

HISTORICAL FICTION WORKSHEET

LILY OF THE NILE:
A NOVEL OF
CLEOPATRA'S
DAUGHTER

In Bookstores Near You!

by Stephanie Dray

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Tips on Writing Historical Fiction

Some advice from
an award-winning
and critically
acclaimed author of
historical fiction and
fantasy

PASSION IS EVERYTHING

IF YOU'RE BORED YOUR READER WILL BE BORED

It's often helpful to make a list of everything that you find exciting or inspiring about your time period or the person that you're going to be writing about. Keeping in mind what excites you will help you stay focused on the fun!

HISTORICAL FICTION IS LIKE A TIME MACHINE

Use words to help other people imagine what it would be like to go back in time. Weaving little historical details into your story can teach people new things without them even knowing that they're learning anything. Sneaky!

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?

Sometimes historical fiction tells the whole life story of a famous person. Sometimes it's just a mystery or a thriller or some other kind of story that happens to be set in the past. You have to decide what the theme of your story is and then pick out details from your historical story that support that theme.



Do you love old dolls?



Do you find ancient artifacts to be mysterious?



Do you love machines?

If you're excited by something, chances are that readers will be excited by it too.

Here are some questions to get you thinking!

NAME YOUR FAVORITE HISTORICAL ERAS

I love ancient Egypt and Rome, but you can pick any time in history. Maybe you love cowboys and the Wild West. Maybe those first airplane pilots like the Red Baron in World War I interest you most. Whatever time period excites you, list it here!

WHAT EXCITES YOU ABOUT YOUR ERA?

Are the clothes beautiful? Were the politics weird? Is the setting dangerous? Is the food exotic? Or have you found a person in history that you think is especially cool?

WHAT DO YOU WISH YOU KNEW MORE ABOUT?

Do know what they ate in your favorite historical time period? What kind of toys kids had? Whether people took baths once a day or once a year? If you're curious, your readers will be too!

HOW CAN YOU RESEARCH YOUR STORY?

A great deal of research happens in books and online. But where else can it happen?

USE THE SENSES OF YOUR ERA

Chances are, you already know more about your time period than you give yourself credit for. If you are writing about Arabia, you can probably close your eyes and imagine camels in the sand. If you're writing about the Wild West, you already know about cowboys. Take inventory of what you already know by listing a sight, sound, smell and taste from your time period:

WHO WAS FAMOUS DURING YOUR ERA?

Even if you're not writing about the life story of anyone famous, your readers will be trying to think of a person as a reference point. You can name drop in your stories. Who is a famous person from your time period?



Writing about history can be an adventure!

You never know where history is going to lead you. Studying the life of Cleopatra Selene helped me to learn about interesting characters like the first Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar and his doomed daughter, Julia.