



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

Vol. 1, No. 25, September 20, 2019

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From the Editor

There's lots of fun news this week. Emily-Jane Hills Orford has a new release out – *King Henry's Choice*. We also have an author interview with Anne Clare, who shares about her new World War 2 release, *Whom Shall I Fear?*

The featured article for the week is 'You Weren't There?' – almost to the end of the alphabet. Next week will be the final 'Z' themed article. But never fear – the featured articles will continue, just not in an A to Z fashion. (By the way, you can blame the April A to Z Blog Challenge for the 26 weeks of alphabetical topics.) Starting in January, we'll include paid guest posts twice a month. Submission details will be shared here and on the Pages of the Past Facebook group by the end of October. So if you have a topic in mind that you'd like to share – and get paid a little bit for – put your thinking caps on.

A few years ago, Literary Hub posted 'Historical Fiction is More Important Than Ever' and asked ten authors to weigh in with their thoughts. Caroline Wood, author of *Fräulein M.* wrote this:

"I often turn to E.L. Doctorow when examining why historical fiction matters. "The historian will tell you what happened," he wrote. "The novelist will tell you what it felt like." It's one thing to read that on July 31, 1932, the Nazis became the largest party in the German Reichstag. It's another to, via fiction, share a cafe table with a group of Berlin liberals just before the results of the election are announced, and watch them toast what they assume will be the Nazis' loss. A prickle of unease lifts the hairs on the protagonist's neck...

Historical fiction has the power to make connections between the past and present in ways that facts and dates sometimes obscure. It brings people out of history and sets them beside you at the table—whispering, laughing, fearful. And it can lead its readers in pursuit of the historical record."

That's such a true distinction – the books we consume and fall in love with take us to that time. The story becomes more than simple historical facts and data. And *that* is why we keep writing and reading historical fiction!

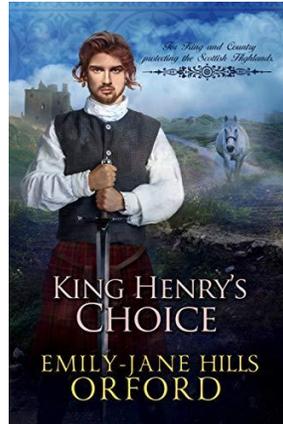
Trisha

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New Release

King Henry's Choice

Emily-Jane Hills Orford



There are powers at play that continue to seek amalgamating Scotland to England – powers from the past and powers from the future. It's the late 1800s and Queen Victoria wants more than mere access to the Scottish retreat at Balmoral Castle. But King Henry I of Scotland, direct descendent of Queen Mary Elizabeth I, the time-traveling royal daughter of Mary Queen of Scots, is determined to keep Scotland free and independent and a powerful, progressive nation in its own right. The struggle to protect what is his by birthright becomes a battle that must be fought in the past, the present and the future and in other parts of the world. And, in the midst of each battle, there are choices to be made. Very difficult choices.

You Weren't There?

Over twenty women sat in chairs, soaking up information about writing family stories. I'd held several classes at this local library, but the Writing Family Tales class had the best turnout of all of them. It was a four-week class covered many topics. This particular evening we were discussing using family tales to create a fictional story or book. One lady spoke up, "But I wasn't there. How can I write about something that I don't know about?"

Anytime we're writing about something that took place in the past, whether it be about family or simply a fictional tale that sprouted in our imagination, we have to rely on stepping into a period of the past that we did not inhabit. I may be writing about my mother's childhood memories in the 1940s, the life of a woman that embroidered a dishtowel in the 1930s, or the life of Mittie Ann who arrived in Texas in a covered wagon in 1948. No matter the year, I need to be able to know enough about that time and era to weave in enough details to bring the scene to life and let the reader feel that they're seeing everything happen as they devour the written words.

Read about life in the times. There are so many online sources that we can access with a few mouse clicks and taps that much of the research we need to do can be done from the comfort of our own homes. A few hours in the stacks of a library with a good reference section, or a library geared towards historical

documentation can only add to what's available online. Many actual diaries are available online, along with informational posts and blogs.

Read books set in that era. Even though you'll be reading through the lens of another author, they've done their own research prior to writing their book. Reading fictional tales set in the time period you're writing about will give you many clues and tidbits the help you with your own works.

Visit museums and historical societies. They have many letters, diaries and other documents that may pertain to the period you're writing about, especially if you can visit one near a specific place you're writing about.

Watch movies set in that period. Although the movies may be embellished to come across in their media form, there's still a lot of historical research that they've done and sometimes they're able to transport you to an earlier time with their visual imagery.

For a few little teasers, here are some interesting links that I enjoyed:

Life in Colonial Days – The blog, **Pilgrims and Pioneers**, has many interesting posts and photos.

<https://pilgrimsandpioneers.blogspot.com/2008/02/daily-life-in-plimoth-colony.html>

Custom Boxes has a post, **Packing Up and Heading West: The History of Covered Wagons**, which has almost anything you'd want to know about covered wagons. (Disclaimer – some of the links don't exist anymore.)

https://customboxesnow.com/library/history_of_covered_wagons.htm

The Gold Rush days of the early miners were documented in many diaries. Here's an excerpt of one, **Life in a Mining Camp**, written in 1867, by Rachel Haskell.

https://wnorton.com/college/history/archive/resources/documents/ch19_04.htm#While



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It's always exciting to discover new authors and new books. Anne Clare is definitely on this 'Glad to Have Found' list. She has a new book out, set in 1943. Today we welcome Anne to Pages of the Past to tell us a little bit about her new release and her writing journey.



Welcome, Anne Clare! I'm excited to see that your novel, *Whom Shall I Fear*, set in 1943, was recently released. Can you tell us a little bit about your book and how it evolved from a thought to a concept?

Thanks so much for letting me stop by, Trisha!

Believe it or not, this novel came into being due to a dream and broken household plumbing.

It started with a vivid dream—a dramatic confrontation in an alley in London at the end of the Second World War. I don't usually have such clear dreams (at least not ones that make sense) but this one was interesting. I kept mulling over the details, wondering what had brought the characters to that spot and situation.

I jotted down a few ideas, but I was busy, occupied with day-to-day life. It probably wouldn't have turned into a full-fledged novel if our household plumbing hadn't broken.

Being stuck at home with my three small children, waiting for repairmen to come and waiting on ever-mounting repair estimates, left me eager for the escape that writing provided.

Of course, the further the story progressed the more I realized that I didn't know nearly as much about World War II as I thought I did, which led to more research, which led to more writing until the whole novel was born. (And, mercifully, we did eventually get to use all of our household systems again!)

How was it that you chose this era for your tale?

From the beginning, *Whom Shall I Fear?* was a World War 2 story but deciding just where and when to place my characters took hours of research and planning.

Much of the story follows Sgt. James Milburn, a British infantryman, who spends much of the novel fighting in Italy. Wanting to be certain that the events in my story *could* have happened, I picked real groups of soldiers to “follow” and scoured military histories and memoirs to try to paint a clear picture of the era and experiences.

I was happy with the timeline I’d established...and then I found out that none of it would work because the Allies didn’t have control of the Mediterranean during a period when I needed him to sail there...

...and so, the research began again!

I see that with the three main characters you have, you’ve woven in historical World War II details from Britain, Italy, and Egypt. How did having three different countries represented affect your research?

I had the advantage of “seeing” Italy and Egypt through the filter of James’s eyes—once I knew his character, the facts that I’d read from memoirs and histories came to life fairly easily. Of course, getting to know James and my other main POV characters—Charles and Evie—was the difficult part.

As all three of them are British, I wanted to do my very best to portray them as such. Besides reading histories, I read as many first-person accounts from British points of view as I could to try to give the text the right “feel”—especially when it came to terms and slang that are different from American usage. The BBC’s website has an amazing archive called “The People’s War” which shares thousands of recollections of citizens’ wartime experiences—these real stories helped shape my fictional characters’ lives.

Without admitting to any favorites (as one can’t admit to having a favorite child or grandchild) can you tell us about one of your favorite characters from *Whom Shall I Fear?*

While I loved my three main POV characters (yes, even my villain) the story wouldn’t be nearly as enjoyable without the personalities of my secondary characters.

A couple of wise-crackers from James’s platoon always made me smile, and I found myself holding my breath while writing their battle scenes, hoping they’d make it through.

Also, the formidable Great-Aunt Helena back on the home front (whose meddling has an immense impact on the plot) had a curmudgeonly attitude that was great fun to write.

I was reading your blog about the process this book has taken over the last two years. It is quite an involved process, isn’t it? I had to laugh when I saw your phrase, “After the first or second or twentieth round of editing...” Isn’t that the truth! It sounds like you had a good team in your corner to help with beta reading and proofing. Can you tell us a little bit about this part of the writing/editing journey?

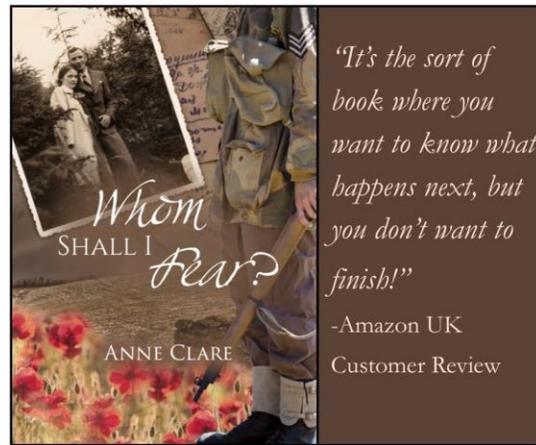
Involved is the word—honestly, I think twenty rounds of editing is a low estimate! Still, I can’t deny that I’ve had a tremendous group of people working with me and supporting me through the publication process. From my mom, who read one of the earliest, ugliest drafts and *still* encouraged me to continue, (she passed away last month—it was a blessing to have the chance to share the final product with her) to friends and fellow teachers and my wonderful husband, I had excellent early readers. Two close friends

who are also writers gave me fantastic and honest (but kind!) feedback, and friend and indie author Amanda Ruehle helped me with editing, formatting, cover design—that lady can do it all! Other authors like Anita Heath gave encouragement and helped me to find ARC readers.

On your blog, I saw that you are already working on another story. Is it historical fiction also? Can you tell us a little bit about your next project?

It *is* historical fiction, and it's once again set in the Second World War—there are so many stories to tell in that era! While there are still plenty of plot points to iron out, I can tell you that it's requiring me to do lots of research on the Anzio beachhead in Italy, on the Army Nurse Corps, and POW camps.

It's exciting to see the story come together, and I'm looking forward to sharing it!



[Whom Shall I Fear?](#) by Anne Clare is available on Amazon.com in paperback and Kindle formats.

[Paperback Link](#)

[Kindle Link](#)

You can find Anne here:

Anne's main base for all things writerly is her blog: thenaptimeauthor.wordpress.com

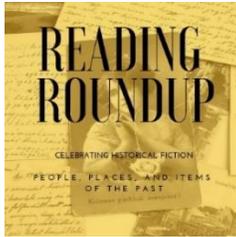
She can also be found on her Facebook author page: Anne Clare: Sharing Stories of the Second World War <https://www.facebook.com/Anne-Clare-Sharing-Stories-of-the-Second-World-War-671890326572825/>

And occasionally on Twitter: [@anneclarewriter](https://twitter.com/anneclarewriter)

Anne Clare lives in the gorgeous green Pacific Northwest of the United States with her husband and three children. When she's not reading and writing about the Second World War, she keeps busy teaching middle-schoolers Literature, Music, and Art part-time and serving as a church musician.

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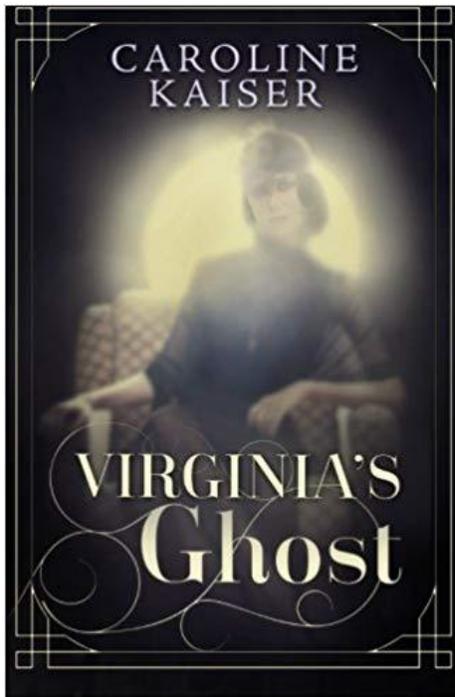
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The 1920s

Virginia's Ghost

Caroline Kaiser



Antiques specialist Virginia Blythe of Gable & Co. Auctioneers is working late one night when she hears mournful wailing. Following the sound to its source, she gasps in astonishment: a breathtakingly beautiful flapper who looks like a refugee from an F. Scott Fitzgerald novel is lingering in the shadows of the company's basement. Later the disconsolate young woman returns to offer Virginia her diary, written in 1928. It reveals she's the ghost of wealthy Toronto socialite Constance Pendleton. What is Constance trying to tell her? Intrigued, Virginia curls up with the diary and begins dipping her toes into the elegant opulence of Constance's Jazz Age world. But suddenly things go terribly awry at Gable & Co. Just as Virginia's preparing for a blockbuster auction, some valuable porcelain mysteriously goes missing and her job is on the line. The worst, however, is yet to come. A shocking murder spins the eccentric world of the auction house into chaos. Struggling to make sense of it all, Virginia turns increasingly to the secrets of the diary. Virginia's Ghost is a tale of ghastly crime, euphoric love, and devastating betrayal in which two women transcend time to affect each other's lives in startling ways.

Authors: Do you have a historical fiction book or short story that you'd like featured in Pages of the Past? Email me at texastrishafaye@yahoo.com to see about scheduling your book or short story in a future issue.

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