

APRIL MUSINGS

SHARON VIRT



Tariffs: A Tale and Old as Time

*In fourteen hundred ninety-two,
Columbus sailed the ocean blue...*

Most of us have recited this rhyme to remember the date of America's discovery, but **how many know the motivation behind Christopher Columbus's ocean voyage?** Columbus was trying to find a new route to the far east, but why?

The answer: To bypass the Silk Road tariffs.

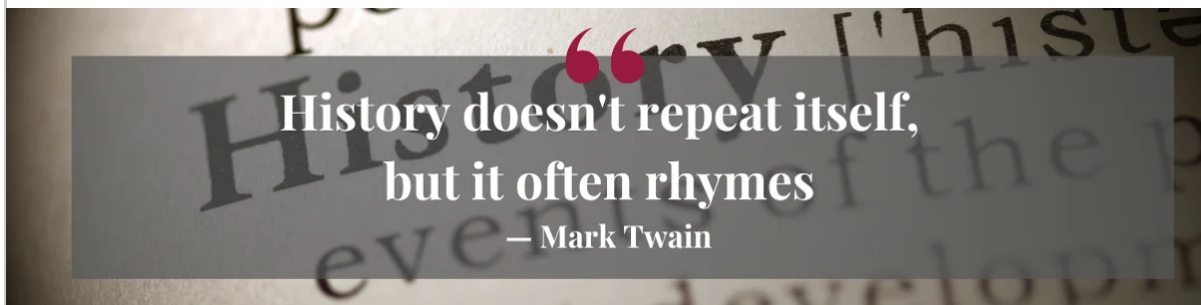
As I delve deeper into the research for my next book, I'm once again reminded that the battles of our past echo (*loudly*) our present. One issue that continues to resurface in my research—and in the very fabric of American history—is tariffs.

In *Masque of Honor*, tariffs were not just a background issue. They were central to the political unrest of the early 1800s. After the War of 1812, American markets were being flooded with cheap British goods. The North—just beginning to build its manufacturing base—was drowning in foreign competition. Factory owners couldn't compete. Shops were closing. Northern leaders pushed hard for tariffs to protect American industry and help pay off war debts. Many of the militia men who had

served in the War of 1812 hadn't even been paid yet. Tariffs, they believed, could help right those wrongs.

But the South had a very different perspective. Their economy depended on the export of raw materials like tobacco, cotton, and grain. Much of that went to Britain and Europe. Southern leaders feared that if the United States imposed tariffs, Europe would retaliate—and their goods would sit, unsold, rotting on the docks. To them, tariffs weren't just an economic inconvenience—they were a direct threat to their livelihoods.

This tension boiled over again just a few years later... [<READ MORE>](#)



"Caption This" Photo Call

For years, you've wowed me with your witty one-liners and hilarious takes on my weekly "Caption This" feature. **Now, I want to showcase YOUR photos!**

Send me your most fun, quirky, or curious snapshots (but no more dog photos please), and I'll feature a new one each week for the community to caption—and win prizes. **Let's keep the laughter rolling!**



Upload Photos Here



What I've been doing and What's Coming Up?

Events Earlier This Month ...



DAR 75th Anniversary and dedication marker for Thomas Mason. [Watch the Unveiling!](#)

Midday Maryland

(ABC WMAR), putting the spotlight on our book club. [Watch Interview!](#)

River Creek Book Club discussion on *The Grays of Truth* - what a great night!



History or Hogwash

Three Loudoun County history buffs. Three incredible stories. But—one of them is pure hogwash!

My "story" was titled, "Petticoats and Presidents." Do you think I spun a historical truth or lead the audience astray with a well-crafted lie?

Check out my social media for the answer!

What's Coming Up ...

MAY 7

***The Grays of Truth* Book Discussion**

Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia

JUNE 8

History Talk

Lovettsville Historical Society in Lovettsville, Virginia


JUNE 26


Book Signing at the 2025 ALA Annual Conference in Philadelphia, PA



Veil of Doubt Walking Tour

I have been getting so many requests for another *Veil of Doubt* Walking Tour and I am happy to announce that I've scheduled another one!

 **Date:** May 20, 2025

 **Time:** 6:00 PM EDT

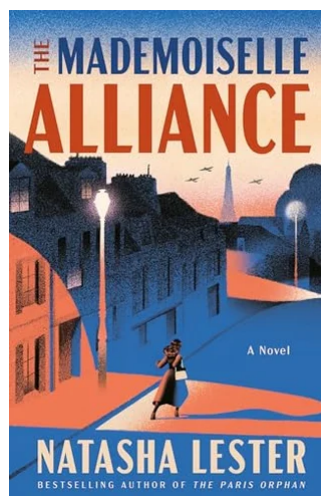
 **Location:** Leesburg, VA

I hope you can join me! Click the button below to register. We will send the details!

[Register Here for my May 20th Walking Tour](#)

April New Releases in Historical Fiction

Spring into READING! Check out some of the new releases in historical fiction that have just hit bookstore shelves.

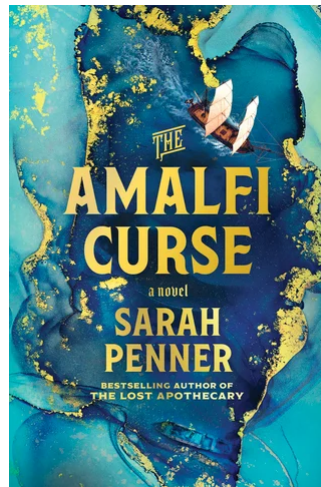


4.58★ on Goodreads

The Mademoiselle Alliance

by Natasha Lester

In *The Mademoiselle Alliance*, Natasha Lester brings to life the remarkable true story of Marie-Madeleine Fourcade—the only woman to lead a resistance network in WWII France. From an adventurous young mother in 1920s Morocco to a covert leader in Nazi-occupied Paris, this gripping novel explores love, sacrifice, and courage. A riveting tale of espionage, identity, and heroism based on one of history's unsung heroines.

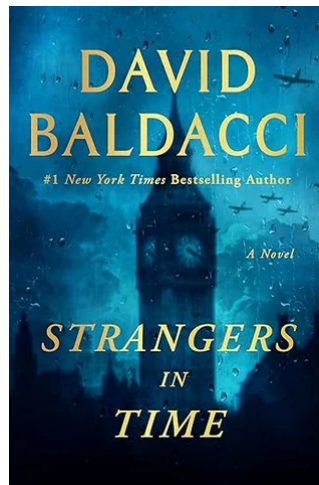


4.31★ on Goodreads

The Amalfi Curse

by Sarah Penner

In *The Amalfi Curse*, Sarah Penner spins a spellbinding tale of sunken treasure, ancient magic, and forbidden love along Italy's Amalfi Coast. When nautical archaeologist Haven Ambrose dives into her father's mysterious past, she uncovers a legacy of sorcery and a centuries-old curse threatening the region. Brimming with romance, mystery, and coastal enchantment, this atmospheric novel is a captivating escape into myth and magic.

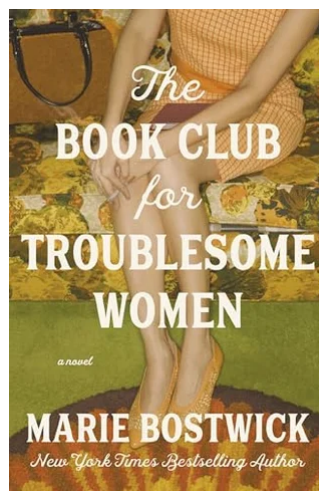


4.22★ on Goodreads

Stranger in Time

by David Baldacci

Set in war-torn London in 1944, *Strangers in Time* by David Baldacci is a moving story of loss, resilience, and unexpected connection. A grieving bookshop owner, a runaway boy, and a displaced girl form an unlikely bond as bombs fall around them. As secrets surface and dangers close in, they discover that found family and trust may be their greatest refuge. A heartfelt, hope-filled novel from the master of storytelling.



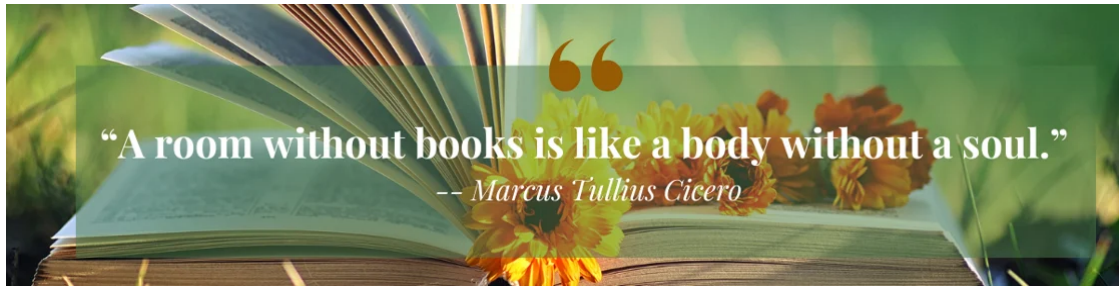
4.13★ on Goodreads

The Book Club for Troublesome Women

by Marie Bostwick

In *The Book Club for Troublesome Women*, a suburban housewife's spontaneous book club in 1960s Virginia becomes a catalyst for friendship, self-discovery, and quiet rebellion. As four women gather to discuss *The Feminine Mystique*, they begin to question

the roles they've been handed—and dare to want more. A nostalgic, empowering novel celebrating sisterhood, ambition, and the courage to redefine the American dream.



April Journaling Challenge: A Season of Renewal

As the world wakes from winter's slumber, we're greeted with signs of new life—buds on branches, birdsong in the mornings, and longer, brighter days. Spring is nature's reminder that we, too, can begin again.

This month, let's embrace the spirit of renewal. Whether it's refreshing an old goal, planting the seeds of a new habit, or simply letting go of what no longer serves you, April invites you to bloom in your own time and way.

Each day, reflect on your own season of growth:



- 🌸 What is something you'd like to start fresh?
- 🌸 What have you let go of that's made space for something better?
- 🌸 Where are you seeing signs of renewal—in your life?

Let this be the month you turn the page—literally and figuratively. 🌸

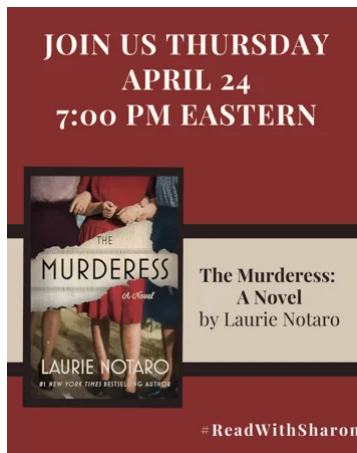
Pick up your pen, and let the writing (and blooming) begin!



#ReadWithSharon

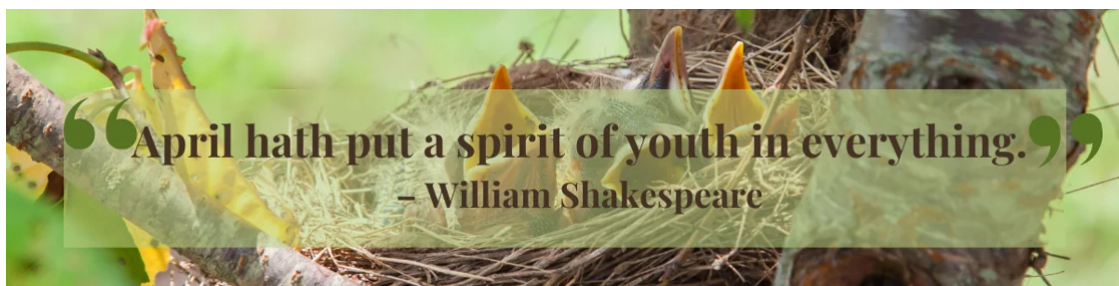
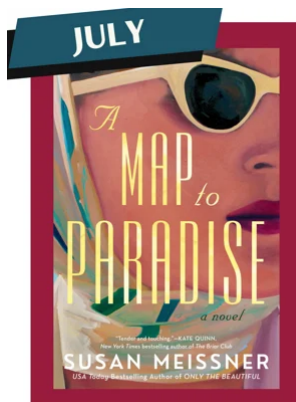
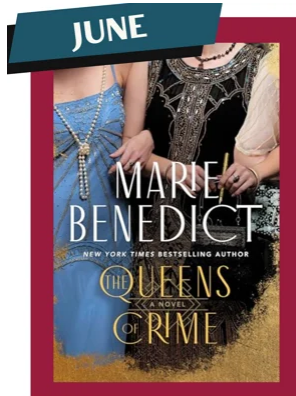
Historical Fiction Book Club

Get ready for an awesome line up in my [#ReadWithSharon](#) book club. On Thursday April 24 at 7pm eastern, we will discuss, *The Murderess* with author Laurie Notaro—a true-crime story and author discussion you won't want to miss.



The #ReadWithSharon book club only reads current release (within the last year) 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 are able to ask questions during the discussion. Meetings are the fourth Thursday of the month at 7pm eastern, and never go 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](#)



Here's to the coming of spring and the renewal that it brings!



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