from 1661 Madrid and 1992 Missouri, did you encounter any difficulties in tying these two eras together?**

The periods are tied together by the diary and some other letters that Rachel finds. Who wouldn't want to find such a treasure? I cheated a bit by having Rachel be a professor of Spanish literature, so that in her musings about what she has found, she can inform the reader of some of the background in which Juliana was writing.

**In *The Lines Between Us*, a diary from the 1660s plays a pivotal role in the plot line, although in a fictional manner. What are your thoughts on the real-life diaries that exist from days long gone?**

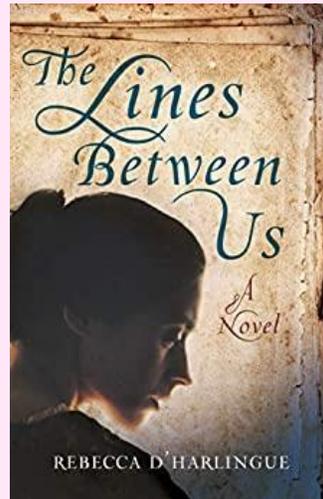
Real life diaries are, of course, a treasure, both for those who read the diaries themselves, and as source materials for historical fiction writers. What can possibly be more exciting than hearing the personal thoughts and feelings from someone from the past?

**Is anything on the burner for a future book?**

I am currently working on a novel which is set to come out in 2023. The working title is *The Map Colorist*, because the main character is a woman involved in the production of maps. It is set in the same time period as my first novel, but in Amsterdam, which at that time was the world capital for cartography.

**Is there anything you'd like to share with us that I didn't ask you about?**

I want to thank you for giving me this chance to connect with your readers, Trisha! Also, I love book clubs! If anyone is in a book club and they would like to meet with me over Zoom, they can contact me through my website. <https://rebeccadharlingue.com/>



**You can find Rebecca D'Harlingue's books here:**

**Amazon:** [amzn.to/2Pfr9xo](https://amzn.to/2Pfr9xo)

**Bookshop:** [bit.ly/3dZHDZS](https://bit.ly/3dZHDZS)

**Apple Books:** [apple.co/2NqDZqo](https://apple.co/2NqDZqo)

**You can find Rebecca D'Harlingue here:**

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

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

BIO: Rebecca D'Harlingue has done graduate work in Spanish literature, worked as a hospital administrator, and taught English as a Second Language to adults from all over the world. She has shared her love of story both with preschoolers at a Head Start program and with the members of her local AAUW book club. D'Harlingue lives in Oakland, California, with her husband, Arthur, where they are fortunate to frequently spend time with their children and grandchildren.

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