



August 24, 2024

Greetings Fellow Reader!



Drum roll please. You should already have received your Welcome Letter, and this is the first of the many monthly newsletters to come.

Remember that I'm eager to hear your thoughts, so don't hesitate to hit reply or click the buttons below to write me back.

Life Stuff

The French and I share a particular passion. We both love the design stage of a project. I can say this after living here and working for a French bank in my long-ago corporate banking days. Nothing excites the French mind like a challenging puzzle. In some contexts, too much simplicity can even be a bit suspect. We Americans, on the other hand, often embrace the "just do it" attitude, which can propel us get off the blocks and get us going in pursuit of our goals. In some writer circles, the difference in approach is called "plotter" vs "panster." Spoiler alert - I'm a plotter.

But when does planning become a cover for procrastination?

Or bold action a cover for lack of preparation?

In launching this newsletter, I've been torn between my French spirit urging me to make sure everything is completely figured out before taking the first step and my American spirit urging me to just launch the damn thing and improve it as I go.

At the moment, I'm feeling that their combined influences got me to this place of feeling excited about what I'm offering you, while at peace with the need for changes that will inevitably arise. Like so often in life, the path forward was found somewhere in the balance.

Click here to tell me about when you've been lured from a goal by the siren's call of perfectionism. Or when you've plunged ahead, then wished you'd planned a little more.



Pretty Pix

A bit of library porn taken at the French National Assembly (the lower house of their Parliament)' reading room.



Historical Yummy

I'm on my third stint living in Paris, where I can indulge my passion for fresh baguettes, great cheese and 17th century French history. I love visiting the very same places where figures of that era lived, loved and died. I can touch the same walls, look out the same windows and walk the same gardens. It's a veritable paradise for a research junkie like me.



One of the most fascinating women of the French 1600's was known as "**Marie de Rohan**" (left). I'm so captivated by her that she's become the heroine of my current novel, which is set in the court King Louis XIII.

Beautiful, fun-loving and irreverent, Marie began her Court career as a *fille d'honneur* to young Queen Anne.

The daughter of a high-ranking Duke, Marie was just one year older than the teenage queen. The twelve *filles d'honneur* were unmarried girls from high society whose job was to keep the Queen company and be entertaining—Marie's top skill. At sixteen, she married King Louis XIII's favorite and the two quickly became the power couple behind the throne.

Around her eighteenth birthday, the position of Superintendent of the Queen's Household was created just for Marie, which put her in charge of Queen Anne's entire household of around 500 attendants, squires, pages, cooks, seamstresses, dancers, musicians and guards. Plus she was paid ten times what the next highest salaried staffer made. Girl boss!

But then her husband fell out of favor and died. Shortly after, Marie ran afoul of the King by running through the Louvre palace with the pregnant Queen, who tripped and lost the baby she was carrying. At twenty-one, Marie was a widow with two children and banished from Court.

But rather than disappearing into a convent as most women in her position might have done, Marie dusted herself off and married the Duke de Cheveruse (right), a libertine from one of France's highest ranking families. The Duke's status ushered Marie back to Court and from then on, she lived in essentially an open marriage while engaged in numerous political intrigues, her life spared by Chevreuse's position.



Though banished from France twice, Marie always managed to worm her way back into the country and Court. Behind the scenes, she was one of the most politically influential women of her era, a continuous thorn in the side of both Prime Minister Richelieu and Mazarin during the reigns of King Louis XIII and XIV. Her conspiracies sometimes cost her lovers their kingdoms or their heads, but she

always landed on her feet, attracted a new lover and began plotting again. A consummate survivor, she died at the age of seventy-nine in peace and obscurity.

Marie de Rohan was a force of nature and I can't wait to finish my first novel about her and share it with you.

Fantasy Treat

Fairies are one of the fantasy elements in my Twin Birch House stories, including your free story, SILVER MOONLIGHT.

I grew up imagining fairies like Tinkerbell—very small, winged creatures with wands to dispense magic. When I got older and started reading fantasy and fantasy romance, I encountered Fae and Fae societies inspired by Celtic legends, usually depicting them as magical, alluring and often untrustworthy human-like creatures... not to mention hotties. Fairies have appeared in stories and literature for centuries, described in various ways by early Christians, Persians and Europeans. They have been seen as demoted angels, a race that preceded humans and as any sort of magical creature. Fairies were also big in the Edwardian era, and as I've mentioned, the period's literature influenced me at an early age. This emotional connection and the wide range of perspectives on what exactly a fairy is are part of their appeal to me creatively.

The word “fairy” and “fae” in French and English derive from the Latin “fata” and “fatum,” meaning “The Fates.” So, in my version, they are the children of Nyx, the daughter of Chaos, personification of Night, and mother of the Fates. Like in many fables, my fairies are able to shapeshift, their preferred form being butterflies. In the Twin Birch House world, fairies are beautiful in their human-like form, and have wings, not unlike Luis Ricardo Falero's "Lily Fairy" from 1888 (right). Look forward to introducing you to Lachima and Morniero!



Exclusive Freebie

If you’ve read SILVER MOONLIGHT, you might enjoy seeing the hand-drawn map I made for myself of the Twin Birch House world when I first started writing the series. Look carefully and you can see the screenplay text on the backside of the recycled paper.

Can you find the path Irene took to get to Roy’s house?

[Take me to my free map!](#)

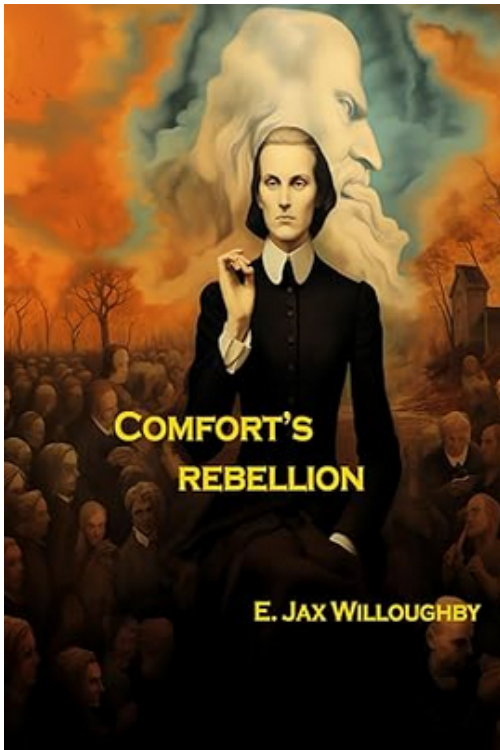
I’m considering having the map redone by an artist to include in the first novel and any others in the series.

What do you think?

[Click here to tell me on a scale of 1 - 10 how much you enjoy illustrated maps in books.](#)

The Nightstand

I just finished reading **E. Jax Willoughby's "Comfort's Rebellion,"** inspired by the fascinating life of the Public Universal Friend, born in Rhode Island as a Quaker named Jemima Wilkinson in 1752.



After a debilitating fever at the age of twenty-four, the Friend claimed that Jemima died of her illness and her body was now inhabited by the Friend, a genderless entity tasked by two angelic messengers from God to spread God's word. Despite serious opposition, the Friend went on to lead the Society of Universal Friends, which formed a small town in the western region of New York State.

Dressing in many ways like a man and demanding to be addressed with genderless pronouns, the Public Universal Friend is seen by many as a pioneer of both women's rights and transgender rights. Willoughby's intimate portrayal of a person struggling to find their way in a world that has no place for them is compelling and thought provoking. The sensory and well-researched detail brought me deep into the world of the "Great Awakening" in American religious history. I particularly appreciate "Comfort's Rebellion" for bringing yet another important, yet largely forgotten, person out of the shadows of history to help us understand our past in a more complete way.

[Click here to tell me what you're reading.](#)

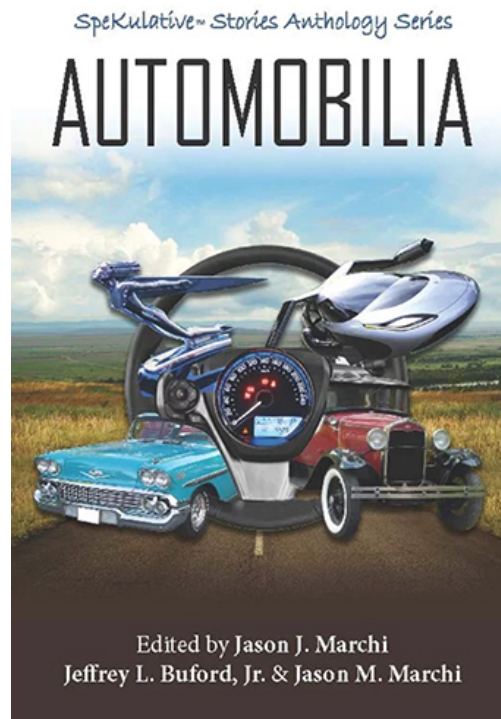


Saylie on my desk, pretending she's a cat helping me work.

Behind the Curtain

My latest publishing news is that my short story **“Built to Last”** appears in the speculative fiction anthology **“Automobilia,”** edited by **Jason J. Marchi and Jeffrey L. Buford, Jr.**, which was released earlier this year.

After being neglected in a dank garage for months, a beat-up old car secretly helps its new driver push through their shared grief.



"Built to Last" isn't historical fiction, but it's getting some nice notice by reviewers, which is gratifying and inspiring for me as an author.

I'm also working with my extraordinary editor, Raquel Brown, on copy edits for the first novel to be released, which is set in the Twin Birch House world. Can't wait to share it with you when the time comes!

Talk with you again next month!

Warmest Wishes & Happy Reading,

Kady

P.S. Full disclosure - some links in my newsletter may be affiliate links, which means if you purchase something using the link, your price won't change, but I might get a small commission. Sweet, huh?

Kady Ambrose

Writing in Paris, France



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