

A Fan Inside: Interview with Author Mary Martin

Earlier in the month I posted a sneak peek into author Mary Martin's, soon to be published book, part two in *The Trilogy of Remembrance --The Fate Of Pryde*. Today I have the privilege of sharing with you a fascinating written interview with the author.

Mary E. Martin is the author of two trilogies *The Osgoode Trilogy* set in the corridors of power in the world of the law, and *The Trilogy of Remembrance* set midst the glitter and shadows of the art world.

Vonnie Faroqui: Welcome to the Ink Slinger's Whimsey blog Mary. It is really great to interview you for our reading audience. Some of the first questions that fans usually want to ask have to do with that moment of discovery, when you first knew that you wanted to be a writer; in part, because writing is one of those creative vocations that so many of us aspire too. Do you think of writing and being an author as a special calling or your purpose in life?

Mary Martin: Yes, but I had to do a lot of other things first, such as practice law and raise three children, before I felt that way. It's a sense of *this is what I'm supposed to do* and that is very satisfying and—*fun*. I think such a feeling gives you the longer view of the writing life in that you are able to reach out to someone you've never met and touch them. As a writer, I live for that.

Faroqui: Tell us what kinds of novels you have written.

Martin: My second trilogy of novels [*The Trilogy of Remembrance*] is about an artist, Alexander Wainwright, Britain's finest landscape painter. The genesis of this trilogy occurred many years ago, before the publication in 2005 of my first novel, *Conduct in Question*, the first in *The Osgoode Trilogy*. A writer friend/mentor of mine challenged me to write something other than a mystery novel. And so, I tried to write a romance, with little success. I had a man and woman meet while travelling on [believe it or not] the Orient Express to Venice. After thirty pages, I was getting bored. I knew enough to say that if the writer is bored, heaven help the reader!

At that moment in time, I envisioned a mysterious character who pretty much *appeared* in the room in my imagination. At once, I knew he was the protagonist for the book. It took a long time to get to know him, but after innumerable character sketches and other jottings, he became Alexander Wainwright, Britain's finest landscape artist. He would be the main character around which the next trilogy would be built. So, I suppose it was Alexander, himself, who inspired the trilogy. Once I got to know him a little bit, I found he had a great deal to say.

My experience has been that the characters an author creates are a part or aspect of oneself. Consequently, the growth of Alexander — *a person who believes that there is much more to this world than meets the eye* — probably is my inquiring, prodding, reflective self. I present him with many questions to which I personally want to find answers.

The next novel in this trilogy—*The Fate of Pryde*—will be published this fall on Amazon's CreateSpace. Again, Alexander is the protagonist and I've presented him with a new character from whom he has much to learn, Jonathan Pryde. Pryde is an extremely wealthy patron of the arts who wants to commission Alex to create a vision in stained glass for his residence in Venice in the south of France. Alexander hesitates. After all he is a painter, not a glass cutter. But Alex is drawn into Jonathan's strange and murky world. At the foot of the garden of Pryde's chateau-like home, stands a bunker protecting his secrets. In this novel, the question posed to Alex is—*How can the very best and the very worst of humankind reside in one's man breast?*

And so, I love to present my protagonist with all sorts of problems to reflect upon. I have a few ideas for the next novel, but the trick, as always is to create a driving plot to find all the questions and— a few answers.

Faroqui: How do your books evolve? Do you get a creative burst which eventually matures into a novel? Do you pick a theme and lay a foundation? How do you approach the creative process?

Martin: I think each novel evolves in its own way. A lot like raising children—each one is quite different. It seems I do a lot of work “in the back of my mind” and so, when it's ready, I sit down and get started. The

growth of *The Drawing Lesson* was quite unusual. In fact it started out as a novella or even three novels and so the structure of a full novel was not really in place at the outset. Parts or scenes of the novel kept “floating up” to me and I would write them down without really knowing why. And so, I made a rule for myself—not to throw anything out until much later. It was like walking on a beach and coming across different shells and having to decide whether to pick one up and carry it home or not. Not until the end of the process did I cut out or change significant portions of the manuscript.

So, sometimes it starts out as an idea or a kind of character or a bunch of questions. I think I’m a pretty “organic” writer in the sense that I like the natural flow of the story to take over and guide me where it wants. I’m a great student of Carl Jung and consequently really believe in the power of the subconscious, which I think is a lot smarter and more creative than I am.

Faroqui: Some people believe that in order to be truly creative a person has to be tormented, or have deep inner turmoil? What do you think of that notion?

Martin: No! At least I certainly hope not. Much is made of battles with inner demons. But it’s interesting you should ask. In fact, Alexander Wainwright does have a battle like that in *The Drawing Lesson*. Suddenly, this artist, known for his beautiful landscapes bathed in an ethereal light, starts painting *trolls*—ugly humanoid creatures—along the riverbank of his most recent painting. Of course this heralds a *breaking up* of his art so that he can advance creatively. I guess I’ve inflicted that on Alex so that I don’t personally have to deal with it. But seriously, I don’t think you have to suffer in order to create. I guess you do go down into the subconscious where wonderfully creative stuff resides, but so does a lot of stuff of nightmares.

Faroqui: What do you hope readers will come away with when they read one of your books? Do you send messages through your work, hoping to inspire perhaps?

Martin: I hope the reader will enjoy looking beneath the surface of life for various layers of meaning and have found moments of quiet reflection. But, I also hope the reader has also been fabulously entertained with a great story and fascinating characters. In the weeks and months to come, he or she will think back to something in *The Drawing Lesson* or *The Fate of Pryde* and say— *This person I’ve just met in real life reminds me of a character in that novel like Rinaldo or Daphne or Jonathan Pryde.*