My friend Rebecca Morean is dropping by for a visit today, with word of a return of her tales of two fascinating women of the early Twentieth Century—one of whom is a relation of… well, see for yourself.

–LRK

*I was excited to sit down with Abbey Pen Baker, the great niece of Faye Martin Tullis for an interview. She very rarely grants interviews, but has such high respect for Laurie R. King, she immediately agreed. Faye Martin Tullis published books about Myrl Adler Norton all through the ‘20s, ‘30s and ‘40s. Her stories and monographs are all out of print now, but two decades ago Abbey found her great aunt’s famous roll top desk at the family farm in Vermont. Inside was a previously unpublished manuscript describing who Myrl’s real father was and the facts of the Myrl and Faye’s first case.* In the Dead of Winter *resulted in a flurry of questions and disbelief, but facts are facts. We met in a coffee shop in Yellow Springs, Ohio.*

**Morean**: What did you think when you found that manuscript? Did you have to get a family consensus to publish it?

**Baker**: I remember standing there holding that stack of old paper. The barn is right along the Connecticut River and it was a bright fall day. I started crying when I realized what it was. It was very emotional for all of us. Everyone in family knew Myrl had to be Sherlock Holmes’s daughter, but there was never any real hard proof. There was some talk of a DNA test, but really? Not happening.

**Morean**: A DNA test? With what?

**Baker**: There’s apparently some hair at 221b Baker street from a brush that was supposedly Sherlock’s and Aunt Faye kept a tooth of Myrl’s—Yeah, I know. Gross. But anyway, yes. I had the family vote on it and we searched for any of the Norton family to weigh in too, but couldn’t find anyone. We agreed to publish. And now I’m going through Faye’s monographs.

**Morean**: Why do you think these stories are compelling today?

**Baker**: It’s a sad truth that we are still dealing with the issues these two women grappled with. And I’m not just talking crime. I mean we still have murder and blackmail and intrigue. Good grief, look at the news. The first monograph, about complicity, focuses on the Mafia and this drug that was supposed to be non-addictive, “Heroin.” And yet people were becoming horribly addicted. Sound familiar? Look at the opioid epidemic today. And then there’s the whole women’s rights initiative, which is still going on. And race and class issues. It’s all there. Faye wrote about all of it.

**Morean**: While catching the bad guy.

**Baker**: Or not. I’ve read a lot of these now. And as I am editing, I am also pulling from Faye’s old journals and letters. Sometimes there is no perpetrator, or the perpetrator is really a victim of someone or something else.

**Morean**: Did you ever meet them? Myrl and Faye?

**Baker**: I have a vague memory of Aunt Faye. She’d come out to the farm and have dinner with us at Thanksgiving and over the holidays. But she died when I was nine. I hope to go the Norton house in Northampton this summer.

**Morean**: What would you say to aspiring writers or those trying to write biography?

**Baker**: Just do it. Do it because you have to. You have to tell these stories, and write like you don’t have a choice. And be a literary citizen: go to readings, buy books, support each other, go on retreats, respect your readers. Don’t put it off. There’s never a convenient time to carve out something for yourself. You don’t need money to write. Write a page a day and in a year you have a book.

**Morean**: Well. Thank you for your time. Just before you leave, can you talk about what you are working on now?

**Baker**: It’s another monograph about trust. That’s all I can say.

For more information about Abbey Pen Baker and her ongoing series of monographs, go [**here**](http://www.abbeypenbaker.com), or see her on FB @abbeypenbakerwrites . Or enjoy her free monograph, “The Other Side of Scandal”, [**here**](http://www.abbeypenbaker.com/blog/the-other-side-of-scandal).

For more information about Rebecca Morean visit [**her web site**](http://www.ramorean.com)**.**