



Vol. 3, No. 32, DECEMBER 2021

- New Release: *From the Dark We Rise, Jasmine in Paris, The Light We Left Behind*
- Author Spotlight: Roxi Harms

From the Editor



'Tis the Season! The season of many holidays. Happy Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, Saint Nicholas Day, Saint Lucia Day and Merry Christmas to our readers.

There are lots of fun new releases the past few weeks in the historical fiction world. This month, we're featuring three. So many fascinating new books....so little time! But, what's a little more heft to our TBR piles? After all, the one with the tallest stack wins!

Keep reading as we chat this month with Roxi Harms who providentially ran into a wonderful story from World War 2. In her book, *The Upside of Hunger*, she takes us to a side of the war little seen. Keep reading to find out more about her experience with sharing this true-life story. And there's even more upside to her tale. The proceeds from this book go to help underprivileged children continue their college education, furthering their lives. She's included a short snippet from her book – so read on my merry time travelers!

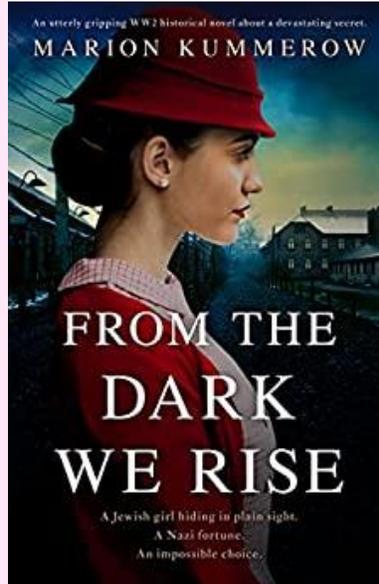
Stay tuned—in the next few issues, we'll be chatting with Alex Schulz and Pamela Nowak!

Trisha

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New Releases



[From the Dark We Rise](#)

Marion Kummerow

1942, Germany: A Nazi fortune. A Jewish girl hiding in plain sight. An impossible choice...

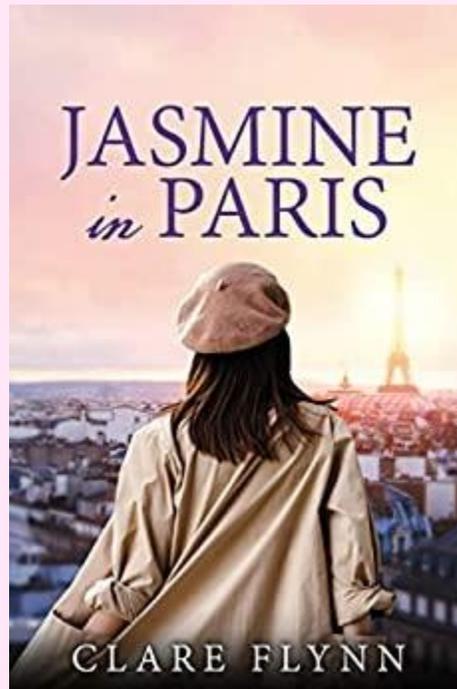
When the Nazis destroyed all that Margarete Rosenbaum knew, taking everything and everyone she treasured, she prayed only to survive. Until chance allowed her to disguise herself as Annegret Huber, the daughter of a prominent Nazi.

As Annegret, Margarete had a moment of safety, but now the legacy of her false identity means she must make a devastating decision, and risk everything to save the lives of others.

Because the true Annegret and her family are dead, and the fortune is all hers – all Margarete’s. There is a grand house with crystal chandeliers, and a factory with fences built high and topped with cruel curls of barbed wire. Inside, the workers shiver, their faces gaunt from hunger. Margarete struggles to hide her gasp when—amongst the faces of the prisoners—she sees one that is achingly familiar.

Suddenly, she has hundreds of lives in her hands, including one who means more to her than anyone else left in the world. There’s no question that she must act. From that moment, Margarete is more than just a girl in hiding. She’s a girl who can save others. But in her new position of power, surrounded by the Nazi elite, every move she makes is being watched. Every mistake she makes could lead to disaster.

As the war tears through the country she loves, and turns the world dark, Margarete knows she can’t ignore her chance to stand up against evil. Even if it means risking her own life to save the innocents in her protection...



Jasmine in Paris

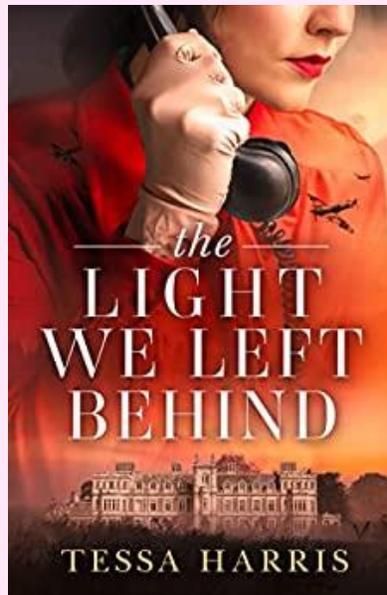
Clare Flynn

Art, love and betrayal, against the rich backdrop of 1950s Paris

Desperate to make her mark as an artist and prove herself as an independent woman, Jasmine Barrington heads for Paris and a place at the prestigious Beaux Arts school. Following in the footsteps of former students like Renoir and Degas, she immerses herself in her studies by day and discovers the cafés and bars of the left bank by night.

But life in the City of Light is far from easy. Will the challenges and discipline of the classical training regime crush Jasmine's creative spirit, and will her charismatic teacher, Lachlan, break her heart?

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, Howard, the man to whom she owes her life, faces the daily dangers of the Malayan Emergency without so much as a postcard to fuel his fading hope that Jasmine might one day return to Penang.



The Light We Left Behind

Tessa Harris

England: 1944

When psychologist **Maddie Gresham** is sent a mysterious message telling her to report to Trent Park mansion, she wonders how she will be helping the war effort from a stately home.

She soon finds captured Nazi generals are being detained at the house. Bugged with listening devices in every room, it's up to Maddie to gain the Nazis' trust and coax them into giving up information.

When **Max Weitzler**, a Jewish refugee, also arrives at Trent Park with the same mission, Maddie finds herself trapped in a dangerous game of chess.

The two met in Germany before the war, and Maddie's heart was his from the moment they locked eyes. The hope that Max had escaped the Nazi threat was her guiding light in the darkness of war.

But Maddie has finally gained the trust of the Nazi officers at the house, and her love for Max must remain a secret.

When the walls have ears, who can you trust?

Based on the true events that took place at Trent Park during WWII, this is an emotionally gripping, and heart-breaking novel about love, sacrifice, and betrayal, perfect for fans of *The Rose Code* and *The Lost Girls of Paris*.

Author Spotlight: Roxi Harms



Hello Roxi Harms! We're excited to chat with you today about your writing. What inspired you to write *The Upside of Hunger*? Is there a story behind the main character Adam Baumann?

I met Adam while on vacation in 2012, when he and his wife Jean were staying at the same resort as my husband and I. I learned bits and pieces of his life story while we chatted over a couple of dinners. Having always been interested in history, and equally interested in true life stories, I found Adam's story intriguing on several levels. From identifying as German even though his ancestors had been in Hungary for more than two centuries and learning about how they had held tight to their language and traditions through all those generations in a new country, to hearing about his time on the Eastern Front at age 15 and then being deported to Germany in a cattle car, to his experiences under a socialist regime in Peru decades later, Adam's lived experiences through world changing historical events fascinated me! I felt strongly that his story was important and should be recorded BUT I'd never written anything of any length so I didn't envision that I would be the one to do it. However, two years later I was still thinking about Adam's story. The word compelled comes to mind. I wasn't really in charge – the story was driving me. So, I called Adam and set up a lunch appointment. He agreed to collaborate with me on a novel based on his life. It took five years from that point, and I've been grateful ever since, for the opportunity.

What was it like writing a story set during World War 2 times?

I learned so much through the writing of *The Upside of Hunger*. In school we learn a certain amount about WW2. There is so much history to teach students in a limited amount of time, so the depth that can be covered is naturally limited, as are the perspectives. And it's not personal, its textbook, typically. The human element is missing. During my research for *The Upside of Hunger*, I learned so much more about the circumstances and human experiences of people other than "us" (the allies), the conversations happening around kitchen tables in those years, even how Hitler was viewed before, during, and after the war. It all became so much more real. For example, I had no knowledge of the deportation of young Hungarians to Russian labor camps (gulags), or the role and treatment during and after WW2 of people of Germanic ancestry who lived in other parts of Europe. So, for me it was an eye-opening experience. I feel that I have a more well-rounded understanding of WW2 now, and what people went through.

Tell us about one of your favorite scenes from *The Upside of Hunger*.

One of my favorite scenes was when Adam had just arrived at the Eastern Front at a location in the Ukraine. It was November 1944. He hadn't seen any live action yet, and was on night patrol, looking out over no man's land when a Russian soldier of a similar age approached him, looking for cigarettes. When I heard about this scene, I was struck by the irony of two teenage boys from opposite sides meeting on a battlefield to swap cigarettes and vodka. In that moment they weren't enemies, they were just two boys.

What challenges have you found with writing historical fiction?

My biggest challenge was trying to figure what genre *The Upside of Hunger* actually fit into. Every scene in the book took place. It's not a work of fiction at all. But creative non-fiction is a little known and little understood genre, at least that's how it seemed when I was writing and publishing. I decided to categorize *The Upside of Hunger* as historical fiction so that it is shelved, advertised, and discussed alongside works such as *All the Light We Cannot See* and *Beneath a Scarlet Sky*.

During the writing of *The Upside of Hunger*, I didn't have the challenge of creating characters or a story line. My job was to imagine and create the dialog, and the emotion of the characters other than Adam and Jean, since many of the characters weren't available to be interviewed. My challenge was to stay true to the story and the events and intentions of these very real people, whose lives I set out to represent accurately.

Do you write in any genres other than historical fiction?

The Upside of Hunger is my first and only novel so far. My next will most likely be memoir. But then again, *The Upside of Hunger* wasn't in my plans, so who knows? Maybe the next story will be another surprise.

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

I didn't write *The Upside of Hunger* for personal gain... that was the further thing from my mind. I wrote it because I think it's an important educational (and entertaining at times) story and I wanted to capture it while I could. I donate 100% of the profits from book sales to a scholarship fund that benefits under privileged high school graduates who wish to pursue post-secondary education, to assist with the cost of their first year after high school, whether it be university or a trade. Preference is given to students who have demonstrated the ability to overcome adversity, such as what Adam overcame as a teenage boy. Through this, every reader contributes to educating our youth!

What's been the most rewarding part of having written *The Upside of Hunger*?

When I first heard Adam's story, I remember saying to my husband that it would be powerful for our kids, teenagers at the time, and teenagers across the developed world for that matter, to hear it. Part of my reason for thinking this was the historical value, and the other very important part was how Adam had gone on to live his life – his attitude and his perseverance – despite what he'd been through. Fast forward to now, and I'm overjoyed to share that *The Upside of Hunger* was evaluated and officially endorsed for use in high schools last year. I became aware of this after it had already happened, and since then I've created, with the help of a film student, a 35-minute film of Adam answering questions and discussing events in his life, as a supplemental resource which is available at no charge for teachers to use in the classroom alongside the novel. From what I can tell from my sales reports and teachers who have reached out to me, *The Upside of Hunger* is being used in both History and English curriculums.

Do you have a short snippet from *The Upside of Hunger* to share with our readers?

This scene took place in the fall of 1945, a few months after the end of WW2, when Adam was trying to get back home to Hungary.

As he raised his hand to bang again, the door opened a few inches. A wrinkled face topped with a few wisps of white hair peered out at him.

"What do you want?" the face croaked.

"I need your help," Adam said urgently in Hungarian, looking over his shoulder and then back at the face in the crack of the door. "I've run away from the communist police in Komarom. They were going to shoot us. Please. I don't know if they are still chasing me. I need a place to hide. Please!"

After an eternity, the door opened. The old man stepped aside to let Adam into the tiny kitchen and shut the door quickly behind him. A thin, elderly woman stood with her back to the kitchen counter, twisting her apron in her hands, her eyes wide and her lips pressed together.

"Who are you and why are you running from the police? We will report you." The man raised his chin and gave Adam a challenging look.

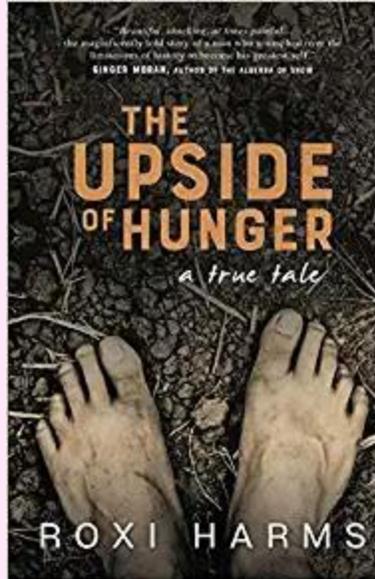
Adam looked from the man to his wife and back again. Surely they wouldn't. Oh my God, had he made another mistake? He closed his eyes for a moment, and wished there was a God to pray to. Taking a deep breath, he began speaking rapidly.

"My name is Adam Baumann. I am from a small village near the Romanian border called Elek. I was fighting in the war and now I can't go home to my mom and dad because of the communists. I walked from Bavaria to Vienna because they are going to deport my family and I need to get there before they do that and then the police stopped the train in Komarom and took us to the prison and they shot some of us. And they kept some of us and we've been doing forced labour to dig bodies from the fields. And I ran away just now when the guard wasn't looking. I ran across the creek into the cornfield. . . " He stopped talking, his throat too tight for any more words to get out.

The old man and his wife looked at each other. Then the man spoke decisively.

"I can hide him in the hay stacks across the creek."

"Okay, I'll fix some food," his wife responded.



You can find *The Upside of Hunger* here:

mybook.to/The-Upside-of-Hunger

You can find Roxi Harms here:

<https://roxiharms.com>

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

BIO: Born into a remote Mennonite community in northern British Columbia, Canada, Roxi spent her childhood surrounded by hard-working farmers, loggers, and good-hearted small-town people. Curiosity about what lay beyond the horizon, and hunger for bigger challenges drew her away after high school, but the grounding and appreciation of that simple beginning remain at her core. Roxi feeds her soul by discovering new things, whether they are found on distant shores or curled up in the swinging chair on the porch of her cabin, lost in a story well told. She lives on Okanagan Lake, in British Columbia, Canada.

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