



# Book Notions

## Newsletters

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### Q&A With Fiona Davis

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#### Q&A With Fiona Davis

This morning I got a response from New York Times Bestselling author Fiona Davis agreeing to do this Q&A with me. Fiona Davis is the author of “The Chelsea Girls,” “The Doll House,” “A Wild Rose,” which is an Amazon Original Stories, “The Address,” “The Masterpiece,” “The Lions of Fifth Avenue,” and her recent novel “The Magnolia Palace”.

**Q:** So Fiona at what point in your life did you realize you wanted to be a writer?

**A:** I didn’t even consider the idea of writing fiction until I was in my mid-forties. I’d been a journalist for some time before then, but it wasn’t until I stumbled upon the Barbizon Hotel for Women in New York City – now a luxury condo – and began researching its history did I think I would try my hand at writing a novel. It was a book that I desperately wanted to read, which made me think it might make a fun project to play around with.

Q: If you had to choose, out of all the books you wrote so far, which one was your favorite to write?

A: It's hard to choose a favorite. In terms of research, I was blown away by everything I learned about the McCarthy era that eventually went into *The Chelsea Girls*. The way innocent people were ruined, and seeing how politics divided the country, felt very resonant in terms of what's going on today. In terms of location, it was a treat to learn all about the Dakota, which isn't open to the public, and gave me an opportunity to get inside and explore.

Q: What is your advice to anyone wanting to be a writer, especially those who want to write historical fiction like you do?

A: Find a story that really sticks with you, as you'll be playing around with it for a few years, at least. If you love your characters and the time period you're setting it in, it makes it a lot easier to get through the ninth or tenth draft of the manuscript, when everything feels old and stale and you're about to toss the whole thing out the window. That's just a natural stage of the writing process, yet if you stick with you, you end up with a book.

Q: What advice do you give to anyone who suffers writer's block?

A: Having been a journalist, I quickly learned that if you don't make your deadline, you don't get paid. So that's an incentive to stay in the chair and stick with it. I apply that same maxim to writing fiction. If you can get something down, even if it's messy and confusing, you'll be able to eventually edit it into shape. I try to not judge the first draft or go back and edit it – I write straight through with the understanding that some days are easier than others.

Q: Are you writing a new novel now? If so, can you spoil it a little bit about it?

A: I'm in the editing stages of a book set at Radio City Music Hall in the 1950s. It'll be out next summer and I'm very excited to be able to share it with readers.

Q: Does Hollywood have the rights to any of your novels?

A: There's been some interest, so we'll see what happens. I love the way historical fiction being embraced by viewers, from *The Queen's Gambit* to *The Gilded Age*. It's clear there's an appetite out there for historical fiction featuring strong women characters. Fingers crossed!

Q: I remember seeing that your novel "The Lions of Fifth Avenue," was a Good Morning America Book Club Pick. What was it like having your novel being chosen for a GMA pick? What was it like meeting some of the people on GMA?

A: It was such a dream when I learned from my publishing team that it had been picked. I was really excited, but also nervous about being interviewed by Deborah Roberts for the show. It was during Covid, so the interview was conducted via Zoom, and she was incredibly generous and kind. They have such a wide reach, and I was very lucky to be able to get in front of a national audience of readers.

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