

JULY MUSINGS

SHARON VIRT



The Trouble with Jack

If there's one character who's kept me awake at night while writing *Masque of Honor* and, more recently, in the stories I continue to explore for my Fields of Honor series, it's Jack McCarty.

Jack is... *complicated*. He's charming, brave, fiercely loyal, but he has a flaw that makes him one of the hardest characters I've ever written: Jack hates losing and hates compromising almost as much.

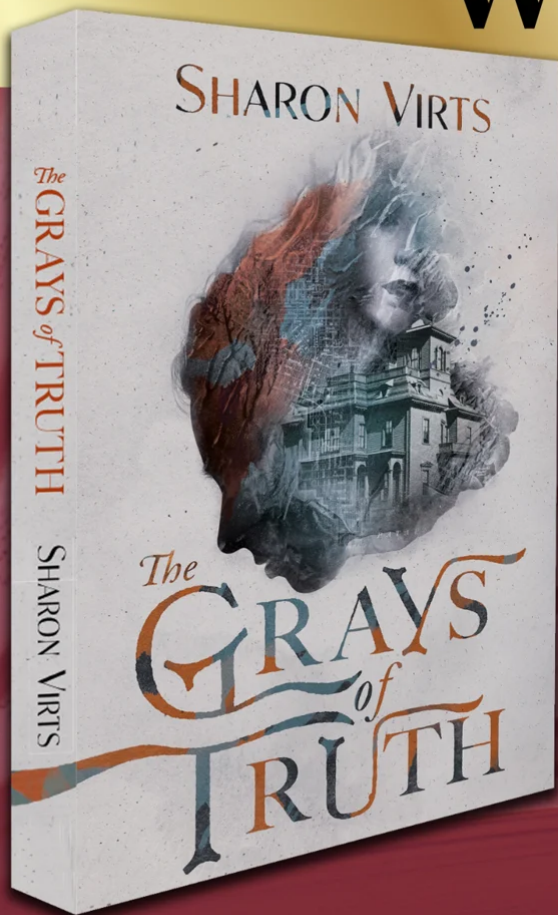
No matter what life throws his way, Jack always believes he can bend the world to his will. And if he can't? He fights. Sometimes literally. The dueling field became Jack's second home because he couldn't walk away, couldn't accept that losing (even just once) might be the better path forward. For Jack, winning isn't just a goal; it's survival. It's honor. And when you live in a world where reputation is everything, I suppose I understand his logic. Still, his refusal to bend becomes his greatest burden, and the source of his deepest pain.

Here's the truth: Jack is so hard to write because ... [**<READ MORE>**](#)

“Winning is not everything, but it beats anything that comes in second.”

— Paul Bryant

WINNER



of The International
Book Award for
Historical Fiction

The Grays of Truth by Sharon Virts



Best Historical Fiction: *The Grays of Truth*

The Grays of Truth took the top award for **Best Historical Fiction at the 2025 International Book Awards**. Between its bestseller status and this award, I am humbled by the novel's success. I hope you had the opportunity to read it! If not, you can get your copy at [AMAZON](https://www.amazon.com) or wherever books are sold.



Writer's Life.



Oh, How I Love a Parade...

What is it about a parade? Ever since I was little, I have been fascinated by them. The first parades date back to 2000 BC when the Babylonians celebrated Akitu by parading their deities and performing rituals. Most parades were used to celebrate victory days like the end of the American Civil War or WWII.

And did you know that the parade float got its name from decorated barges that were towed along the canals with ropes held by parade marchers on the shore? My favorite parades are those I recall from childhood--marching bands, majorettes, and floats with beauty queens and cartoons characters.

There's just something special about a parade...



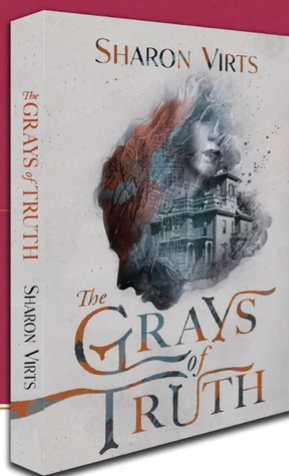
Escape to Carolina

Scott and I took a welcome break from the Virginia heat and headed to Bald Head Island, NC for the rest of the month where I am knee-deep (more like neck-deep!) in development edit revisions on my *Bargains of Fate* manuscript. As much as I love

him, Jack McCarty is killing me! Hopefully, I can fit in some time on the beach and the golf course!



“Keep your face to the sunshine and you will never see the shadows.”
— Helen Keller



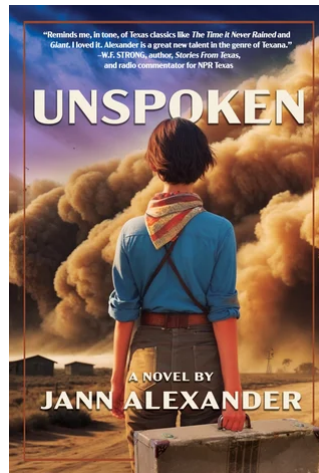
Have Sharon Attend
Your Book Club Meeting

20% off your purchase of ten or more books

LEARN MORE

July New Releases in Historical Fiction

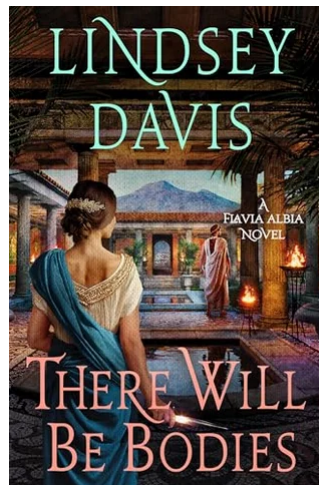
Check out some of the new releases in historical fiction that have just hit bookstore shelves this July.



4.64★ on Goodreads

Unspoken: A Dust Novel by Jann Alexander

In *Unspoken: A Dust Novel* by Jann Alexander, ten-year-old Ruby Lee Becker is torn from her family and Texas Panhandle farm after the devastating Black Sunday storm of 1935. Twelve years later, she sets out on a determined journey home—fueled by grit, heartache, and hope—in this sweeping tale of survival, separation, and a mother’s unbreakable love.

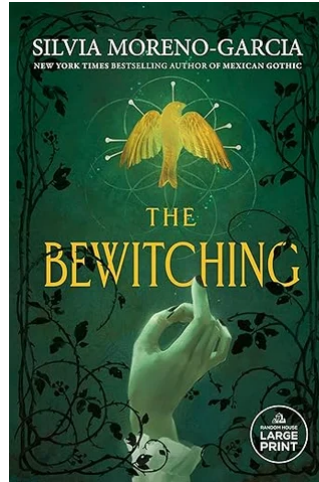


4.55★ on Goodreads

There Will Be Bodies by Lindsey Davis

There Will Be Bodies by Lindsey Davis is a gripping historical mystery set ten years after Mount Vesuvius's eruption. When a villa buried in ash reveals a body hidden in a locked storeroom, Flavia Albia suspects foul play. As secrets, greed, and danger

rise from the ruins, she must untangle a long-buried mystery before another life is lost.



4.29★ on Goodreads

The Bewitching

by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

In *The Bewitching* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, grad student Minervais is researching a forgotten horror writer when she uncovers a chilling link between a vanished college girl, her great-grandmother's eerie tales of witches, and something sinister that may still lurk on campus. Blending gothic suspense, literary mystery, and folklore.



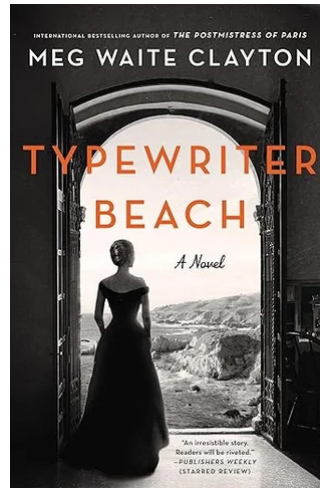
4.03★ on Goodreads

The Original

by Nell Stevens

In *The Original* by Nell Stevens, aspiring art forger Grace is drawn into a web of doubt when a man claiming to be her long-lost cousin returns to her uncle's estate in 1899 England. As suspicion divides the family, Grace must use her eye for fakes

to uncover the truth—about him, and herself—in this richly layered story of identity, inheritance, and authenticity.



3.97★ on Goodreads

Typewriter Beach

by Meg Waite Clayton

Typewriter Beach by Meg Waite Clayton is a moving, multigenerational story of creativity, identity, and hidden truths. In 1950s Carmel, a rising actress and a blacklisted screenwriter form an unlikely bond. Decades later, his granddaughter uncovers secrets that challenge everything she thought she knew. As past and present collide, one family's legacy unfolds along the foggy California coast.



July Journaling Challenge: The Heart of Summer



Long days, golden light, and a slower pace—July invites us to pause and soak in the richness of the season. It's a time of ripening, of noticing the quiet rewards of what we've been tending—whether in our gardens, our relationships, or ourselves.

This month, let's reflect on what it means to be fully present in this moment of abundance. Not striving or starting—but savoring.

Each day, take a moment to notice what's in full bloom in your life:

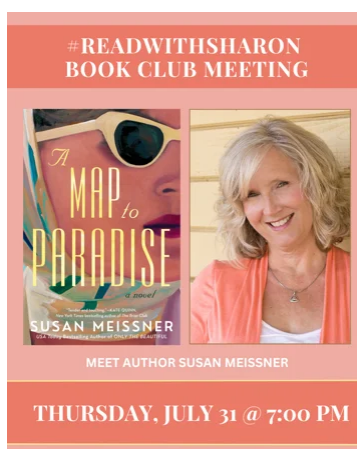
- ☀️ What have you nurtured this year that's now bearing fruit?
- ☀️ Where are you finding joy in stillness or simplicity?
- ☀️ What memory, feeling, or ritual makes summer feel most alive to you?

Pick up your pen, and let your writing begin!



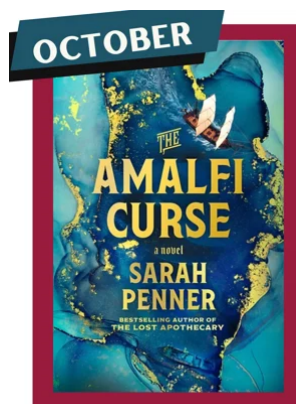
#ReadWithSharon

Get ready for an awesome lineup in my [#ReadWithSharon](#) book club. On Thursday, July 31, at 7:00 p.m. Eastern, we will discuss ***A Map to Paradise*** with author Susan Meissner—a story of three different women in 1956 Malibu, drawn into a fragile alliance when their reclusive neighbor vanishes and long-buried secrets begin to surface.



The #ReadWithSharon book club only reads current releases (within the last year) of historical fiction, and I do my best to pre-read every selection before making the pick. Most months, the author joins us via Zoom, and you can ask questions during the discussion. Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month (this month being an exception) at 7:00 p.m. Eastern and last no longer than an hour. For meetings you miss, you can access our Zoom discussions with the authors on my [YouTube Channel](#).

If you love stories from the past, this club is for you. You can sign up for free [HERE](#).





**Summer. When the days get longer, the stars shine
brighter, your hair gets lighter, the water gets
warmer, the music gets louder, and life gets better.**

Life is better when you're under the sun!



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