



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

Vol. 2, No. 51, December 18, 2020

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From the Editor



Hello historical fiction lovers!

We're almost there. One more week until Christmas! Since Christmas falls on a Friday, the day the newsletter comes out, next week I'll be sending it out on Wednesday. I don't think reading your Pages of the Past newsletter will be top on anyone's priority list on Christmas Day – not even *mine*!

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with DS Elliston, Sylvia Broady, Gini Grossenbacher, and a lot more!

Trisha

New Releases

The Secret of the Grand Hôtel du Lac

Kathryn Gauci



“Sometime during the early hours of the morning, he awoke again, this time with a start. He was sure he heard a noise outside. It sounded like a twig snapping. Under normal circumstances it would have meant nothing, but in the silence of the forest every sound was magnified. There it was again. This time it was closer and his instinct told him it wasn’t the wolves. He reached for his gun and quietly looked out through the window. The moon was on the wane, wrapped in the soft gauze of snowfall and it wasn’t easy to see. Maybe it was a fox, or even a deer. Then he heard it again, right outside the door. He cocked his gun, pressed his body flat against the wall next to the door, and waited. The room was in total darkness and his senses were heightened. After a few minutes, he heard the soft click of the door latch.”

February 1944. Preparations for the D-Day invasion are well advanced. When contact with Belvedere, one of the Resistance networks in the Jura region of Eastern France, is lost, Elizabeth Maxwell, is sent back to the region to find the head of the network,

her husband Guy Maxwell.

It soon becomes clear that the network has been betrayed. An RAF airdrop of supplies was ambushed by the Gestapo, and many members of the Resistance have been killed.

Surrounded on all sides by the brutal Gestapo and the French Milice, and under constant danger of betrayal, Elizabeth must unmask the traitor in their midst, find her husband, and help him to rebuild Belvedere in time for SOE operations in support of D-Day.

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Timelines

Do you need a timeline for every story? Not necessarily. A lot depends on the complexity of the project, how many plots and sub-plots, how many major characters there are, and what type of writing style you have. Are you a plotter or a pantster? Do you have everything laid out precise detail before you begin, or do you have a general idea, and you jump in and start writing?

No. Not everything requires a timeline. However, in the world of historical fiction, most stories need one, even if just a simple few ideas jotted down on a piece of paper.

On a post, [‘How A Timeline Helps You Plot A Novel’](#), Writers Write says:

A timeline helps us choose what to include in our story. It also gives us a map to follow. It is the big picture of a novel – a place where we get the chance to see the overarching storylines and how they intersect.

When writing a piece in the historical fiction genre, having a timeline as an anchor becomes even more important. A timeline can help us keep track of dates, times, events (plot events or historical events), ages, journey times, and other pieces that can easily get lost and threaten to destroy our carefully crafted world down the line.

Even on my Vintage Daze short stories, I find I need at least the few key dates and scenes jotted out on a single sheet of paper. When I found that I really needed a timeline was when I was writing *Fat and Sassy*, a fictional tale based on family stories of my mom and her siblings growing up. I had two legal pads filled with memories and snippets to use in writing the tale. However, memories don't appear in chronological order. The snippets I had jumped all over the place, most covering a span of twenty-some years. I also needed to tie these pieces in with historical data from Glendora, California that I would weave in with the family stories.

I ended up creating a simple table with three columns. In the first, I had the month and year of the period I was writing. Then I went through my legal pads with all the notes. I numbered each story, and then put each Memory # in the appropriate Mo/Year row. In the third column, I inserted the historical notes for the city/state/nation that I wanted to include as part of the story.

Peter Jones has a terrific post, [Managing Your Story's Timeline](#), where he shares about when he discovered he needed to use a timeline. He writes:

I was having one of those rare writing moments when (it felt like) everything was going well – words were pouring out of me. I was bashing out scene after scene with unparalleled delight. Never mind that most of those scenes seemed to start with the phrase “*the next day*” or words to that effect. That could all be dealt with in the edit. The edit which would happen when I'd *finished* the WHOLE book. I'd learnt that much about writing: Write first. Edit later.

Although, as I wrote “*the next day*” for about the fiftieth time that evening I started to realise that I might have a problem that couldn't wait until the grand ‘fix-everything’ edit. And the problem was this; in my head the chapter I was writing was supposed to span roughly a month, sometime in the summer, a year or two before the turn of the millennium. But as I scrolled through my manuscript and counted the number of times

Author Spotlight: Celia Martin



Hello Celia Martin! We're excited to chat with you today about your writing. Your Celia Martin historical fictions series now has eight books. What drew you to write historical fiction?

First, I have always loved history. Second, as a child, I played lots of imaginative games – make believe games – but I reached a point where I could no longer play make believe, so to entertain myself when walking to and from school, or waiting for my allergy shots, or hanging out the laundry, whatever, I told myself stories. I love telling stories, and I love combining them with my love of history, adventure, and mystery.

Do you have a favorite era to write in? What do you enjoy most about that era?

All my present books are in the 17th century in England and Colonial America, but as I continue writing, some will make it into the 18th century. I have always loved English history since I was a child and found a wonderful English history book at the library. I liked it so much my mother bought one for me. I also love early American history. All that said – the truth of the matter is, I love pretty much all history – all time periods.

Do you have any favorite methods you use in researching your books?

I have somewhere around 100 history research books. Which ones I use depend on what I'm writing. I also use google to help with a lot of things – like 'how far could a coach travel on crummy roads in 17th century England', or 'what was the date of Easter using the Julian calendar' which England continued to use long after Europe changed to the Gregorian calendar. Stuff like that, google is great for.

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

That is a tough one because I love all my characters, but if I really have to choose one, it is not one of my heroines, it is the hero, Sefton Ridgely, in my book *With Every Breath I Take*. He is so in love with Serenity, and whenever she decides she needs to help someone, and that is often, he is right there to support her and do what he has to do to get Serenity and all the people she wants to help safely to New York in the dead of winter on horseback in 1692.

What challenges have you found with writing historical fiction?

No bad challenges. I love the research because I learn as I write. My biggest challenge is not being able to write as fast as I would like because I have so many stories in my head, and they are all clamoring to get out – yet with making sure my history is accurate (which to me is very important) I have to do a lot of research and then checking and rechecking. Oh, editing is always a nuisance.

Can you tell us a bit about the various books in the series?

All my books are stand-alone stories, but major characters may appear as minor characters in other books. The books are centered around the D’Arcy, Lotterby, and Hayward families, but many other families are also involved, like the Ridgelys, Larkins, Yardleys, Crosslys, and more. As I said, the stories are set in the 17th century in England and Colonial America. They are adventure romances, with at least one love scene usually toward the end of the book, but they are not hot or steamy scenes – I like to think they are delicate love scenes between two people very much in love. All of my heroes are nice guys. Some of my books, especially *Perfidious Brambles*, have a bit of a mystery going on as well.

Do you have a current historical fiction work in progress? Can you give us a little teaser about it and let us know when we can look for it?

I hope to have *An Unexpected Treasure* out in February. Just got it back from my editor. It is such a sweet love story and my heroine, Selena, is probably my favorite heroine. She is a unique individual because she looks for the good in everyone. Animals are drawn to her as are children. She accepts that she is the wealthy daughter of an earl, so has many privileges, but she is not afraid to get her hands dirty or to help other less fortunate people in any way she can. She falls in love with a yeoman (farmer) and is determined she will marry him whether her father approves or not.

I am working on two other books. Both are adventure romances, but the mysteries play big roles in both stories. I am having great fun with them. I dearly love mysteries, and I think many of my future books will be mysteries as well as adventure romances.

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

In my stories, I like to show the people of all walks of life. The poor, the merchant class, the wealthier farmers, the gentry, and the peerage. Life was very tough for a lot of people. I like to show how they lived, what they had to do to survive. I like to show the insides of homes of the rich and the poor and what was then middle class. I like to show the inns, the roads, the coaches, and stables. I like to show the foods. What the rich ate and what the poor survived on. I want my stories to be fun entertainment, sweet love stories filled with adventure, but I want my readers to experience the past. I want history to come alive for them.



You can find Celia Martin's books here:

<https://www.amazon.com/-/e/B07TNP174K>

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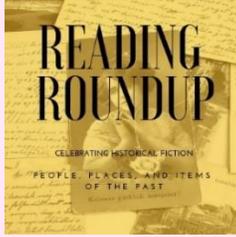
<https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/100064906-celia-martin>

<https://celiamartinbooks.blogspot.com/>

BIO: Celia Martin is a former Social Studies/English teacher. Her love of history dates back to her earliest memories when she sat enthralled as her grandparents recounted tales of their past. As a child, she delighted in the make-believe games that she played with her siblings and friends, but as she grew up and had to put aside the games, she found she could not set aside her imagination. So, Celia took up writing stories for her own entertainment. She is an avid reader. She loves getting lost in a romance, but also enjoys good mysteries, exciting adventure stories, and fact-loaded historical documentaries. When her husband retired and they moved from California to the glorious Kitsap Peninsula in the state of Washington, she was able to begin a full-fledged writing career. And has never been happier. When not engaged in writing, Celia enjoys travel, keeping fit, and listening to a variety of different music styles.

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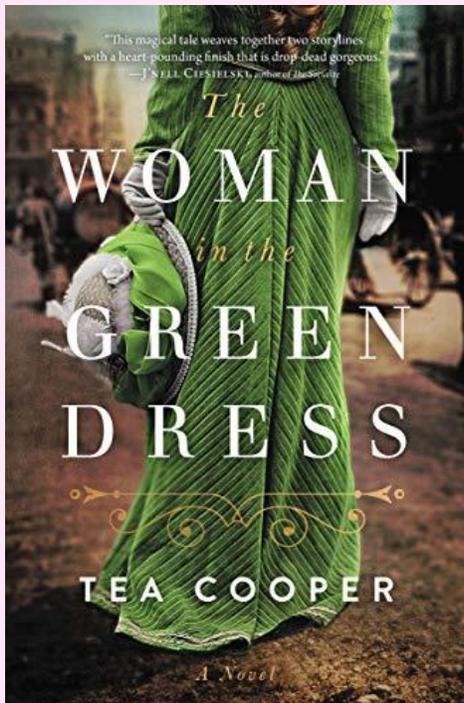
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The 1900s/1910s

The Woman in the Green Dress

Tea Cooper



A cursed opal, a gnarled family tree, and a sinister woman in a green dress emerge in the aftermath of World War I.

After a whirlwind romance, London teashop waitress Fleur Richards can't wait for her new husband, Hugh, to return from the Great War. But when word of his death arrives on Armistice Day, Fleur learns he has left her a sizable family fortune. Refusing to accept the inheritance, she heads to his beloved home country of Australia in search of the relatives who deserve it more.

In spite of her reluctance, she soon finds herself the sole owner of a remote farm and a dilapidated curio shop full of long-forgotten artifacts, remarkable preserved creatures, and a mystery that began more than sixty-five years ago. With the help of Kip, a repatriated soldier dealing with the sobering aftereffects of war, Fleur finds herself unable to resist pulling on the threads of the past. What she finds is a shocking story surrounding an opal and a woman in a green dress. . . a story that, nevertheless, offers hope and healing for the future.

This romantic mystery from award-winning Australian novelist Tea Cooper will keep readers guessing until the astonishing conclusion.

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