

# BRINGING HISTORY TO LIFE

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WITH MICHELLE RENE



# WHO AM I AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

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- I've been writing for about fifteen years.
- My main genre focus is historical fiction.
- I've won a number of indie awards for my historical books:
  1. I Once Knew Vincent
  2. Hour Glass
  3. The Dodo Knight
  4. Maud's Circus (to be published)

# HISTORICAL FICTION

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- Historical fiction is not nonfiction It weaves fiction in with history. Not a biography.
- There are different kinds of historical fiction.
  1. General historical fiction – literary, women's fiction, commercial.
  2. Genre historical fiction – historical romance, westerns, mystery.
  3. Speculative historical fiction – historical fantasy, paranormal, alternate history
  4. You can be strict or play fast and loose with history.

# SETTING

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- Go to the place you are writing about.
- Check almanacs, records, modern maps, and weather.
- Read books about your setting and time period. Both nonfiction and fiction.
- Watch films, TV, and documentaries.





# DO NOT INJECT MODERN MORALS INTO HISTORY

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- To truly understand history, you cannot judge it by today's moral standards.
  - 1. Even some of our best humanitarian pioneers wouldn't hold up to modern morals.
- Do not sanitize. Leave your biases and preconceived notions at the door.
- In order to write history accurately, put yourself in that time period's mindset – no matter how distasteful.
  - 1. African Americans were considered property.
  - 2. Women were married off after their first menstrual cycle.



DO NOT JUDGE HISTORICAL CULTURE BY TODAY'S STANDARDS

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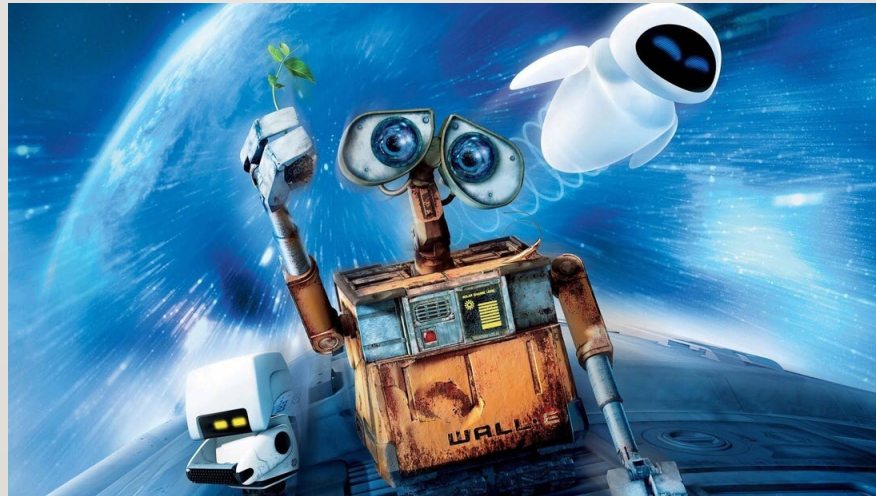


# WHAT MAKES A STORY RESONATE NO MATTER THE TIME PERIOD? EMOTION.

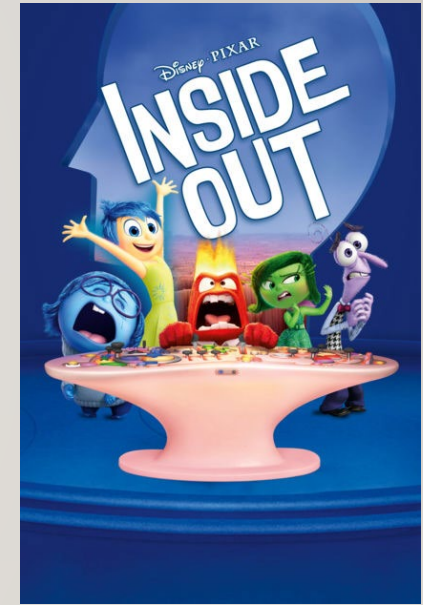
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WHAT IF TOYS  
HAD FEELINGS?



WHAT IF ROBOTS HAD FEELINGS?



WHAT IF FEELINGS  
HAD FEELINGS?



# CHARACTERS

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*Charles L. Dodge*

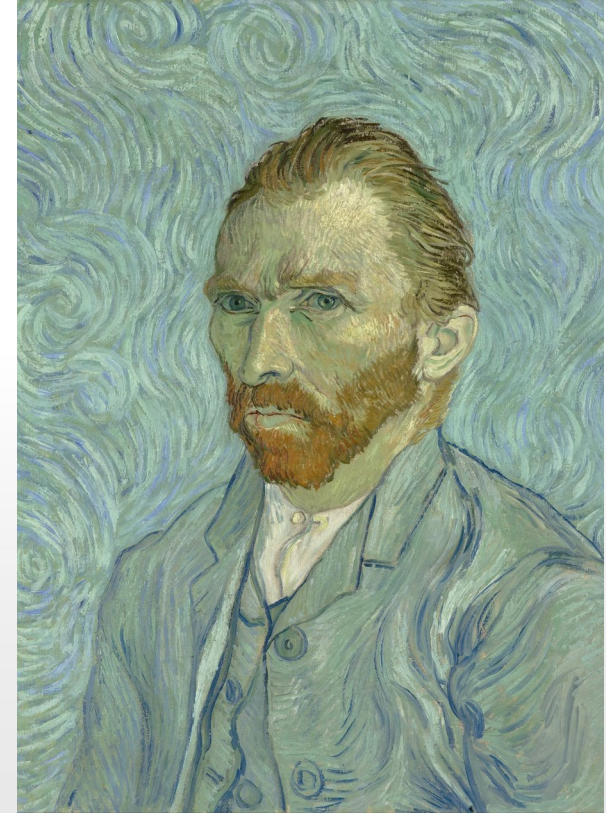


# VINCENT VAN GOGH

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(30 March 1853 – 29 July 1890) was a Dutch Post-Impressionist painter who is among the most famous and influential figures in the history of Western art.

{He liked sunflowers and once cut off his ear.}



# VINCENT VAN GOGH

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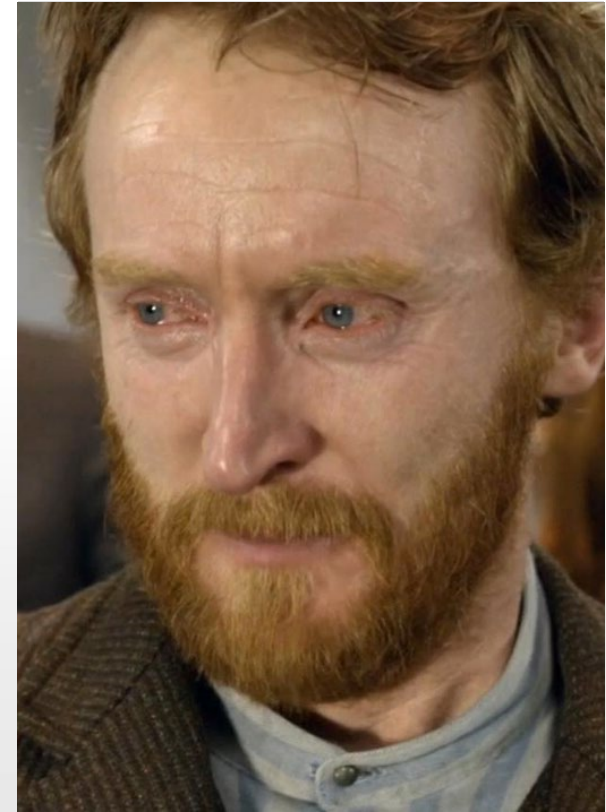
He was giving. He was selfish.

He loved. He wanted to be loved.

He strived for greatness. He often failed.

He laughed. He despaired.

He was human.





# RELATIONSHIPS

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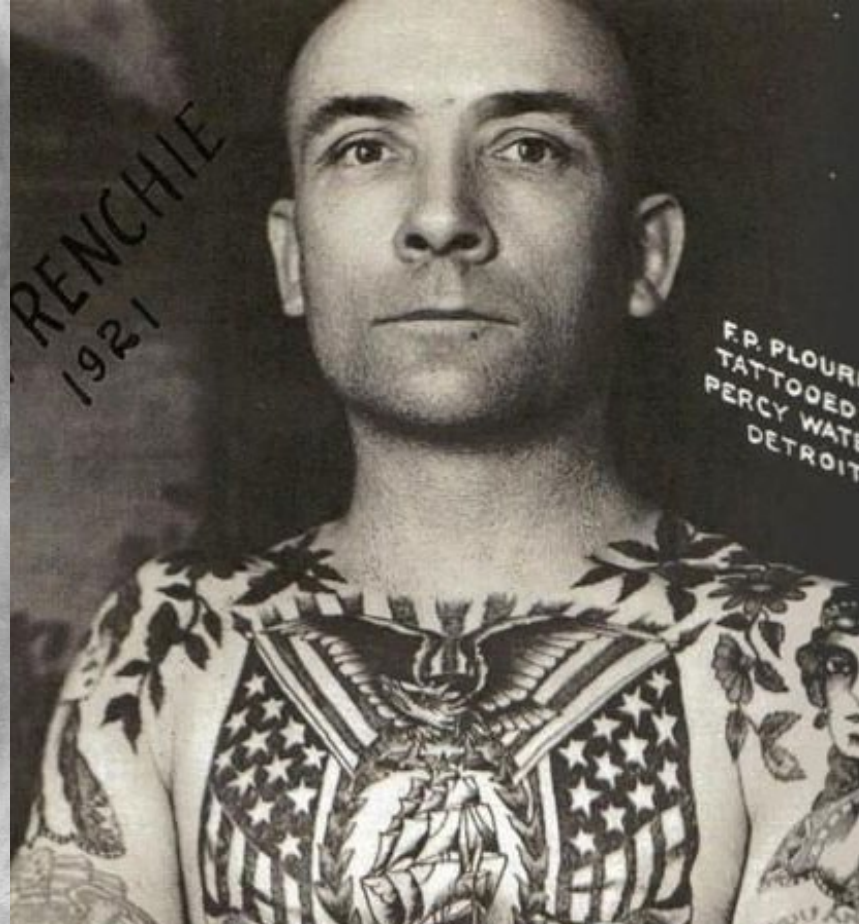
- *“Well, gentlemen, I’ll tell you – you who set great store by manners and culture, and rightly so, provided it’s the real thing – what is more cultured, more sensitive, more manly: to forsake a woman or to take on a forsaken one?”*
- - Vincent Van Gogh



# THEMES

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- Like relationships, larger themes can bring a reader closer to the character they are reading about.
- A human touchstone in someone's life that represents something larger than themselves.
- Often helpful when very little is known about that person.
- Even the most obscure person can be relatable if you find common ground.
- In the end, that is the task – to make someone long dead relatable to a reader today.



# TATTOOS – AN INSIGHT INTO THE HUMANITY

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# IMMERSING READERS THROUGH LANGUAGE

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- Language can be the easiest way to bring a character and time period to life.
- Written vs Oral language. Class difference in dialogue.
- Contractions (don't, won't, can't) and articles (a, an, the).
  - Contractions are common except in... Non-native speakers, written correspondence, and more proper language of the 17<sup>th</sup>-19 centuries.
- Some words and phrases are more modern and don't apply to older time periods.
  - Allergy and Autism
- Slang changes the meaning of common words.
  - "Bless your heart" and "That dog don't hunt."



# DIALOGUE AND SLANG

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- *“A mailman is bringing a letter from my girlfriend.”*
- *“A messenger brings forth to me correspondence from my beloved.”*
- *“That fella’s bringin’ me a letter from my gal.”*
- *“Got ur text. Who dis? 🙄”*



# OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE

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- Martha Jane Canary, better known as Calamity Jane, drank like a cowboy and swore like one too.
- The idea of bad language in a western may offend older readers who grew up with John Wayne movies, and that's okay.
- Old, derogatory slang may offend today's readers, and that's okay. (The old west was racist and sexist)