

MAY MUSINGS

SHARON VIRT



Beyond the Apron Strings

Honoring the Non-Conventional Mothers Who Shaped Us.

When we think of “mother,” we often conjure a soft image: warm hugs, fresh cookies, unconditional love. But real motherhood—like the women who embody it—rarely fits neatly into such comforting boxes. As a storyteller, I’ve long been drawn to the women who defy expectations, who mother not only through nurture but through grit, style, rebellion, and complexity.

In my debut novel, *Masque of Honor*, one of the most beloved characters isn’t a romantic lead or a war hero—but Sally McCarty, a woman who raised her boys with boldness and flair. Sally was widowed young and faced life’s hardships with unflinching confidence. She insisted her sons call her “Sally,” not “Mom”—a choice that spoke volumes about the role she intended to play in their lives. She wasn’t there simply to comfort them. She was their strategist, their emotional equal, their inspiration.

Sally reminded me so much of a woman who shaped me personally: Jeri May, the mother of my childhood best friend. Jeri May wasn’t my mother, but in so many

ways, she was a mother to me. Her door was always open, her advice always firm, and her belief in me never wavered. She helped me believe in the possibility of becoming who I am today. And perhaps that's what makes a mother—someone who helps shape your identity, no matter her biological or legal ties to you.

But not all mothers are nurturing. Some, in fact, stretch the very definition of motherhood. In *Veil of Doubt*, Emily Lloyd is the embodiment of the dark side of motherhood—or perhaps, the absence of it. Accused of the unthinkable—murdering her own children—Emily is complex and enigmatic. Did she do it? I won't spoil the book. But I will say this: motherhood doesn't automatically bestow selflessness.

<[READ MORE](#)>

A picture memory brings to me;
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee ...

—John Greenleaf Whittier



A map of Leesburg, Virginia, showing a walking tour route. The map is divided into a grid of streets: WIRT ST., KING STREET, and CHURCH ST. running vertically; and UNION, NORTH, CORNWALL, MARKET, LOUDOUN, and ROYAL running horizontally. Numbered stops 1 through 8 are marked with red circles and icons: 1 (church), 2 (house), 3 (house), 4 (house), 5 (museum), 6 (house), 7 (house), and 8 (church). The title 'Walking TOUR' is written in a large, elegant script. To the right, the text 'VEIL OF DOUBT' is in large, bold, dark blue letters, followed by 'Downtown Leesburg' in a smaller, bold, dark blue font. At the bottom right, the date and time 'TUESDAY MAY 20, 6PM' are displayed in a bold, dark blue font.


**Walking
TOUR**


**VEIL OF
DOUBT**
Downtown
Leesburg

**TUESDAY MAY 20,
6PM**

***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](#)



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

Events Earlier This Month ...





The 100th running of the Virginia Gold Cup

Scott, me and our kids had a great family day at the races! A little light betting between the family, great food, great company and a little relaxation after months of writing!



Poe Museum Book Talk & Signing

On May 7th, I gave a **Tell-Tale Talk** at the Poe Museum in Richmond, Virginia, on my latest novel, *The Grays of Truth*... Edgar Allan Poe himself makes an appearance in this book.

We had a lovely evening and really engaged crowd!

What a beautiful setting - the Poe Museum and Book People of Richmond were terrific hosts.

What's Coming Up ...

MAY 31

Loudoun County Women Wine & Books Meet Up

Leesburg, Virginia

JUNE 8

History Talk

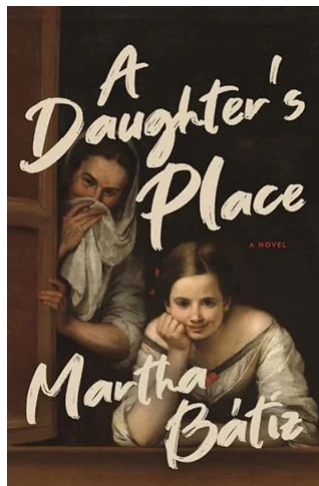
Lovettsville Historical Society in Lovettsville, Virginia

JUNE 26

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

May New Releases in Historical Fiction

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

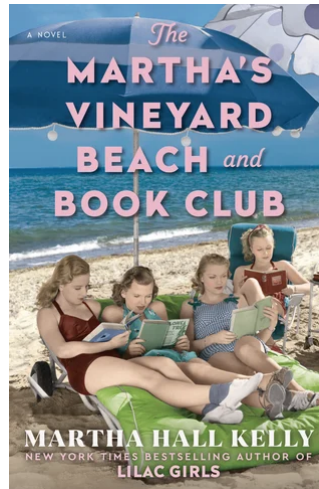


4.38★ on Goodreads

A Daughter's Place

by Martha Batiz

In *A Daughter's Place*, set in 1599 Madrid, fifteen-year-old Isabel is sent to live with her absent father, Miguel de Cervantes, posing as a maid to hide her illegitimacy. As years pass, she uncovers family secrets, experiences love and loss, and searches for identity in a society that denies her place. Set during Spain's Golden Age, her journey unfolds alongside the creation of *Don Quixote*.



4.24★ on Goodreads

The Martha's Vineyard Beach and Book Club

by Martha Hall Kelly

In 2016, grieving Mari travels to Martha's Vineyard and uncovers a hidden family connection through reclusive painter Elizabeth Devereaux. In 1942, sisters Cadence and Briar struggle to save their farm during WWII, launching a women's book club that offers hope amid fear, romance, and wartime secrets—including a possible spy threatening everything they hold dear.



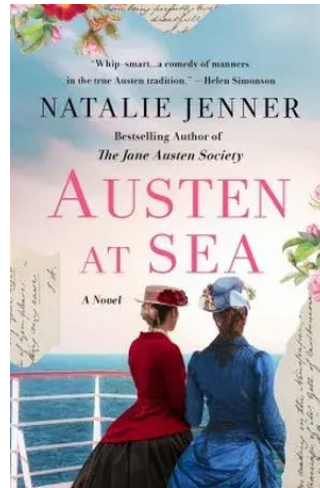
4.00★ on Goodreads

The Devil Three Time

by Rickey Fayne

In *The Devil Three Times*, Yetunde awakens on a slave ship with only her sister's ghost for company—until the Devil offers protection and power in exchange for a soul-altering sacrifice. Their pact spans generations, as he aids Yetunde's

descendants in times of crisis, hoping to redeem himself. Rooted in Black spiritual traditions, this sweeping saga explores salvation, identity, and the cost of survival.

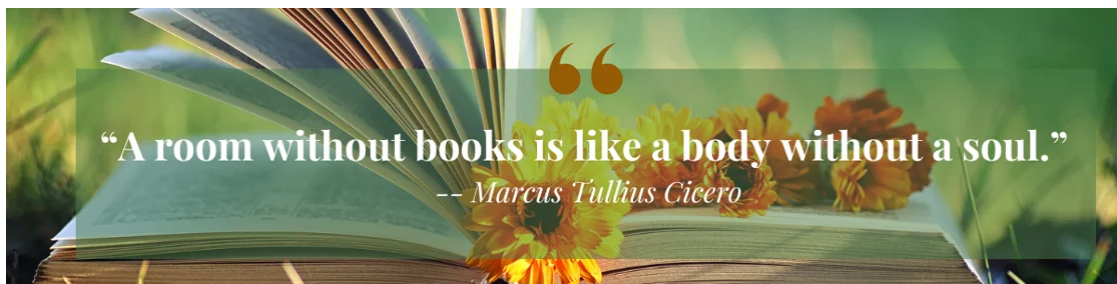


3.93★ on Goodreads

Austen at Sea

by Natalie Jenner

In *Austen at Sea*, two sisters and two brothers set sail for England—Charlotte and Henrietta Stevenson, inspired by Jane Austen’s novels, and Nicholas and Haslett Nelson, rare booksellers drawn by a rumored Austen artifact. Awaiting them is Sir Francis Austen, who may have matchmaking plans of his own. But before destinies unfold, the four must navigate an Atlantic crossing that promises to change each of their lives forever.



May Journaling Challenge: A Month of Hope & Possibility

“May is the month of expectation, the month of wishes, the month of hope.”

— Emily Brontë

There’s something quietly magical about May. The world feels on the edge of something—lush with promise, alive with anticipation. It’s a time to dream a little bigger, to believe in the beauty of what could be.

This month, let your journal be a space for hopeful expectation—a place to plant your wishes and give shape to what you're longing for.

Each day, reflect on your heart's quiet hopes:



- 🌿 What are you hoping for right now?
- 🌿 What wishes have you carried with you that still feel alive?
- 🌿 Where in your life are you feeling a sense of possibility?

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

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



#ReadWithSharon

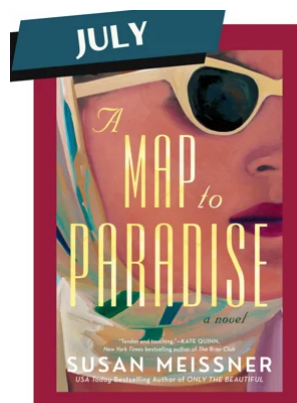
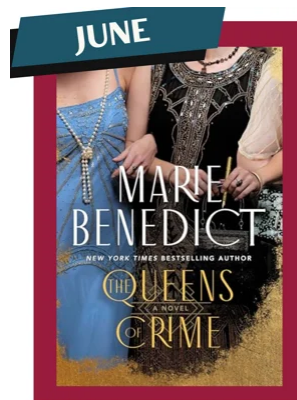
Historical Fiction Book Club

Get ready for an awesome line up in my [#ReadWithSharon](#) book club. On Thursday May 22 at 7pm eastern, we will discuss, *Glamorous Notions* with author Megan Chance—an intriguing story about stolen identities, friendship, and betrayal.



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](#)





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month of wishes, the month of hope**
—Emily Brontë

Here's to the coming of summer and the possibilities that it brings!



WWW.SHARONVIRTS.COM



Sharon Virts, Selma Mansion, Leesburg, VA 20176, United States, www.sharonvirts.com

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