

# Madame Tussaud and Read Alikes



*Madame Tussaud* is a historical fiction book by Michelle Moran based on the real Marie

Tussaud, a sculptress and museum owner in Paris. Apprenticed by her uncle, Marie learns the art of wax sculpting amid the politics, court intrigue, and massacres leading up to and during the French Revolution. Marie needs the museum to be profitable, but is often torn by personal loyalties and her desire for success. It was really refreshing to read a historical book with a strong female character who does more than sit around in fancy dresses and flirt with famous men. With a little digging, I uncovered a few more books that fit this description - historical fiction with strong women who earn income, love to learn, and are passionate about their careers!

Like Marie Tussaud, the protagonist of *Creation of Eve* is based on a real person and also is an artist. Sofonisba Anguissola is a Renaissance painter who catches the eye of Michelangelo and is invited to train with him. After a scandal, she flees to the Spanish Court and becomes embroiled in court intrigue. The court details and love triangles make for juicy reading, but this book doesn't lose focus of a woman who is a career artist at heart.

Also based on a true story, *Mrs. Lincoln's Dress Maker* is about a former slave turned seamstress named Elizabeth Keckley. "Lizzie" is selected by Mary Todd Lincoln to not only make formal dresses, but to serve as her personal stylist. Eventually her reputation as one of the best dressmakers in Washington DC grows. Chiaverini brings well known characters to life and breathes life into some long forgotten details.

The medical establishment in Venice in the 1600s is reluctant to accept a strong female doctor. Defying the odds, Gabriella Mondidi has excelled in medicine under the tutelage of her father. After her father goes missing, Gabriella puts together clues of his disappearance while continuing to learn and grow her medical knowledge. *The Book of Madness and Cures* is full of historical details about science, madness and medicine but also contains unforgettable characters and a lush setting.

Part page turning mystery, part engrossing historical fiction *The Orphanmaster* is set in the mid-1600s in the Dutch colony of Manhattan. Blandine von Couvering is a trader by profession, but engages in some detective work when orphans begin disappearing. The suspects are colorful, and the details about the Dutch colony in the days prior to the American Revolution are fascinating.

Posted by sbowman on July 9, 2013

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