



**RESEARCHING
HISTORY:
DAUNTING,
CHALLENGING
AND FUN**

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A simple question...

Why do we research?

- To create a world
- To put readers into that world
- Give our novel an air of authenticity
- Enrich our story with historical details

Create a world

Our framework

Give our readers a frame of
reference

This is the world in which our
characters live and breathe



**History doesn't
necessarily
mean
100s of years
ago...**



30 years ago...

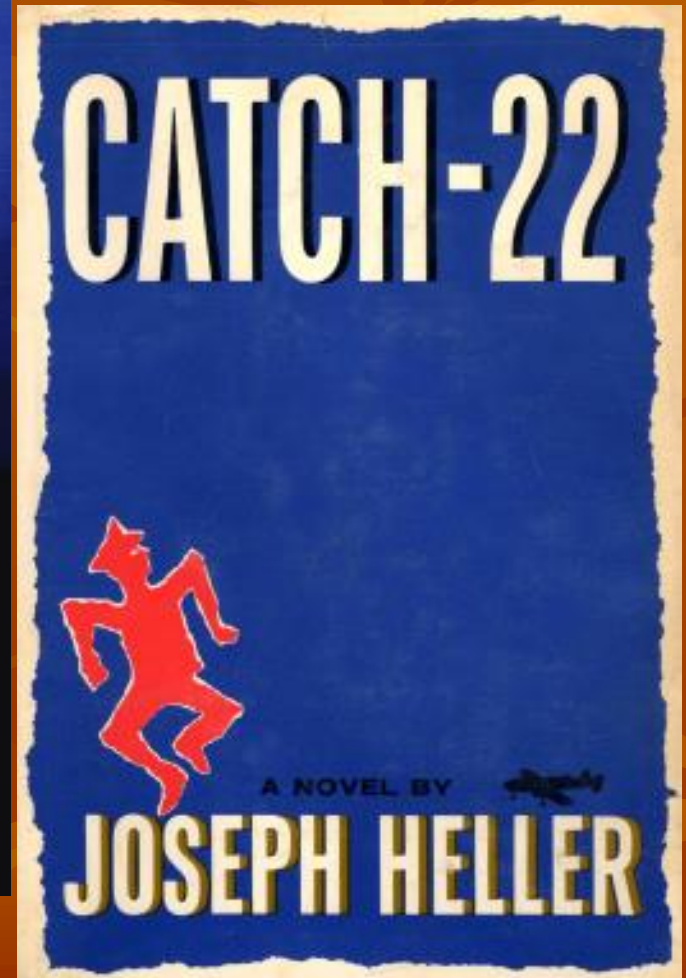
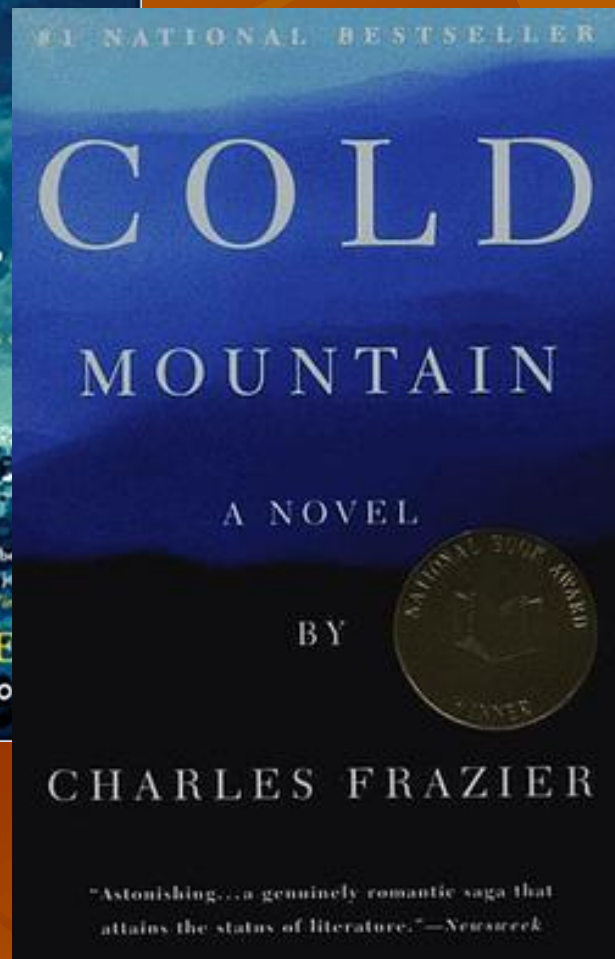
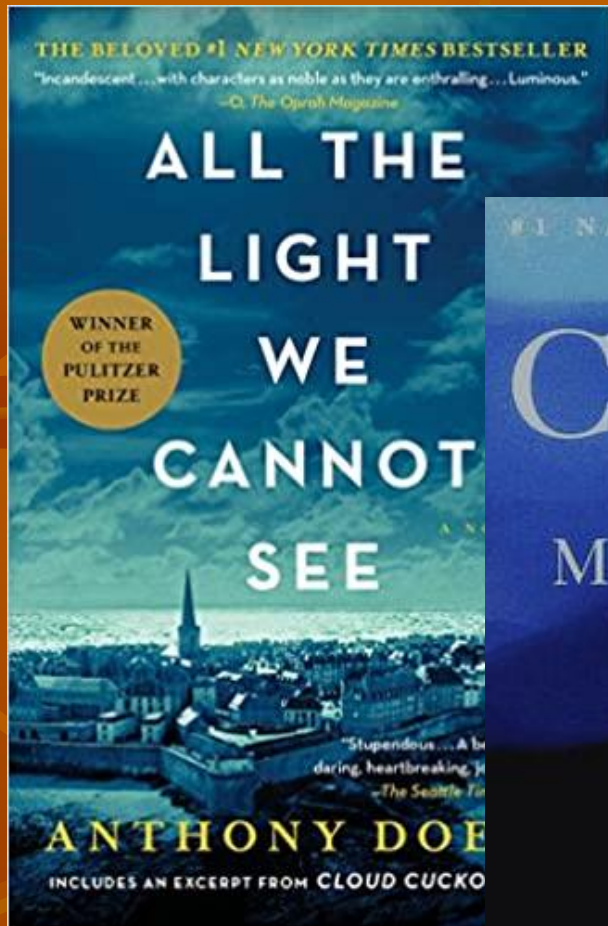
- Eastern Air Lines stops flying after 62 years
- Freddie Mercury dies of AIDS
- Gulf War
- Disney's animated "Beauty and The Beast" is released
- The beating of Rodney King was filmed
- Jeffrey Dahmer was arrested

The time we choose can add conflict



War is conflict





Times tough on humans



Put readers into your world

Welcome in readers with the details and make them feel at home. They'll come to know the place even though it was in the past.

They can experience what your character experiences through the historical details.

Give story air of authenticity

It's the details, baby.

With such information and details, we want to make the reader feel as if our fiction story really was a part of history.

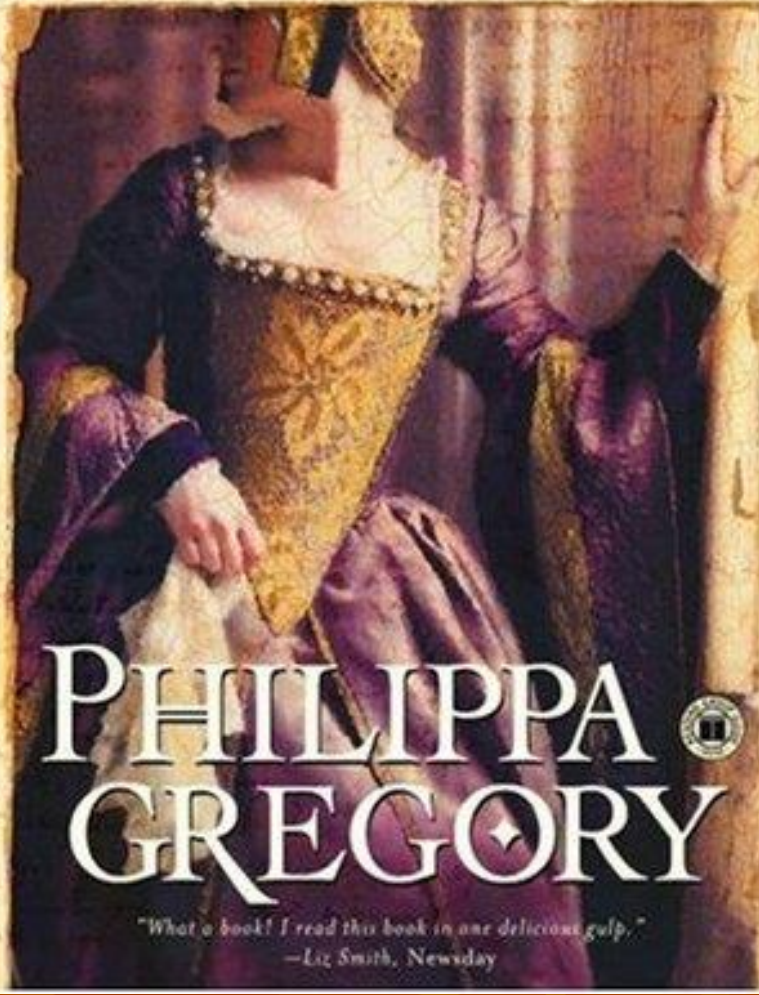


VIKINGS



THE OTHER
BOLEYN GIRL

A Novel



PHILIPPA
GREGORY

"What a book! I read this book in one delicious gulp."
—Liz Smith, Newsday

Which of your favorite fiction books felt as if they were really a part of history... (or that you wanted them to be.)

Historical details can enrich your story

What you find in your research may expand
and enrich your story.



So where the heck do we start?

Do you have to research the whole of Victorian England? Or the Middle Ages? The Roman Empire?

Probably not....



Starts with the outline

- Outline helps keep us on track so we can effectively use our research time...
- Our story will dictate what we need to research.
- Bonus....sometimes what we learn will open new doors for our story

**All this research will
give you a feel for the
time in which you set
your story.**

Stay true to history but ...

You do have dramatic license.

However...

Some readers may not buy it. That is you have too many modern sensibilities in your historical characters.

That said, be as accurate as you can.

Challenge

Where to look for information?

- Internet
- Wikipedia (the resources at the bottom)
- The Library!
- Museums
- Historical societies
- Interview people!

More Resources

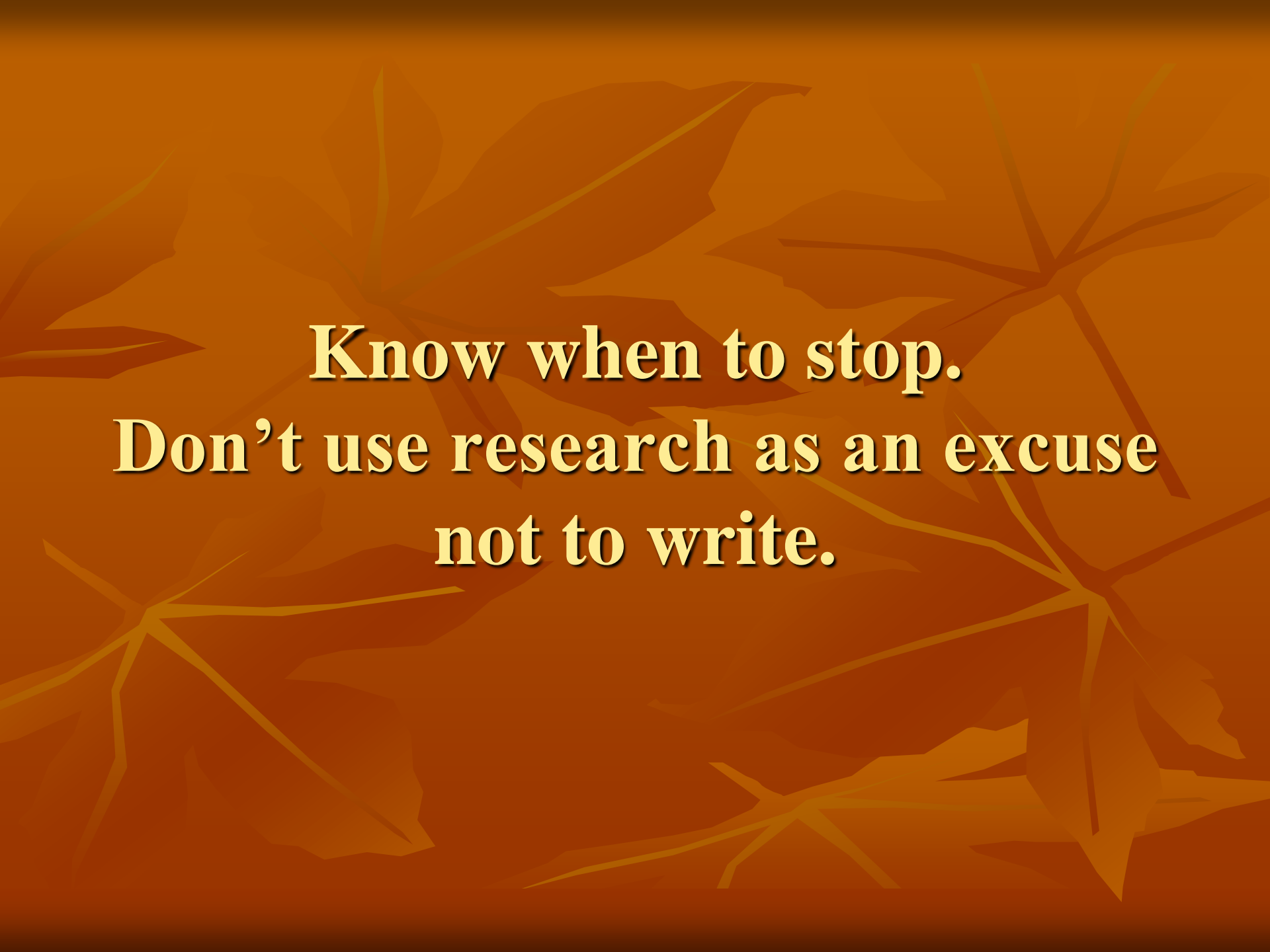
- BBC
- Library of Congress
- New York Public Library
- Used book and thrift stores
- Google Earth
- Documentaries (not movies)



**What are your favorite
research sites?**

How much research do you use in your writing?

- Enough to establish your world.
- Enough to establish your characters in that world.
- Not so much at the research slows down the story to the crawl of time.
- Enough to move your story forward.

The background of the slide features a pattern of stylized autumn leaves in various shades of orange and brown, set against a darker orange gradient background. The leaves are scattered across the frame, with some showing detailed vein patterns.

**Know when to stop.
Don't use research as an excuse
not to write.**

Remember the acknowledgments

Keep track of every source you use
for the acknowledgements

Also in case you need to go back
and look something up

Where's the fun?

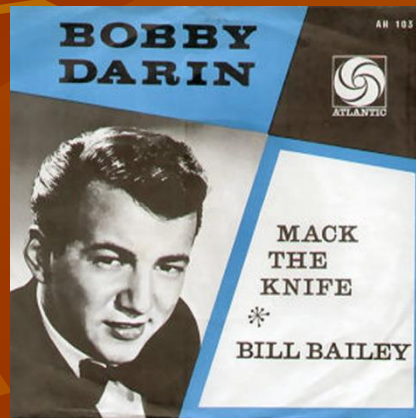
Learning new things!

What underwear Victorian women wore.

The hit songs of 1959

Favorite poison of

The Borgias.



The more you learn the more ideas for
more books.

How fun is that!

Gives perspective to our lives, in other
words,

Enriches us.

Research Sites

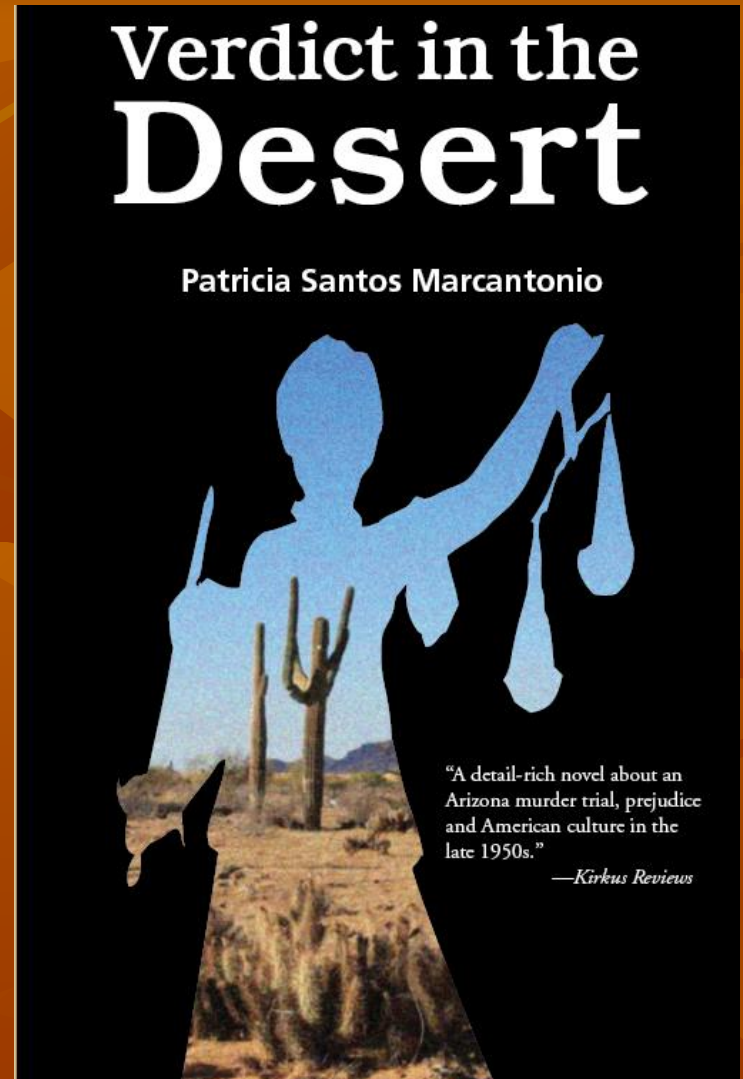
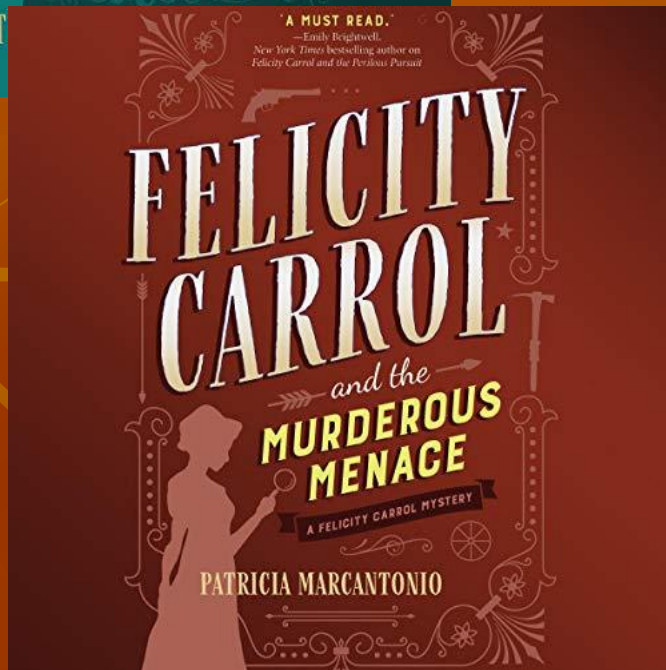
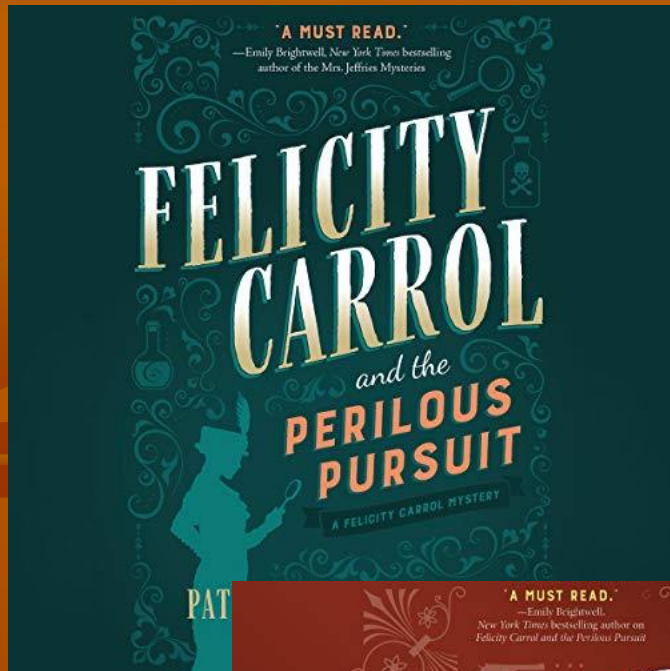
- ReferenceDesk.org
- nasa.gov/tla/ask-the-expert
- usa.gov/
- reference.com/
- Encyclopedia.com
- EncyclopediaBritannica.com
- Researchgate.net/search (science)

More sites

- Rfdesk.com
- guides.library.ucla.edu/
- perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/
(Greek history texts)
- <https://www.medievalists.net/>
(Medieval history)



And here comes the plug...



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