



LitChat January 22, 2010

Topic of the Week: Fictionalizing Real People

Guest host: Melanie Benjamin, author of ALICE I HAVE BEEN

Guest Host: @MelanieBen (Melanie Benjamin)

LitChat Welcome to #litchat. Today we have @MelanieBen, author of ALICE I HAVE BEEN. Please join us now. - 1:00 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen Hi there! Thanks for having me! #LitChat -1:01 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @GLHancock Are you looking for someone in particular to review? #litchat -1:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi Wondering if my Alice tarot card set will improve my odds of winning ALICE I HAVE BEEN #litchat - 1:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols Really looking forward to today's chat. :) #litchat -1:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat Great to have you, @MelanieBen. I've been waiting for ALICE I HAVE BEEN since I first read the @PublishersLunch sale. #litchat -1:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Welcome! Have always loved the Alice in Wonderland stories, so very pleased to have you talk about your book. #litchat -1:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @amyknichols Am looking for someone who reviews children's books. #litchat -1:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat In addition to @MelanieBen spending time with us today, she is offering a signed copy of ALICE I HAVE BEEN to a participant. #litchat -1:07 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns Thanks! #LitChat -1:07 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat To qualify for the signed copy of ALICE I HAVE BEEN, your tweet must be on topic and tagged as #litchat - 1:08 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
dosankodebbie @LitChat Good morning from Japan. I look forward to hearing about ALICE I HAVE BEEN! #litchat - 1:08 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @MelanieBen Can't wait to hear how you blended fact and fiction in your novel about a real person. #litchat -1:08 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
corb21 @LitChat oooo how delicious! #litchat -1:08 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
Jaybezo RT @DavidRozansky: Any #authors wanting to be guests for #scifichat? #books #litchat #writing #scifi #fantasy -1:08 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat Let's get right into our chat today. If you have questions for @MelanieBen, be sure to use the hastag like this: #litchat -1:09 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
Lori_Randall So excited to hear more about ALICE I HAVE BEEN!! #litchat -1:09 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
Trishryan @LitChat So excited to read ALICE I HAVE BEEN by @melanieben. A different read for me. #litchat - 1:10 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Assuming that since not much truly known about Alice's life as adult, was easier to blend fact and fiction? #litchat -1:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat @MelanieBen Will you first tell us a bit about when/how your interest in Alice Liddell began? #litchat - 1:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns Definitely; it's 1 reason why I chose her as a subject. Wouldn't write about someone better documented. #litchat -1:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock #MelanieBen Did you have any problems from the family or estate of Alice? #litchat -1:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @LitChat Saw a photographic exhibit of Lewis Carroll pics; had no idea he'd taken them, or that there was a real Alice. #litchat -1:12 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @GLHancock No; she's been written about before, fictionalized & in movies (mostly her childhood yrs; I went beyond them) #litchat -1:12 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes calling @dijeratic #litchat is about @MelanieBen 's fictionalisation of Alice Liddell tonight! -1:13 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen If she'd been better documented, would you have felt limited by info, or nervous about getting her "wrong"? #litchat -1:14 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols Would have been most limited by not being able to imagine her voice, which was the most important thing to me. #litchat -1:14 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen I was a student at Christ Church. The "Alice Tree" 1 of 1st things we were shown from Deanery window. Have you had... #litchat -1:16 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen support marketing your book in Oxford? #litchat -1:16 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen What was that like for you, finding her voice? How did you find her? #litchat -1:17 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
NS_WDW_Mom @litchat @MelanieBen Is historical fiction your preferred genre? Or do you read a variety of genre? #litchat -1:17 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen Not really; the UK isn't fond of Americans writing about their icons! We haven't sold UK rights yet - we've sold them elsewhere. #litchat -1:17 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @NS_WDW_Mom Now it's my preferred genre to write; it took me a while to get there. I read a variety, though. #litchat -1:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @McKinnonCC Hello!! Do come and join us at #litchat -1:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Re voice. Liked Alice finding chewing gum pointless. Could see her as story Alice thinking "curiouser and curiouser." #litchat -1:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols From her photograph & the Alice books; she's so wise & unflappable. #litchat -1:19 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns Exactly - the Alice in the books was a huge inspiration. #litchat -1:19 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @McKinnonCC you can ask @MelanieBen all about writing the book #litchat -1:19 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @MelanieBen Was/is your publisher the least bit concerned about complaints from the subject's estate or family? #litchat -1:19 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
NS_WDW_Mom @litchat @MelanieBen Did you travel to UK for research? #litchat -1:20 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
McKinnonCC I just want to say this is a fabulous book #litchat -1:20 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @GLHancock Not to my knowledge; again, it's not as if Alice Liddell hasn't been fictionalized before, although not quite this way. #litchat -1:20 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @NS_WDW_Mom No, but I wanted to! But I was a poor author w/o a book contract when I wrote it! #litchat -1:21 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @McKinnonCC Thank you! #litchat -1:21 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
maggiedana @MelanieBen With success of ALICE, does your publisher anticipate surge of interest in your previous books? #litchat -1:21 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @maggiedana Not really; different publisher, for one. Totally different type of book. Ancient history! #litchat -1:22 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @MelanieBen The fact that someone has already been fictionalized does not preclude problems later on, presumably only similar ones. #litchat -1:22 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

corb21 @MelanieBen how are you using the new movie to leverage your book? #litchat -1:22 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar Did the story come to you in a rush, or did you have to squeeze it out? #litchat -1:23 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
NS_WDW_Mom @litchat @MelanieBen Can u share something you personally found really intriguing about the real Alice while researching/writing? #litchat -1:23 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @corb21 That's more up to my publicist; the USA Today article did tie them all together & we're hoping for more like that. #litchat -1:23 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen A rush! I was intrigued but ignored it for yrs; when I finally settled on it, I wrote it very quickly. It had been percolating! #litchat -1:24 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
McKinnonCC @MelanieBen not sure if someone has asked you this. But why Alice? Childhood favourite perhaps? #litchat -1:24 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @NS_WDW_Mom Her sons; the fact that all 3 had to fight in WWI. She was older than the typical war mother; it was just tragic. #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
corb21 @MelanieBen terrific! Do you plan to see the movie/ #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @McKinnonCC Actually, no. It was entirely seeing her photograph in that exhibit that started this. #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @corb21 Oh, yes! Can't wait! #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen did you start with a list of 'true' elements that you knew you wanted to hold on to re Alice? #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat Here's a site with many of Charles Dodson/Lewis Carroll's photographs: http://bit.ly/4A4Pbn #litchat -1:25 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen for me the name Liddell is always part of Liddell & Scott. Was Alice into words/etymologies? #litchat -1:26 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat You can see a few photos of Alice Liddell on @MelanieBen's website: http://bit.ly/5JYzU5 #litchat -1:26 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @sandiosandi Yes. I built the bk around those facts - her sons, the books, her unusual marriage, friendship w/ a prince. #litchat -1:26 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
Elisheba RT @AdviceToWriters: Translation Prizes for 2009: http://bit.ly/8NZPAG #translation #literature #litchat -1:27 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @agnieszkasshoes I don't think so - she was clever, but not so intrigued by wordplay as Dodgson/Carroll. #litchat -1:27 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @LitChat Thank you for the link to the pics. She looks feisty. :) #litchat -1:28 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen - So did you also have a few true elements about her that you knew you were going to ignore? #litchat -1:29 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols She looks quite modern, & an old soul - yet she had to hold that pose for at least 45 seconds! #litchat -1:29 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser Uh, I can't believe I almost lost #LitChat. I was waiting for it! O_o -1:29 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Prince named a child Alice; she named one Leopold. True? No wonderland of love for them allowed. #litchat -1:29 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @sandiosandi In hist.fic, you have to pick & choose the elements you need to tell the story as you want to. #litchat -1:29 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
maggiedana @agnieszkasshoes For me, the name Liddell conjures up Basil Liddell Hart, the historian. Wonder if any relative to Alice. #litchat -1:30 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @marisabirns Yes, very true - that was one thing that spoke to me, helped me form the story I wanted to tell. #litchat -1:30 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
donquig @MelanieBen Can you share with us what other pieces or works you have in process? #litchat -1:30 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @maggiedana I have no idea! #litchat -1:31 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen will you be holding a reading in Oxford at Alice's shop? http://www.aliceinwonderlandshop.co.uk/ #litchat -1:31 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @donquig I'm working on another historical fiction, set in the US this time, another amazing story you probably don't know. #litchat -1:31 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @donquig But hopefully, you'll want to know! That's all I can say! #litchat -1:31 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @agnieszkasshoes No plans for that as yet, unfortunately. #litchat -1:32 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @maggiedana I think you'd better break out the box now. We're batting 0 here. I need reinforcement! #litchat -1:32 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @maggiedana quite possibly - Liddell of Liddell & Scott's Greek Lexicon was her father, Dean Liddell #litchat -1:32 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
maggiedana @GLHancock Large glass of plonk heading your way. Duck ... #litchat -1:33 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar Was it difficult to let go of her character when you were done? Does she still talk to you? #litchat -1:33 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @agnieszkasshoes Yes, I mention the lexicon in the book, as well, of course, his career as Dean of Christ Church. #litchat -1:33 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen there's a huge Alice industry in Oxford - delighted to help if I can - shout me any time #litchat -1:34 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar No. One weird thing about me as an author - when I'm done with a book, I'm done. Eager to move on to the next one. #litchat -1:34 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @agnieszkasshoes Thanks! #litchat -1:34 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar Or ADD; not sure which! #litchat -1:35 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @maggieDana - Eric Liddell of Vangelis, er, I mean Chariots of Fire fame was in the family too of course #litchat -1:35 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @maggiedana @GLHancock Ahem, ladies. You don't know where plonk will land. #litchat -1:35 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @agnieszkasshoes You know, I have always wondered about that! Thanks for letting me know! #litchat -1:36 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
maggiedana @agnieszkasshoes Seems there are lots of Liddells 'hangin' about. Send 'em down the pub. Will meet you there. #litchat -1:36 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
dosankodebbie I was wondering about that @agnieszkasshoes: Eric Liddell of Chariots of Fire fame was in the family too of course #litchat -1:36 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
McKinnonCC @MelanieBen I teach ESL and recommended this to two students today. Alice's popularity is universal. #litchat -1:36 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @McKinnonCC Thanks! #litchat -1:37 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @McKinnonCC Do you think that universal popularity makes the Alice story a "high concept"? If so, what? #litchat -1:38 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi Any other famous(ish) Liddells out there? #litchat -1:38 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

NS_WDW_Mom @MelanieBen @LitChat Would you attempt a novelization of another well known person/character? #litchat -1:38 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
CarolyBurnsBass @MelanieBen Has there been much of a response yet from Lewis Carroll scholars? #litchat -1:39 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Hard thing about historical fiction is that while facts are needed, I want more of "story". Do you find this true? #litchat -1:39 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @GLHancock I think it does; that definition is kind of squishy but a book that can be sold on a larger appeal that's already known #litchat -1:39 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen Yes. It depends upon how much is already known/written, however. That was the appeal of Alice; her later life was largely ignored #litchat -1:40 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns I think story always comes first. Not every fact can be included; there's a reason this is "fiction." #litchat -1:41 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen Do you know how she felt about half her life being ignored? (haven't read your book *YET* and don't know much abt her) #litchat -1:41 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar When you editor fell in love with it, would you say rewrites were substantial, minimal or medium? #litchat -1:41 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @CarolyBurnsBass No, not yet. I'm a bit afraid of them, to tell the truth! But I honestly feel I was very respectful of Carroll. #litchat -1:42 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar BTW, love the word squishy. #litchat -1:42 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols Personally I think she didn't want publicity; not very Victorian, you know. It wasn't until she was nearly 80... #litchat -1:42 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen ...that she came out to the public. I think she was fine being ignored for most of her life. #litchat -1:43 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar Minimal...mainly the 3rd section, her older life away from Oxford with her sons. #litchat -1:43 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen You have me completely fascinated with her now. :) #litchat -1:43 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols Well, that's the idea! #litchat -1:44 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
GLHancock @MelanieBen Did you have an agent? If so, who? If not, how hard was it to sell to Dellacorte? #litchat -1:44 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser @MelanieBen Would you share ur opinion on the controversy of Alice's relationship w/ Carroll? How did you approach this on ur book ?#litchat -1:44 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen And at 80 Alice sold evidence of childhood that never belonged to her for protection of her sons' (home) which did. #litchat -1:45 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @GLHancock Yes, my agent has been w/ me for several yrs, several books, & has supported my change in direction. #litchat -1:45 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
dosankodebbie Me too! RT @amyknichols: @MelanieBen You have me completely fascinated with her now. :) #litchat -1:45 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @mariblaser Can't give too much away, of course; that's the central mystery of my book. I can say I wasn't interested in stereotype #litchat -1:45 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns Well, that's how I saw it, anyway! #litchat -1:46 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen - you mentioned that you weren't able to go to UK for research. Where did you find info instead? #litchat -1:47 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser @MelanieBen Makes sense. :) I'm glad to know you were concerned about stereotypes. Your book is definitely my reading list! :) #litchat -1:48 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @sandiosandi Online, old books, 1 biography of Alice, 1 of John Ruskin, obvious so much about Carroll out there. My imagination. #litchat -1:48 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat The tweet that follows this one in my Tweetchat feed wins today's signed copy of ALICE I HAVE BEEN, compliments of @MelanieBen. #litchat -1:49 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @mariblaser I angered some people because I didn't make Carroll a pedophile. But I didn't see him that way, nor Alice a victim #litchat -1:49 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mincontro Wld love to read it. #litchat -1:49 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @ litchat - oh, mememememe! #litchat -1:50 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
maggiedana History is in eye of beholder. #litchat -1:50 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
CarolyBurnsBass @MelanieBen: I thoroughly enjoyed your adoption of Victorian prose in developing the 1st person voice for ALICE I HAVE BEEN. #litchat -1:50 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols Hubby just said, "Kinda weird fictionalizing someone's biography". Your thoughts? Should I just tell him to hush? ;) #litchat -1:50 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Can't wait to read your book! #litchat -1:50 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @maggiedana I so agree! Even nonfiction has the author's personal feeling toward the subject inherent in it. #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
CarolyBurnsBass @MelanieBen: What did you do/study/immerse yourself in to develop Alice Liddell's voice? #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @CarolyBurnsBass Thanks - I've read a lot of British novels, Victorian era ones as well. I didn't know I was doing research! #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen @mariblaser - I always thought the relationship seemed more complex than pedophile/victim #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser @MelanieBen Since you're not writing a biography, you should feel free to insert more of your personal impression, no? #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols Well, that's what historical fiction is, isn't it? Taking a life and asking the "what ifs?" #litchat -1:51 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @CarolyBurnsBass That was it - reading a lot of Victorian fiction. #litchat -1:52 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
agnieszkasshoes @MelanieBen I had more Liddellology than Theology & Philosophy at Ch Ch! #litchat -1:52 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @mariblaser I definitely formed the story I wanted to tell, based on real parts of her life, & by filling in the blanks in between. #litchat -1:52 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat @MelanieBen's tweet followed my winning tweet and doesn't want to mail it to herself, so the next after this is winner. #litchat -1:52 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen I bet - I know there's a huge cottage industry there built around Alice. #litchat -1:53 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser @MelanieBen But did you have the opportunity having interviews to have other point of view on her life? Should b interesting if yes #litchat -1:53 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen That's what I told him! I even used the "what if"! :) #litchat -1:53 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
dosankodebbie Absolutely! RT @MelanieBen: Even nonfiction has the author's personal feeling toward the subject inherent in it. #litchat -1:53 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @mariblaser Not sure what you mean? I stuck to the driest of facts, avoided other people's conjectures as much as possible. #litchat -1:54 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

NS_WDW_Mom @melanieben @litchat Thanks for including bookclub reading guide! #litchat -1:54 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat One more time... next tweet (not counting @MelanieBen, @LitChat or @CarolyBurnsBass) is winner. #litchat -1:54 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar ME! #litchat -1:54 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser RT @dosankodebbie: Absolutely! RT @MelanieBen: Even nonfiction has the author's personal feeling toward the subject inherent in it #litchat -1:55 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @NS_WDW_Mom You're welcome! I love to chat w/bookclubs when possible - check out my book club page on my website. #litchat -1:55 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
marisabirns @MelanieBen Filling in the blanks is what makes story telling so pleasurable. #litchat -1:55 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @marisabirns It's the part of this that appeals to me; I love history, love research, love wondering the whys & what ifs. #litchat -1:55 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat YES! Congratulations! You are the winner of ALICE I HAVE BEEN! Would you please DM your mailing addy? RT @TwinkleChar: ME! #litchat -1:56 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar Do you use any special software to organize facts/research? #litchat -1:56 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser Seems like a good approach. Interviews can both clarify and cloud view of facts. RT @MelanieBen: I stuck to the driest of facts #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @LitChat Sigh. I can deliver it to her in person! She lives in my town! #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen - there's a kind of 'fly on the wall' element to historical fic - being able to write a scene that might've happened #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser Makes sense. I have little info on this. RT @sandiosandi: @MelanieBen I always thought the relationship seemed more complex #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar Nope, other than a basic timeline - dates of birth, marriage, death, etc. My head is my Rolodex. #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @TwinkleChar Congratulations! #litchat -1:57 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar Pick another winner, if made you sigh. :) RT @MelanieBen: @LitChat Sigh. I can deliver it to her in person! She lives in my town! #litchat -1:58 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @sandiosandi Imagination is as much a part of research for historical fiction as everything else. #litchat -1:58 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar No, no - I'm glad you won! Sigh was misinterpreted! #litchat -1:58 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols ☆ RT @MelanieBen Imagination is as much a part of research for historical fiction as everything else. #litchat -1:59 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser RT @MelanieBen: @maggiedana Even nonfiction has the author's personal feeling toward the subject inherent in it. #litchat -1:59 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @TwinkleChar - that's very generous of you! #litchat -1:59 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar @sandiosandi I have my moments... but thankfully, @MelanieBen insists. YAY! #litchat -2:00 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat @MelanieBen @TwinkleChar Perhaps you two can have a little #litchat and book hand-over with tea and crumpets. #litchat -2:00 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
dosankodebbie @MelanieBen If you were hoping to spend a fortune on postage, you can send me a copy too! he he #litchat -2:00 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @LitChat Or coffee & popcorn, right, Charlene? #litchat -2:01 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen At any point did you get frustrated with the project? #litchat -2:01 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen - I'm really looking forward to reading ALICE, thanks! (and, uh, what @dosankodebbie said) :) #litchat -2:02 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols No; the story was so real in my mind before writing it; Alice's voice so strong. However I just abandoned a project... #litchat -2:02 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat We're at the top of the hour. We'd love for @MelanieBen to stick around a bit longer, but we understand if she needs to skedaddle. #litchat -2:02 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar @MelanieBen Exactly! Thank you, Melanie. Seriously, quite excited to receive book, and equally excited to chat. #litchat -2:03 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen ..50,000 wds in because none of that was true; it was frustrating. I feel I'm working on the right story now. So that happens. #litchat -2:03 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi maybe tea and popcorn with truffle oil (best of both worlds) #litchat -2:03 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @sandiosandi As soon as we sell to the UK, I'll let you know! #litchat -2:03 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @LitChat Sure, I can hang around a bit if there are more questions. #litchat -2:03 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen Wow. That must have been hard after the rush of Alice! Glad you found the right story. Can't wait to hear what it is! #litchat -2:04 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar @MelanieBen That took courage, but must have also rendered a huge sigh of relief to let go of boondoggle. #litchat -2:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
LitChat If you have questions for @MelanieBen, go ahead and post;she's sticking with us a bit longer. #litchat -2:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser I want one too! heh RT @dosankodebbie: @MelanieBen If you were hoping to spend a fortune on postage, you can send me a copy too! #litchat -2:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar Well, my agent & editor, both, were supremely understanding & supportive - that helped! #litchat -2:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
sandiosandi @MelanieBen - actually, I'm in Seattle. Are you planning a book tour (and is Seattle on the map for you)? #litchat -2:05 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @amyknichols That was the thing - this one wasn't a rush, it was barely a dribble. An indication it just wasn't going to work. #litchat -2:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @sandiosandi Not sure yet; maybe a bit later in the spring. My appearance page will be updated when I know! #litchat -2:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
mariblaser @LitChat See, I was kidding too! :) #litchat -2:06 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
amyknichols @MelanieBen Good lesson! I wonder how many writers aren't sensitive to that, and spend years trying to make a dead-end story work. #litchat -2:09 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen Any other questions I can answer? I apologize if I missed anyone or seemed short or curt; it was hard to keep up there for a while! #litchat -2:09 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
TwinkleChar Curious about dropped story. Obviously had original rush of enthusiasm and lure. Character stop talking? No longer inspire? #litchat -2:09 PM Jan 22nd, 2010
MelanieBen @TwinkleChar I mistook enthusiasm for story for enthusiasm for protagonist; her voice never came to me as Alice's did.... #litchat -2:10 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen ..New WIP definitely has the "Alice" factor for me in terms of knowing & understanding protagonist & her voice. #litchat -2:10 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

amyknichols Do you have beta readers? Critiquers? Do you only work with your agent and editor? #litchat -2:10 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

TwinkleChar RT @MelanieBen: @TwinkleChar I mistook enthusiasm 4 story 4 enthusiasm for protagonist; her voice never came to me as Alices did... #litchat -2:10 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @amyknichols I have one critique partner who was instrumental in getting me to write ALICE I HAVE BEEN; I dedicated the bk to her.. #litchat -2:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen ..and of course, my agent is instrumental as well. As, naturally, is my editor now. #litchat -2:11 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

LitChat Before we close, I'd like to welcome a few new people in the chat today: @McKinnonCC @Elishiba @Lori_Randall. Hope you'll be back. #litchat -2:12 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

TwinkleChar Thank you, @MelanieBen and @litchat. VERY excited to win, too. Double gooder. Will get in touch for handover, @MelanieBen. #litchat -2:13 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen Thanks for having me, everyone! Feel free to DM or email if further questions occur! #litchat -2:13 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

amyknichols Thank you @LitChat and @MelanieBen This has been such an interesting chat. I can't wait to read this book! :) #litchat -2:14 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

MelanieBen @TwinkleChar OK! Looking forward to it! #litchat -2:14 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

McKinnonCC @LitChat Thank you! Such a nice thing to find (it was recommended) #litchat -2:14 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

mariblaser Thanks @LitChat for the wonderful chat (as usual :), and @MelanieBen for being so generous with us today. #litchat -2:15 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

LitChat Next week we celebrate 1 year of LitChat. We'll be having some past guest hosts pop in all week. <http://bit.ly/5IOhG2> #litchat -2:17 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

luciaorth RT @LitChat: Next week we celebrate 1 year of LitChat. We'll be having some past guest hosts pop in all week. <http://bit.ly/5IOhG2> #litchat -2:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

LitChat Let's give @MelanieBen a huges round of {{{APPLAUSE}}} for joining us today. Thank you Melanie. #litchat -2:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

mariblaser RT @LitChat: Next week we celebrate 1 year of LitChat. We'll be having some past guest hosts pop in all week. <http://bit.ly/5IOhG2> #litchat -2:18 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

mariblaser {{{APPLAUSE}}} RT @LitChat: Let's give @MelanieBen a huges round of {{{APPLAUSE}}} for joining us today. Thank you Melanie. #litchat -2:19 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

LitChat Chatscripts from this week's topic, FICTIONALIZING REAL PEOPLE, and today w/ @MelanieBen, will be on website this weekend. #litchat -2:20 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

scgryn Damn. Looks like I missed #litchat once again. That's what I get for letting "work" get in the way. -2:21 PM Jan 22nd, 2010

LitChat Thanks also to each of you who make #litchat such a great place to talk about books and writing for an hour three days a week. #litchat -2:22 PM Jan 22nd, 2010