



Vol. 3, No. 27, JULY 2021

- New Release: *Kingfisher*
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From the Editor



Hello historical fiction readers and writers. Welcome to the steamy month of July!

Just a reminder – with this issue we’re switching to a monthly issue, instead of weekly. With my better half having cancer, which we just heard the news this past week that we now have a third area to battle with, I’m looking ahead and trying to lighten up my workload.

There are still a lot of new releases coming off the presses. Our HF friend, DK Marley, just released her newest book – *Kingfisher*.

In this issue, instead of an author spotlight, there’s something new. Author Gail Ward Olmsted visits us and brings us a different slant. She interviews one of the characters from her book. Keep reading for more fun. I think you’ll enjoy what she wrote for *Pages of the Past*.

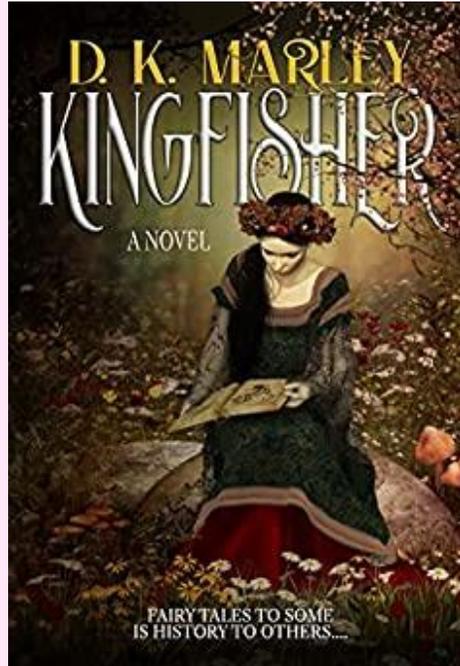
Stay tuned for future issues –next month we’ll be chatting with Malve von Hassell about her newest book – and other fascinating writing tidbits!

Trisha

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New Release



Kingfisher

DK Marley

The past, future, and Excalibur lie in her hands.

Wales, 1914. Vala Penrys and her four sisters find solace in their spinster life by story-telling, escaping the chaos of war by dreaming of the romantic days of Camelot. When the war hits close to home, Vala finds love with Taliesin Wren, a mysterious young Welsh Lieutenant, who shows her another world within the tangled roots of a Rowan tree, known to the Druids as 'the portal'.

One night she falls through, and suddenly she is Viviane, Lady of the Lake – the Kingfisher – in a divided Britain clamoring for a High King. What begins as an innocent pastime becomes the ultimate quest for peace in two worlds full of secrets, and Vala finds herself torn between the love of her life and the salvation of not only her family but of Britain, itself.

Memories and Recollections

The excerpt below doesn't deal specifically with writing historical fiction. It's from a workbook I created for a class I was teaching on writing your family stories. However, since we often refer to people's memories of a time past when we're researching for writing historical fiction, I thought the topic could apply to our roles as historical fiction authors.

Memory

Whether we are writing memoir, historic documentation of a family history, or creating a fictional tale based on true beginnings, we rely heavily on memory – which has been proven to be imperfect.

Our own memories, even though we think we have perfect recall, may err drastically from the truth of what actually happened. The family members that we interview may be spot on in the memories they think of to tell you. Or, those moments may have been distorted by the passage of time and the many experiences that have occurred since.

A lot may vary just because of our own individual perceptions of an event. I was talking to a co-worker about this subject one day. There were three of us in the room discussing some now-forgotten work drama and how another employee's version of what happened differed so drastically from theirs.

I commented that even if someone came in immediately after our conversation and recorded details about what happened – they'd get three different stories. There may be much in common, but we all pay attention to different details. One will recall the conversation with more accuracy. Another may not remember much at all because their mind was far away, dwelling on one of their own problems and they weren't paying attention. Another may remember the clothing that was worn, or the perfume that filled the room, while with someone else the clothing or its color may not have even registered.

Next, add ten, twenty, or sixty years to the timeline. How accurate is that memory going to be?

In *Writing Life Stories*, Bill Roorbach tells a story that his sister likes to frequently re-tell. It involves a younger brother, sucking on a blue toy bolt until it stuck to his lip. The sister finally wrestled it off and when it came loose the younger brother's lip swelled to tremendous proportions and everyone freaked.

Except...the author claims that his sister wasn't there. He was. The bolt was yellow, not blue. And he and his mother both laughed about it. He writes,

“Memory is faulty. That's one of the tenets of memory. And the reader comes to memoir understanding that memory is faulty, that the writer is going to challenge the limits of memory, which is quite different from lying.”

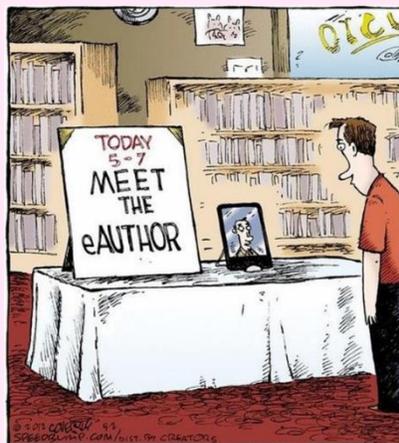
He also writes,

“Even facts distort: What's remembered, recorded, is never the event itself, no matter how precise the measurement...”

Just be aware that our individual perceptions and the passage of time may alter what we try to convey as historical fact. Sometimes a bit of a disclaimer worked into the narrative may help smooth over some of the possible differences in account.

- As far as I recollect...
- The conversation went something like...
- My ex – let's call him Doofus James...
- The story of how he got his first job bootlegging may be lost, but one can assume...
- Though the details have been lost through the years, it most likely...

All in all, since we're most likely not out looking for journalistic awards for this work, the important thing to know is that recording our family's legacy is what's important. As Carol Lachappelle, in *Finding Your Voice Telling Your Stories*, shares: The poet Anne Sexton wrote, **"It doesn't matter who my father was, it matters who I remember he was."**



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Author Spotlight: Gail Ward Olmsted

This month we have something a little different. Author Gail Ward Olmsted has interviewed the main character from her upcoming book, *Landscape of a Marriage*. As she doesn't talk much about her book that's due out at the end of the month, I'm going to go ahead and give you the blurb about it, because it sounds like a fascinating story. Here's what *Landscape of a Marriage* is about – then I'll hand it over to Olmsted to share her character interview with us.

Landscape of a Marriage: Central Park Was Only the Beginning

A marriage of convenience leads to a life of passion and purpose. A shared vision transforms the American landscape forever.

New York, 1858: Mary, a young widow with three children, agrees to marry her brother-in-law Frederick Law Olmsted, who is acting on his late brother's deathbed plea to "not let Mary suffer." But she craves more than a marriage of convenience and sets out to win her husband's love. Beginning with Central Park in New York City, Mary joins Fred on his quest to create a 'beating green heart' in the center of every urban space.

Over the next 40 years, Fred is inspired to create dozens of city parks, private estates and public spaces with Mary at his side. Based upon real people and true events, this is the story of Mary's journey and personal growth and the challenges inherent in loving a brilliant and ambitious man.



I'm talking today with Mary Perkins Olmsted, wife of renowned landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.



Hello Mary. Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. Please tell us how you met your husband? Was it love at first sight?

Oh hardly. I was only eighteen when I met Fred at a neighborhood gathering. He was quite the ladies' man back then. He barely gave me a second glance, which was all well and good as I promptly fell in love with his younger brother John.

Was that your first husband, Dr. John Olmsted? Oh, I'm sorry- I did not mean to upset you.

I still get a bit emotional talking of dear John. Yes, he and I married and honeymooned in Italy. We had three children together, but he died at the age of thirty-two. Complications from tuberculosis. So sad.

How did you end up marrying your brother-in-law?

John begged Fred on his death bed to not let me suffer. So, Fred did the right thing and asked me to marry him, and he adopted our three oldest children. He married me out of a sense of duty, but very soon, we found ourselves deeply in love.

Can you tell us a little about your family?

Of course. John Charles is our firstborn. He joined his father as soon as he graduated from Yale University. He has a very good eye and a keen mind. Our daughter Charlotte is married to a wonderful man, a doctor and they live just outside of Boston with their sons. Owen is still in school and plans to join his father and brother in the family business. Our Marion is a lovely girl, her nose is always in a book and last, but not least, our son Rick. He keeps us in stitches with his antics. I am blessed to have such a wonderful family.

How would you describe your husband's design aesthetic?

Well, you'll rarely see a straight line in any of his plans. He like to take direction from the land itself. The hills and valleys. Always vast expanses of green pastures. Everything is very natural and lush. I heard him describe his style as a sort of organized chaos. I think that describes it perfectly.

Does your husband consult with you on any of his design projects?

Oh yes, we frequently talk about the plans, the types of trees, the smallest of details. As the children are growing up and leaving home, I enjoy spending part of my day in the office. I set up appointments, meet with clients and make a few adjustments to his designs every now and again. Fred always seems to like my suggestions.

Which one of your husband's projects is your favorite?

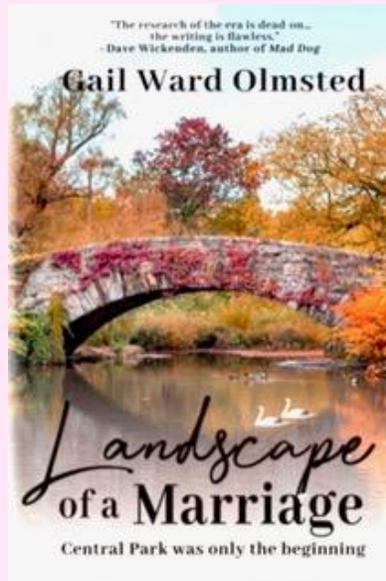
Oh my! I would have to say his first project, Central Park right here in Manhattan is my favorite. We are constant visitors- we walk, ice skate, go boating, ride horses. It is delightful. You should have seen it before my husband got his hands on it. 800 acres of smelly swamp land it was.

You sound like you are quite proud of your husband.

Oh, I am indeed. He has worked so hard to create lovely green spaces for all to enjoy. I can't wait to see what he does next!

Thank you for speaking with me today, Mrs. Olmsted.

It has been my pleasure.



You can find *Landscape of a Marriage* here:

Preorder links –available July 29th, 2021

Black Rose Writing: <https://www.blackrosewriting.com/lit.../landscapeofamarriage>

Amazon: https://www.amazon.com/Landsc.../dp/1684337216/ref=sr_1_1...

Barnes & Noble: <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/.../landscap.../1139037070...>

You can find Gail Olmsted here:

GailOlmsted.com

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