



Pages of the Past

CELEBRATING
HISTORICAL FICTION

Vol. 2, No. 45, November 6, 2020

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From the Editor

Hello and Happy Friday historical fiction lovers!

We're still seeing lots of great new releases from our Pages of the Past members. This week Lindsay Downs and Carmen Radtke each have a new book out. Details follow on the New Releases page. Also, Lindsay is our featured author this week and he shares some tantalizing tidbits about his new book in his interview.

I have a new book out this week too! *100 Years of Christmas* has seven short stories about different women as they navigate life during a holiday season. They are set from 1850 to 1948. Next week I'll share more about it in New Releases.

And on we go through life as we journey through a world still touched by Covid19, America engages in an intense political arena, and now that we're in November, we're seeing Christmas descend upon us with a vengeance. But we can still rely on a great coping mechanism that's gotten us all through many less than perfect days – we can read!

Stay tuned for future issues –In the weeks ahead we have author interviews scheduled with James Conroyd Martin, Janet Oakley, Eileen Donovan, Angela Petch, Linore Burkard, Celia Martin, and a lot more!

Trisha

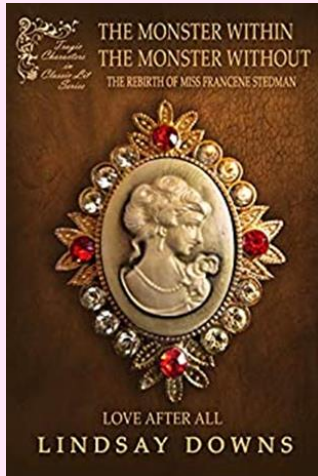
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New Releases

The Monster Within The Monster Without

Lindsay Downs



When bodies start turning up in Whitechapel, Miss Steen returns to London with Lord Cartwright and the Countess of Harlow as her chaperone to solve the murders. Little does she realize she will be introduced to the last person she wants to meet — and hunting down the murderers proves a lot more difficult than they had anticipated.

Author Lindsay Downs is our featured author this week. His interview follows.

Murder Makes Waves

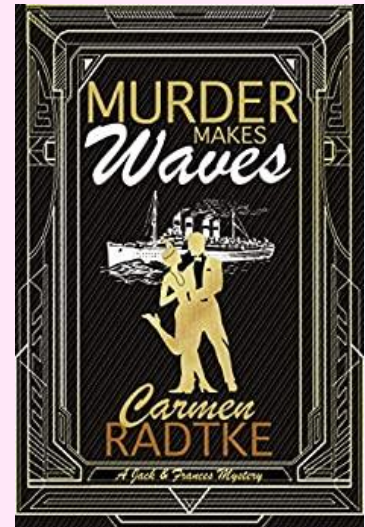
Carmen Radtke

It's a dream come true for Frances Palmer: A voyage from Australia to England on the "Empress of the Sea", together with her fiancé Jack Sullivan and her Uncle Sal, aka "Salvatore the Magnificent". They've been hired to entertain the passengers with magic tricks and daring stunts.

But all is not well below deck, with jealousy and larceny ruffling the cheerful atmosphere. Frances and Jack soon find themselves in stormy seas, together with newfound allies.

When a passenger is found dead after a costume ball and one of Frances's new friends is accused of murder, they decide to secretly dive into the case.

Nothing is plain sailing, though, against a cunning murderer. Will Jack and Frances and their friends get to the bottom of the truth, or will they drown in the sea of deception?



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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's 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>

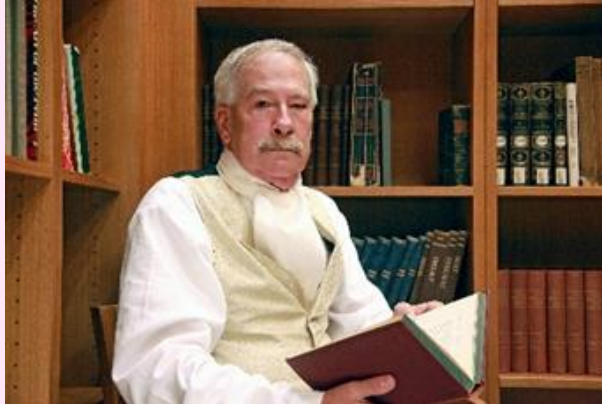
Custom Boxes has a post, **Packing Up and Heading West: The History of Covered Wagons**, which has almost anything you'd want to know about covered wagons.

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

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

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

Author Spotlight: Lindsay Downs



Hello Lindsay Downs. Welcome back to Pages of the Past. We've enjoyed hearing about your writing in several issues over the past year and a half. Today we're here to celebrate the release of your newest book *The Monster Within, The Monster Without*. Can you tell us a little bit about it?

I guess you could say this is a retelling of the Mary Shelley book, *Frankenstein*. As with the original story I wrote mine in first person. However, instead of the main character being male I have mine a very strong female. She has goals and a plan to achieve them except several murders and Mr. Cartwright, aka Lord Cartwright, causes her to reevaluate them.

Can you tell us about the fascinating main character in this book, Miss Francene Steen?

Actually, I have two main characters. Mr. Francis Steen and as you mentioned Miss Francece Steen. The first one is when she is managing her funeral furnisher business and attending medical school in London. Miss Steen is how she is known in the village of Harlow where she grew up after her mother passed away from consumption.

When she and Lord Cartwright return to London to investigate several murders, she goes as Miss Steen but takes her gentleman clothes along in the off-chance she has to sneak around the stews.

This book has an unusual theme. How did the idea come about?

Besides Miss Steen having a secret identity she was also born on the wrong side of the blanket and she falls in love with Lord Cartwright, senior son to the Earl and Countess of Harlow. The earl and countess accept her even though they know of her birth. If that isn't enough, when she attends her first ball with the countess as her chaperone Miss Francene is introduced to two individuals who will be very instrumental in her being accepted by the *ton* and helping to solve the murders.

What kind of research was necessary before undertaking the writing of *The Monster Within, The Monster Without*?

A lot. Got to love going down the research rabbit hole. To begin with I didn't have a clue how bodies were prepared for burial in Regency England. In the process of doing that I learned that it was not uncommon for trollops to be buried upright at a crossroad, so the soul didn't know where to go.

One of the most interesting aspects of my research regarded bringing the dead back to life, and I'm not talking about Zombies. Some of what I learned is in the book so that is all I will say on the subject.

Many of your books have several layers woven throughout. This one is no exception. There's not only a young woman in an unlikely profession for this time period, but there's murder and mayhem, and the complications of one of the killers having a twin brother. If that wasn't enough, the possibly of a bit of espionage entangles its way into the plot. How do you develop so many underlying layers, yet keep it all straight as you're writing?

You forgot -two murders which happened several years earlier that might have relevance to the current ones she and Lord Cartwright are trying to solve. Oops, My Bad, I forgot another one. The annoying Miss Mason.

Why do you think I have, in this book, not one but two main characters? Between them they keep everything straight and let me know when to bring back one of the layers. Yes folks, my main characters speak to me but I don't reply, which would make me crazy if I did.

But seriously everyone, I have absolutely no idea how I keep the layers straight. I don't keep notes on each layer either in the manuscript or on my character list. I just do.

You're a very productive author, Lindsay. What does your typical writing day look like?

I usually don't start physically sitting in the chair and write until after lunch, whenever that is. I will take a break for about an hour to have dinner and relax. I will then work until 10 or 11pm. I usually write for 6-8 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Even before I have a book finished, I'm already thinking about the next one I'll be writing.

Would you like to share a tempting excerpt from *The Monster Within, The Monster Without*?

Offered another cup of tea told me this interview, which was more of an inquisition, was not finished. Not that I was complaining since I greatly enjoyed improving on my story. It was false but excellent practice for the future, if needed. From behind me I heard the French doors open.

I sensed a man was approaching because the breeze carried his masculine scent to me, which I did not recognize. The walking stopped. My hostess lifted her head slightly giving the newcomer a smile of pleasure.

"I was wondering if or when you would make your presence known to us. Miss Steen, may I introduce you to my son, Lord Cartwright."

When the countess said "Lord" at first the word did not register in my mind. In London I was acquainted with a Mr. Cartwright, but he was far from being a peer.

"You must have met him as he is employed by Sir William Morse as a Runner from Bow Street."

I set the bone china teacup and saucer on the glass tabletop, then clinched my fists in anger as I turned in my chair to see if this man was who I knew. He is. Except now he wore a dark brown jacket with matching vest. Covering his legs were buckskin riding britches tucked into well-worn riding boots. A perfectly tied cravat in a coachman's knot circled his neck, which I was sorely tempted to wrap my

fingers around and strangle him. Even more annoying was the wisp of raven black hair hanging down over his forehead. He stood in front of me with a slight smirk on his lips.

That behavior caused me to almost lose what little politeness I had left in me. When he gave me a slight bow then reached for my hand, I lost my temper completely.

“Miss Steen, this is indeed a pleasure,” he spoke.

His words were pleasant but behind them I was sure he was laughing at me for having fooled him all these years.

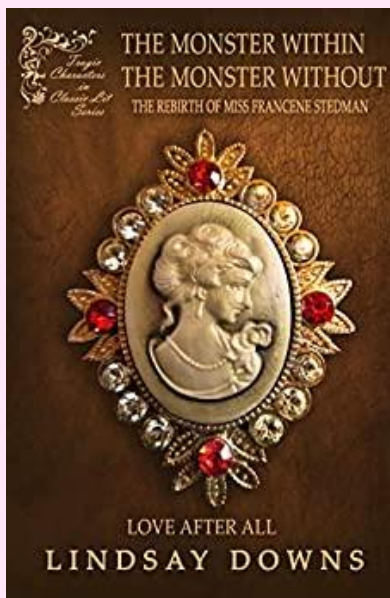
I could no longer be in his presence. Standing, I gave him my hand across his smirking face. Dashing for the open doors, I escaped him

I barely could make out what he was yelling, not that I cared for he had just made a fool out of me. Rushing out the front door I told the coachman to take me home.

“Now,” I screamed at him, climbing into the carriage.

We had barely arrived at the main road when tears started filling my eyes then rolled down my cheeks. I withdrew a hanky from my reticule and tried to pat my face dry but could not because the waterworks continued to flow unabated. Through hazy eyes I saw the coach was approaching my parent’s house. The carriage barely halted when I thrust open the door, climbed out then raced inside and up to my room, throwing myself on the bed.

Thank you for joining us today, Lindsay. We appreciate your time. Please leave a few links where our readers can find you and your newest book, and we’ll go follow and friend you.



US- <https://tinyurl.com/yxpmmwte>

UK- <https://tinyurl.com/yyskcuj2>

CA- <https://tinyurl.com/y5u797sq>

AU- <https://tinyurl.com/y3qoj7q7>

You can find Lindsay here:

Facebook- <http://tinyurl.com/pgq8vzz>

Twitter- @ldowns2966

LinkedIn- <http://tinyurl.com/e8t56>

Goodreads-<http://tinyurl.com/prcdmml>

Amazon- <http://tinyurl.com/ktem76c>

BIO: I've been an avid reader ever since I was old enough to hold a red leather bound first edition copy of Sir Walter Scott's *The Lady of the Lake* in my lap.

So, it only seemed natural at some point in my life I take up pen and paper to start writing. Over time my skills slightly improved which I attribute to my English teachers.

My breakthrough came about in the mid 1970's when I read a historical romance written by Sergeanne Golon, *Angelique*. This French husband and wife team opened my eyes to the real world of fiction. Stories about romance, beautiful damsels, handsome heroes and plots which kept me hooked. Of course, being a man, I had to keep my reading hidden from others as that wasn't appropriate reading for men.

With this newfound appreciation of the written word I took up other books and devoured them as a starving person would a plate of food. I then attempted to write again. I still wasn't satisfied so I put it aside for years as other events entered my life.

Finally, in the early years of the new millennium I tried again to write and once again met with limited success. At least now I was able to get past the first page or two. Then, in 2006 a life changing event brought me back to my love, I took a job as a security officer. This allowed me plenty of time to read different genres.

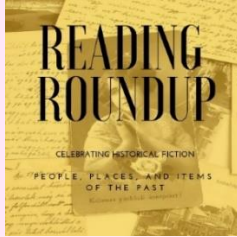
My favorites are regency and murder mystery. As I poured through every one I could get my hands on I knew this could be something I wanted to do and have been successful.

I've been published since 2008.

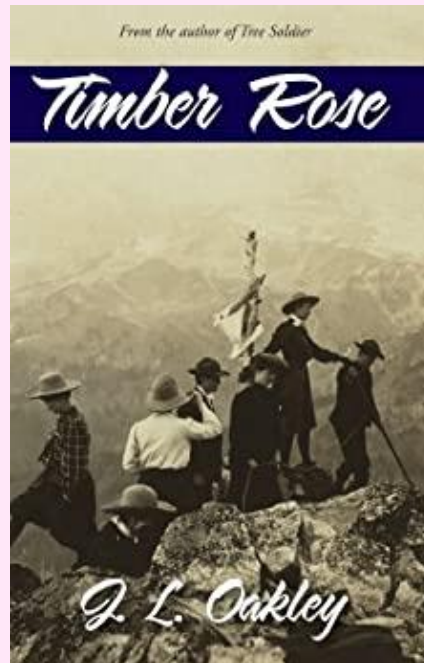
Since 2012 I've lived in central Texas.

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The 1900s/1910s



Timber Rose

Janet Oakley

1907. Women climbing mountains in skirts. Loggers fighting for the eight-hour day. The forests are alive with progress but not everyone is on board. Mountain climbing Caroline Symington comes from a prominent family. When she elopes with an enterprising, working class man bound for the new Forest Service, her father disowns her. Seeking meaning in her new life amidst nature, she's ushered along by a group of like-minded women and a mysterious mountain man with a tragic past.

When her ruthless uncle muscles his way into the national forest, Caroline must take a stand and defend the man and place she loves.

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