

RICHARD TYLER JORDAN

May newsletter

A Heartfelt Thank You!

My Dear Cozy Readers/Friends!

Thank you for helping **Murder and a Missing Manuscript** make such a spectacular entrance into the world last month! I've been overwhelmed—in the best possible way—by your kind reviews, thoughtful messages, and boundless cozy mystery enthusiasm. You've made all those hours/days/weeks/months of hair-pulling, plot untangling, and talking to myself in a British accent completely worth it!



I was in Italy celebrating the launch (as one does!) and happened to be in Rome when church bells began tolling with the news of Pope Francis's passing. A moment of profound global significance... and yes, remarkable timing on my part. Even Polly Pepper would have paused for reflection—before ordering another limoncello.

While I was in Italy, a cozy mystery book blogger reached out asking where I got the idea for **Murder and a Missing Manuscript**. The answer? A **ghost**. Seriously! I'm not saying she rearranged the furniture—but she definitely whispered the plot.

Meet My Muse.

The backstory:

A few years ago, I went through a passionate phase of collecting 18th- and 19th-century portrait art. I've always been drawn to those long-dead faces, frozen in oil paint, silently judging from across a room.



One afternoon, while poking around in a local antique shop, I stumbled upon a painting that stopped me in my tracks—exactly like that moment in *Somewhere in Time* (my all-time favorite three-tissue weeper romantic fantasy movie) when Christopher Reeve's character sees the portrait of Jane Seymour's Elise McKenna and the world around him vanishes.

It was a canvas in a gilt wooden frame. A woman. Demure in posture, but not submissive. The faintest curve of a smile at her lips, as if she'd just overheard a scandal—or remembered one. Pale hands rested delicately on a red velvet cushion. Her gown shimmered from candlelight. Billowing silk sleeves were adorned with delicate ribbons. Her expression was serene—but there was something in her gaze. A hint of sorrow? A long-buried secret? Or maybe she'd just endured a ghastly dinner with the odious Duke of Droitwich and his flatulent dog, Loki. Ha! (If you've read my books, you know who I'm talking about!)

I was besotted. So I paid an extortionate price and took her home. She now graces a wall in my writing office.

One day last year, stuck for a new idea for my next Polly Pepper mystery—utterly uninspired and floundering—I looked up at the portrait. I'd named her Abigail. "Who are you?" I asked. "What was your life like?"

I swear I heard, "My silence was not my choice. My secrets are still mine."

Wow! From there, the book poured itself out of me (or into me)! And that's how **Murder and a Missing Manuscript** was born. Thank you, Abigail—my inspiration!

Do you have a muse? I'd love to hear about them! Are they a mysterious oil painting? A moody cat? A sexy barista whose sultry smile and espresso-dark eyes spark invitation and imagination? Inspiration wears many disguises and I'm wildly curious to know what yours looks like. Do tell!



Caption Contest: What's Abigail Thinking?

Now it's your turn! What do you think Abigail is trying to say in her portrait?

Submit your best caption, and my ever-faithful cleaning lady—and mystery devotee—Flora Scrubb will choose her favorite. The winner will receive a signed copy of **Murder and a Missing Manuscript**—plus eternal glory in the next newsletter. Deadline is May 31st!

Thanks again, dear readers, for staying in touch and saying such nice things about **Murder and a Missing Manuscript**. I'm putting the final touches on Polly's next adventure: **Murder in Mint Condition**. I'll keep you posted about that!

Now, as we move into summer, I'm wishing all of you a safe, happy, and thoroughly enjoyable season—filled with sunshine, shady reading spots, and stories that keep you turning pages long past bedtime.

Best of every moment,

Richard Tyler Jordan

P.S. Don't forget to follow me on all my socials!