

Trice Forgotten – Below Decks 1– Authenticity in Historical Fiction

Content Warnings

- Detailed discussions of systemic racism & colonialism
- Discussions of: food, capitalism, transphobia & queerphobia, slavery
- Mentions of: alcohol, ableism
- SFX: wind & sea, glass smashing

NEMO

Hello friends!

This is Nemo Martin, creator of Trice Forgotten.

I wanted to come in and thank you for checking out our swashbuckling adventure!

There are a lot of people on deck at Rusty Quill helping to make this podcast possible, and the best way you can support us and our show is by spreading the word!

Tell your friends and pirate nemeses, share us on social media with the hashtag #triceforgotten, rate and review us on your podcatcher of choice, maybe even play it on repeat for your aquarium buddies!

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We are still a small company and we want to keep bringing more and more work to writers and performers in future seasons, but we can only do that if people listen and spread the word!

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Now please, enjoy the episode.

[Show Theme - Intro]

SIVA

Rusty Quill Presents Below Decks: a Trice Forgotten Deep Dive.

Episode One. Authenticity in Historical Fiction.

[Theme Fades]

[Inside a ship. Muffled, the lapping of waves, the creaking of wood in the wind, the squawk of seabirds.]

RAFAELLA

Hello and welcome to the first episode of Below Deck, where we dive into some of the research, questions, stories and generally interesting tangential things that went into making Trice Forgotten. I am Rafaella, my pronouns are she/her and they/them and I am one of the writers on Trice Forgotten and also, excitingly, the director for the series. For our first episode I am absolutely thrilled to be joined by Nemo and April. Nemo and April, would you introduce

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yourselves with your pronouns and tell us a little bit about your relationship to the show?

NEMO

Sure, I'm Nemo Martin, my pronouns are they/them and I am the creator of Trice Forgotten and the lead writer. Yay!

RAFAELLA

Yeah, so relationship to the show is kind of an understatement for you, but yeah, yeah, yeah.

NEMO

Yeah, I'm the captain, really, and this is my ship and I'm very excited.

APRIL

Captain Nemo!

NEMO

Yeah, I'm throwing the champagne bottle directly at the hull and wishing it – no, wait, but then I would be – oh God I've lost the whole metaphor, oh no!

[Champagne bottle smashing against hull]

APRIL

The metaphor, it's gotten away!

(Group laughter)

NEMO

I'm drowning! Oh God!

RAFAELLA

And April?

APRIL

Yeah, so I am April Sumner, I am the executive producer at Rusty Quill, so all of the shows we make I basically oversee and make sure that they happen and attach all the teams to it. It's been a delight working with both of you on this.

RAFAELLA

Lovely. So for our first episode today we thought we'd talk a bit about ideas around accuracy and authenticity and issues around those things that might arise in making – not just in historical fiction, but especially in historical fiction like this, which I think it's fair to say has a slightly alternate history vibe to it that is definitely not your regular pirate narrative. It's set in a non-western setting and with predominantly queer characters. So, what does authenticity and accuracy, what do those things actually mean when we make this kind of historical fiction? So, I wondered if, Nemo, to start with, you would tell us about what authenticity and accuracy kind of meant to you when you were conceiving this and maybe you could talk a little bit about pitching the show?

NEMO

It's really interesting how authenticity has changed for me during this whole process. So, a bit of Below Decks facts: when I was first pitching this show it was a lot more food based, food orientated and that's kind of lessened. I mean there's still quite a lot of food mentioned in the show as it is now but there was a lot more about it and so a lot of the reading that I was doing at the beginning was about colonisation's effect on food and global food and stuff like that. And one thing that really helped me when I was thinking about the show was this article that I read by Coral Lee. So, what was central to writing Trice Forgotten as a "authentic show" was squaring the thought that authenticity is a strange word to use when human culture has always been about exchanges and conversations and relationships and in this Coral Lee article, one quote that stood out to me was "the idea of authenticity suggests one institutional individual has the power to define what is authentic while others do not." My mantra in Trice Forgotten has always been read as much own voices as I can, read about the relationships that people have had throughout time, especially ones that aren't super written about or in a lot of media and to explore those relationships I guess and that became what authentic was to me.

RAFAELLA

So, in light of that then maybe this is a nice segue into talking about the research that went into this because the flipside of that is even though, exactly the saying, Nemo – authenticity is a funny word to talk about in the context of exchange, and that's something that we've found really, really applies to this universe that you've created. Nonetheless, there was a huge amount of research that you did, which was a privilege to look at the reams of research that you did for this.

NEMO

Yeah, to the point where my current Google document is about 150 pages of quotes and that's not – yeah, I've done quite a lot of reading. I don't even know where to start with it ...I guess there are like certain different groupings in reading and research that I've done for it. So, one of the big things is that I worked for seven years at the Natural History Museum and so through that I talked to a lot of people, a lot of the curators and the staff there about people that they had found in the margins of their own research and so I really did start with this idea of like there are people behind the white people and that was like really foundational like who are these people behind the white people, who were the "boys" who were out there doing the research, collecting these specimens, putting down knowledge that they had known for hundreds of years, like culturally had known for hundreds of years, but it only became scientific fact when written down by a white man.

RAFAELLA

Do you want to just explain the concept of the boys, the local boy?

NEMO

Sure.

RAFAELLA

Because that's as embodied by Siva in our show.

NEMO

I think the first person that I found who “was considered a boy to a naturalist” is a person called Ali Wallace and he was a local child when a naturalist called Alfred Russel Wallace – and he met this boy called Ali and gave him his surname, Wallace – and so this person’s job, Ali’s job, was to basically go and find specimens, birds, fish, whatever, plants and bring them to Alfred and Alfred would then write down what they were and you know do comparisons and stuff like that. And that’s just one person that we have named and I was so interested in this concept of a “boy” because I’m sure that Ali was, I mean, eventually became a man, right? But it’s such a colonial practice to call colonised men as “boy” as a way of holding power over them and to ensure that like any knowledge that they have is lesser.

APRIL

Sort of infantises them a little bit?

NEMO

Yeah, exactly, and with Siva that was always a thing, like one of the big things with Siva’s arc is his arc as a “boy,” like how he transforms when he understands what it means to be termed like that. And it’s quite funny in my head like, you know, I’m quite in fandom and there’s like the concept of like this is my little, sweet little blorbo, my little meow meow, my boy, my child and it’s like really difficult because I’m like actually one of the fundamental things about his character is that I don’t want him to be a boy by the end of this, like I don’t want people to consider him a boy.

APRIL

It's about growing right?

NEMO

Exactly, yeah, but at the same time he is, he does need to grow on his own side as well.

(Group laughter)

APRIL

He has his own growing to go in a different – and actually I think that brings up a really good point because particularly while we're talking about like authenticity and like what that means with these stories is like it is a fictional story that we're telling but at the same time like these peoples and identities and circumstances are very real things that happened. These are like real people, in concept anyway, who have dealt with these kinds of situations of being infantilised or like called a "boy" but that doesn't take away from the fact that like, you know, that character's truth so to speak is that they still have growing to do but that is separated from like necessarily their identity that's put upon them from like the colonist circumstance. And I read the first pitch that came in for Seas back when it was called Seven Seas and How to Eat Them which was a great title by the way – less applicable at the moment, but great – and I think one of the things that we've really been tackling since like concept to now, like getting into editing and releasing of the episodes, has been treating these characters with like real weight to their stories and real individualism to them. So like the sort of sense of authenticity comes through

the fact of like the loads of research that Nemo did at the initial like concept stage and like from the writing stage and throughout that, but also like all of the work that has gone in from the production stage through our historical consultants, our sensitivity consultants, to make sure that we have as many – and our writers, like Raf and Morgan also wrote episodes for us – to make sure that we had lots of people with lots of different experiences that can put their voices into these characters.

NEMO

Yeah, I don't think it's a spoiler to say that one of the big things, in this first season at least, is the characters are all struggling against the stereotype that has been put upon them and how they interact with a world where sometimes it is legitimate to have to act in a certain way in order to survive. The story and the characters have changed quite a lot since I initially pitched it, especially because of sensitivity and things that I'm not and have never considered. There are story arcs that have been fully taken out and walked away from or hedged for further research before we could put it in. I mean I've definitely expanded a lot of my knowledge, I know that I'm still not a hundred percent perfect, no one can be.

APRIL

Yeah, no one person is going to have all of the knowledge of the world, that's the neat thing is how all of these characters are like different, almost all of them are like mixed race in some way or have some type of mixed influence in their lives which I think that was really a good way for you to kind of build into that.

RAFAELLA

Picking up on that, both of those mentions of “no one person can hold all of the knowledge” and also April, as you said, the huge team of people who have come to work on this in terms of sensitivity consultants, in terms of our consultants on accent and on language – we have characters speaking different languages – and the way that the show has progressed, I wondered if either of you wanted to talk about that process? And through casting as well we’ve kind of revised who some of these characters are. Was that a surprise that that happened or was that always the plan to kind of go, “alright well we’ve got a starting point and actually we’re going to grow this through the people who are involved?”

NEMO

As a writer I’ve always been the kind of person who loves it when actors come in and go, “actually I think this is what my character would say,” and I’d be like, “hell yeah dude, like go for it.” This is again touching on authenticity and stuff like that. I have written quite a few things and I think that it’s really frustrating sometimes. I’ve been commissioned quite a few times to only talk about being a British mixed race white and Japanese person who is non-binary, who is neurodiverse and all of those kind of things, and writing things about yourself, I mean I don’t want to retraumatise myself every time by like having to only write about this one kind of thing! And it’s also kind of like, you know, I’ve not exhausted that but I have friends, I like to write about my friends, I have experiences, I have family, I have -

APRIL

Nemo, t-shirt, 2022: I have friends.

NEMO

I have friends.

(Group laughter)

NEMO

I swear to God I have friends, I swear, please believe me! But I have friends who have never seen themselves in media and I've seen people lament things that they wish they could have and I like to write those things about them and when an actor comes on and they are of a culture that I am not a part of and they say, "actually I really like it to be like this," then I'm like, "it speaks to you in a certain way then it should speak to you in a certain way and you can build on this." And I haven't been a part of the recordings but I've been like, the cast have been like telling me about their experiences and what they've been writing and I'm like that is fundamentally the spirit of the show is bringing all of these peoples excitement and changing our language and stuff like that so yeah.

RAFAELLA

Some of my favourite conversations we've had during recording, especially early on for obvious reasons have been about accent and a lot of our actors – well, not lots of them, but a fair chunk of our actors – are speaking languages as their characters that they don't speak themselves or are encountering

pronunciations for the first time and those have been very sort of joyful conversations where the actors have either gone, “ok I’m going to go away and talk to someone for whom this is a language that they speak, I’m going to listen to them” or they’ve come in and quite rightly gone, “ok well my character says this, but actually this is a second language for them” or “this is, you know, this is not originally where they come from” and being able to work through the idea of – horrible, horrible cliché – that this region of the Indian Ocean is a melting pot of lots of different people from lots of different places who have not just a primary cultural language but a secondary and a tertiary and a fourth one, I don’t know what the – quarter?

APRIL

I don’t think any of our characters are from like one singular place or you know haven’t left it to meld into other cultures or things like that.

RAFAELLA

Yeah, absolutely. You get lovely character notes where you get to hear a character speaking a language and it is what is supposed to be one of their, sort of, first languages and then another character speaking the same and you know that it’s not their first language so that’s going to affect, you know, do they know how to pronounce this actually “accurately,” to go back to that word.

NEMO

One of my favourite terms is, it’s a term I learned from my South East Asian friends called Rojak languages, and so Rojak is a salad in Indonesia and it’s like,

kind of like loads of – yeah, it’s like a mixed salad that you mix it together and so a Rojak language is like a language like maybe used in Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore which has like so many, again, “melting pot” languages where everything is like, yeah, tossed together into a beautiful tasty salad as it should. And like some people, you know, learning languages and trying to recall languages, trying to find your identity when you’re taken out of that, that’s all like – diaspora is obviously a big thing in this, yeah. It’s just really exciting that I got to write this, I say, as if I didn’t pitch it, but (laughs).

RAFAELLA

That does segue into something lovely that I’ve been thinking about in relation to these ideas of authenticity and accuracy which is, you know, a third word that sometimes comes into this conversation is universality, things that are universal, which is a really tricky and I think more problematic than not concept because very often it, everything gets collapsed into the identity and experience of being a white western man and those experiences are universal. Hamlet gets to be universal, you know, but there are certain things that, you know, I – just thinking about the diasporic experiences, my family is Jewish on one side and Italian on the other side and when I was writing the beginning of episode 2 when Siva is with his Nani, that is based on – Nani as I wrote her is based on my Italian nana and it’s a scene of cooking and it’s a scene of a grandmother figure being like, “oh God you’ve got no respect for me.”

(Group laughter)

RAFAELLA

There are some shapes of experience I think that carry across different diasporas and different, yeah, global experiences and it's been absolutely similar to what you were saying, April, to kind of get in touch with those and go, "oh God I really do access my two cultures through food."

APRIL

Yeah, yeah.

NEMO

Yeah, food is clearly so intrinsic.

RAFAELLA

So, I want to go back and pick up on something else earlier you said, Nemo, because we're definitely writing ideas of colonisation in this slightly alternate history universe but that is, you know, a hair's breath away from our own universe. So, I wondered if we could also talk a little more about queer characters within this universe – but also I know as well that we've definitely got neurodiverse characters in this show without necessarily the language of saying that they're neurodiverse sort of and to talk about that.

NEMO

Yeah, it's been really interesting because like I know that it's going to be fairly obvious that a lot of these characters are autistic and that is on purpose, and it's really hard when you don't have the like in universe language to talk about those things. Noor is like written down on their character sheet as being non-

binary but that's never said as a word on the show. And it's not that I think that these words didn't exist at the time or these concepts didn't exist at the time but it has just been a really interesting conversation about language and how we use it and asexuality is a big thing that I've been thinking about in these characters as well. Transness, I mean, Elizabeth in the first episode. Elizabeth doesn't use any pronouns and it's really hard when I as a human being and you know in a lot of my writing that is set in the contemporary period would have characters just say, "my pronouns are they/them" or "I don't use pronouns." In this I had Elizabeth be like, "call me doctor" and that is respected. And it was foundational when we were creating this bible I was like we're never going to have like a transphobic hate crime happen on air. Noor is gendered in a certain way in an episode, there's never going to be like, "oh you're a trans person and so I'm attacking you for that." Same way for race. I mean it's kind of hard because we're talking about colonisation and all of the characters in this, again, alternate time period have to consider what race they are because that's the world that they live in.

APRIL

I think that brings up a really good point too because one of the things that we've discussed a few times and I think part of why we wanted to add in these sort of Below Decks like context episodes is so that we can talk about these things that we don't necessarily want to talk explicitly about in the series, for multiple reasons, because I know that there's a lot of ideas that we've had for the characters and a lot of things that we want to explore particularly around like race and gender that if we were to actually explore it authentically within the series could end up retraumatising some people. So we have to sort of take some creative liberties in order to make sure that like we're being able to

make something that is entertaining and something that people can engage with while still not overlooking sort of the real aspects that would have existed around like trans identity and racial identities, particularly in exploring those within colonial context. And we, I think, have done a lot to try to make sure that we're addressing them without being harmful and I think that that's something that we've been really active about making sure that we're sort of focusing on throughout the whole of the series. But I think that it's been really good that it's been a conscious decision.

RAFAELLA

I think where both of you have found the balance absolutely beautifully is that these queer characters get to live their queer lives.

NEMO

Yeah.

RAFAELLA

It's not certain tv shows I could name, they are like, "it's so beautiful because, you see, we imply it but we never say it" and it's like yeah so we never get to see queer characters doing anything queer. And the absence of contemporary language in the show is going back to this idea of accuracy. Maybe someone wouldn't have used the term non-binary, they probably would have used something not dissimilar to that.

APRIL

There are some characters that are coming up that I think that they're addressed really well with like, "I have specific non-binaryesque pronouns."

RAFAELLA

We also have characters – I can't talk, I can't name names – but we have characters also who, in future episodes, we will see them in romantic and/or sexual relationships with people of the same gender. And, you know, when we're not using specific words from the LGBTQ+ acronym but there is – I'm very hesitant over using the word freedom because I feel like it's an argument that's kind of used against in a sort of queerphobic way – but there is a lovely, very transgressive and freeing about having a cast of characters who are like, "yeah, I mean, I'm just going around living my gay life," like, you know? And it's there and it's on the page and it's in the podcast.

APRIL

Yeah, and that I think that that's, from the Rusty Quill perspective, when we were actually looking at what series we want to commission and what we want to look into one of the things we were particularly drawn to this is like a) particularly Nemo how you've spoke about the project and your obvious like knowledge and research that went into it but also that concept of the fact that like there absolutely were queer people in the 17/1800s and being able to actually explore what those lives might have been like or like could have been like is just a really great thing to actually get a chance to highlight and show a little bit more light on.

RAFAELLA

That's actually a very nice segue into, I want to go back to asking you a specific historical question, Nemo, from your research, which is the time period we're in is a little bit of an amalgam of almost a span of a couple of centuries but it just suddenly occurred to me is there something that kind of, I mean, a lot of the – you can absolutely challenge this from a historical perspective – that like a lot of the very, very rigorous binary Christian moral code colonisation is a Victorian product and we're slightly pre-Victorian in so far as we're matching ourselves up to actual kind of periods in history, did that come into it at all?

NEMO

Vaguely. So, there's a concept called Pax Britannica and it's a period between 1815 and 1914 which is Britain's imperial century and so vaguely in my head this show has aspects of it that are on the early side of that, so 1815 to 1840. There's no specific date that really it's set but I would say 1840s is kind of where we are and it's really, sometimes dates are really, have to be very specific because of things like when was slavery abolished, like that is – well, no singular date, it's not, you know, when was slavery abolished is a really difficult question. It's very long, it's a very big question but like there are certain dates where a law went to pass and things like that and I didn't really want us to be like having to fit things into like, "this specific thing happened on August the 4th 1833" but equally like things that really excite me are things like stamps.

RAFAELLA

Nemo I have friends t-shirt, I have friends.

APRIL

I have friends, and just pictures of stamps.

(Group laughter)

NEMO

Ok but – oh my God, best story, one of the first things that I did when I was researching this thing was that I was like you know one of those websites that you find and it is like clearly made in like the early 2000s and it has got loads of like little pictures.

RAFAELLA

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah the abandoned geo cities, the ancient ruins of the internet.

NEMO

Yeah, yeah, yeah and it's these stamp collectors that I found who had loads of like original stamps from like the 1830s and stuff like that and so I was like, "no way that this email still works, like clearly this has been abandoned hundreds of years ago and like these people are probably dead" but I emailed this really nice couple and was like, "hey if I was trying to send a letter from here to here in this time period what stamp would they have used" and they got back to me in like an hour and they were like, "hi we don't have the exact answer to this but we're going to look through every book right now, we'll come back to you in a couple of hours" and like literally four hours later they were like, "here's

the exact stamp they would use, it's in this book, here's a like scanned copy that we've found for you, I hope that answers your question, please let us know if there's anything else that you want" and it's just like these people who love stamps and it just really excites me and -

APRIL

There have been some delightful people working on it.

NEMO

Yeah, yeah for sure. In the series you won't see the exact stamp that I am talking about but know that I know what stamps there are on the letters that are being sent.

APRIL

That is a very important behind the scenes fact.

NEMO

Yeah, know that I am clear which characters are autistic and asexual and what stamps are used.

APRIL

These are all very important information. (laughs)

RAFAELLA

I also feel like, again, going back to our authenticity versus accuracy, I think that exposes that they are different things, exactly the fact as you said, Nemo,

that we're not having to go, "well this law was enacted on this date and I have worked out it's exactly three years and seven months since that happened in the time line of the show," but what we do have is stamps but what we also have is so many of the communities that are represented in the show are real historical communities of people – often mixed communities of people – that came together – and again, I'm being vague on purpose because this potentially contains spoilers for future episodes – but mixed communities of people that came together, that lived together all through, you know, the last few hundred years and being able to place them side by side allows you to make a story out of them in a way that kind of very sort of didactic bowing to like, "no it's our universe and these are the dates" wouldn't allow so much.

NEMO

Even stories these days, like it's almost a trope of itself nowadays that you have like this single person of colour friend who is like by themselves in a white friendship group, and like families, especially media that does explore like diaspora and stuff like that, there have been some really beautiful films and tv shows that have come out recently that are own voice kind of shows.

Everything Everywhere All at Once recently made me cry quite a lot, it was very relevant to me, but like I have never seen really a family like mine, which I have family that are Singaporean Tamil who live in Vietnam who are mixed race and I have family who are Japanese from all over Japan and I have family who are white Australian and I have family who are Hong Kong Chinese and my school, when I was in secondary school, my friendship group was majority Afro Caribbean second generation or Sri Lankan second generation or Gujarati and in that friendship group I was the whitest person. I really just wanted to have a friendship/family group that was like mine and to have these people have

failures and it not just be a like, “here are these glorious people of colour who can do no wrong,” like they get on each other’s nerves and they piss each other off and they don’t know how to interact with each other a lot of the time but fundamentally I do think that they do love each other and they’re learning how to love each other in a world that hasn’t allowed them to love themselves and I really wanted them to like support each other or maybe because they’ve never been supported by other people and yeah I mean that was why I created this show.

APRIL

I’m getting all emotional from this again, I love listening to you talk about this series. I’m loving this too because everyone is getting an insight into like, we’ve been working on this series for like a year and a half now I think, Nemo, like it was like two Christmases ago or whatever that we actually first started talking and it’s just the passion that you have for like these characters and like that’s what makes them authentic, that’s what brings the reality to them because they’re real to you and like they’re hopefully to our audiences as they’re listening to it, it becomes real to them to.

NEMO

I have friends, their names are Alestes, Baker, Noor.

(Group laughter)

NEMO

They're real and I know every fact about them and in fact I have been told that I need to make my show bible shorter because -

APRIL

I do, this is sort of a side note but I do digital art and stuff and so I follow a lot of digital artists and I think they get that way about their OCs sometimes, their original characters and they'll be like no I know everything about them and they're wonderful and I need everyone else to love them too and yeah, but, I think these characters have some real life to them and I also love them very much.

NEMO

Yeah, I'm really excited like I hope that there will be people who enjoy these characters as much as I do and working with Raf and Morgan as well was so beautiful because they have developed a lot since I first wrote them and kind of handing them over to Raf and Morgan, I wasn't scared at all because I love them both as writers and the way that these characters have flourished under them as well, like Raf and Morgan's episodes I'm like I read them and I was like, "wow these are my favourite episodes." And like the character journeys that they go on and stuff, yeah, and so I'm really excited to see how listeners will interact with this as well and how these characters will flourish - in fandom, like I'm really excited for that.

RAFAELLA

At the risk of this becoming too much of a love-in I will just say when you asked me to come on board with this series I was absolutely thrilled and I was a little bit scared because I was like, “oh I really feel like I’m entering into a universe that I don’t know anything about apart from like I love pirates” and as soon as I read the show bible I was like, “oh I know who they are, I know who these characters are” and this has been one of the most fun writing jobs I’ve had, like honestly, because yeah they are just so like clear and alive in who they are and then – also then having the privilege of getting to be the director of the series as well, getting to see new things in the characters that the actors bring to them. There’s this whole side of Noor that Gigi, who plays them, has kind of brought to them, which – where it has almost had me like, only in my episodes that I’ve written, like just rewriting little bits on the fly kind of thing like, “oh yeah could you say this instead?”

APRIL

Getting to watch the actors and how much they’ve been able to like build on and put into those characters has been really great and this casting process – like circle back because I think we talked a little bit too about casting – was like the casting process for this took a long time, probably twice as long as our normal casting processes because we really wanted to make sure that we found like the right people for it. I know like Nemo did a really great job of us just sitting down and being like, “no, like I think we can get a better person for this role,” and I think the cast that we’ve had and getting to watch them bring those characters to life and getting to watch like what you’ve been able to pull out of them, Raf, has been an absolute treasure. Ha! Treasure.

(Group laughter)

APRIL

But yeah I know like Vic who plays Baker, I know like that was one of the ones where we actually went in and changed a little bit of Baker's backstory because Vic was so right for that character and we wanted to make sure that like that was still authentic for that person to be playing that character and I think that was probably one of the ones that obviously it's going to be touched on and stuff later but yeah we've sort of changed some directions with where we were going with some of the characters to make sure that it fit with the people who were playing them and that's been a really great thing to get to be a part of.

NEMO

And like you know those casting things kind of made me go back to my research and think about, push it further, I guess, actually and I am really excited to think about these characters again and to develop them further and yeah it's just so cool to work on this show.

APRIL

These episodes are just going to be like, "I love working on this show."

NEMO

Yup!

RAFAELLA

Just to add another one in, when we were recording today and one of our cast members – this is just to give you listeners a sense of how many happy tears have been shed in this production – one of our actors sort of went “yeah so I was reading the script the other day, I was in bits,” so it’s spreading, it’s spreading through the production. Everyone is very emotional all the time.

APRIL

Yes, I’m looking forward to making more of these.

NEMO

Oh God, agh! It’s so cool I get to write this show, I’m so – and like I mean this is my first real credit. And I was so scared throughout this process because as a writer, have written things before and have been in some writer’s rooms before, but I’ve never been the show runner before, I’ve never created – like I’ve never had a show that I’ve created have so many people work on it and yeah it’s just really exciting. That’s not what this episode of Below Decks is about but I have learnt a lot, I have grown a lot and I’m really excited and thank you to Rusty Quill for seeing someone who like had basically no production credits and being like, “yeah we’ll put time, effort and money behind this.”

APRIL

Thank you for pitching it to us.

RAFAELLA

You are an extremely generous show runner and also have not yet got annoyed at me messaging you going, “yeah so this bit of currency, do you say it like this or like this, what’s this word Nemo?!”

NEMO

Oh, the currency, oh God, like talking about authenticity and accuracy, my God, if anyone who has a special interest in currency wants to frickin come on board. Jesus.

APRIL

There’s been some very niche topics that have come up in development. I have a question for Raf, if you don’t mind? I was going to ask like in terms of us talking about like authenticity and sort of what that means like you’ve done a lot of work in bringing under-represented characters to stage and to life and things like that so like what does that mean to you then in terms of like authenticity of the characters and from a director’s perspective or from, you know, working with these performers who are playing these characters. Like you wrote a couple of the episodes and now you’re moving to directing so you talked a little bit about like changing some of the lines of the ones that you’ve read but like now that it’s actually, we’ve recorded like quite a bit of the series now, I’m wondering sort of your thoughts on how that process has kind of evolved particularly moving from writing to directing?

RAFAELLA

Well the thing I'm always interested in I think as a writer and as a director is surprise, which kind of goes hand in hand with the idea of suspense but I like to think of it as surprise. I like the moment when a scene or a line or a character just swerves in a way that you're not expecting them to swerve. I think there's a real pleasure as an audience member in being able to predict the actions of a character only so far, so if you can predict some of their actions it means that you know them, you can anticipate their responses to things which means you understand them on some level no matter what kind of character they are. And then the moment where they step away from what you expect them to do becomes all the more exciting and I think that is really the guiding principle that I have used especially in bringing under-represented characters to stage because that's – or to audio as the case may be. It's exactly as Nemo said, we have characters here who are fighting against the stereotypes that they are perceived as or even if it's not as kind of conscious as that, kind of live in a world that is happy to be reductive about them. So the idea of surprise, the idea of stepping away from what you anticipate that someone is going to do I think becomes even more important for these characters. And actually that works both ways, that's both kind of on a meta level you might come into a piece like this and go, "oh I bet they are going to subvert expectations and da, da, da," and that's what leads to what you were thinking about, "look at this flawless cast of people of colour, like look at these flawless queer characters," but actually no sometimes the thing that is a surprise is they make a wrong choice for themselves or for someone else. So yeah, and so that's a really long answer but that's the thing that I'm most interested in dramatically and it's the thing that serves these characters really well, just finding an unexpected colour.

APRIL

Their flaws make them authentic.

RAFAELLA

Their flaws make them authentic but also just kind of, yeah, the sort of unexpected colours in them, sort of going – it's great to give a character who maybe is usually more serious and just throw them a very funny little line where you're like, "oh that's another little side to that person I didn't know was there." That to me feels very true to life and is very nice to discover. I think we shall draw things to a close, this has been a lovely and unexpectedly self-gratifying first episode.

(Group laughter)

NEMO

Good job, us.

RAFAELLA

Well done, us.

APRIL

Well done.

NEMO

We're so excellent and great and we can do no wrong and actually all of our characters and all of us are flawless and no one can criticise at all, so.

APRIL

I actually like to think that we made the opposite argument like the characters are flawed and I think the important thing to leave off with is that we're not going to get everything right. We've put a lot of effort into this series to make sure that we can get things as accurate or as authentic, sort of, as possible given the fact that like it is fiction and it is these character's truths but like we aren't speaking for any particular people, we're just trying to bring the stories that we know to life and make those real.

RAFAELLA

I hope what we have shown is that if you bring us some new information we'll grow what we have.

APRIL

Yeah. And maybe it'll be about stamps.

RAFAELLA

And maybe it'll be stamps.

NEMO

I, every episode from now on, it's just going to be about stamps – I'm going to – that's a Nemo promise.

(Group laughter)

APRIL

We'll start talking about like a Patreon thing, maybe we can give you your own like stamp show on Patreon?

NEMO

Please do yeah.

RAFAELLA

Let's bring episode one to a close there. Episode one of Below Deck: in which Nemo has friends.

(Group laughter)

NEMO

God, I am never escaping this, so yeah.

RAFAELLA

Goodbye from me, Raf, and just...goodbye!

NEMO

Bye!

APRIL

Goodbye!

RAFAELLA

Bye!

NEMO

Thanks for being my friends, guys!

(Group laughter)

[Show Theme - Outro]

SIVA

Trice Forgotten is a podcast distributed by Rusty Quill, and licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial Sharealike 4.0 International License. The series is created by Nemo Martin and directed by Rafaella Marcus.

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And was edited by Nico Vetesse, and Catherine Rinella

Trice Forgotten – 1 – Below Decks – Authenticity in Historical Fiction

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