

Is There such a thing as Nostalgic Fiction?

What do we call stories set in the not-so-distant past?

We all know what fiction is and we have a general understanding of what historical fiction is. Historical fiction takes place in the past and involves an imaginative reconstruction of events and characters, real and/or imagined. But what do we call a story set in the not-so-distant past? Before considering a definition, let's look more closely at historical fiction.

Margaret Atwood in a Master Class broke it down as follows:

1. Setting: The [setting](#) is the most important part of a historical fiction novel. It should take place during an authentic period in history and be set in a real historical place.
2. Plot: The [plot](#) in a historical fiction novel is a combination of real events and fictional events. You can invent characters, cities, and events, but they still must make sense to the time period.
3. Characters: The [characters](#) can be real, fictional, or both, but they should all look, speak, and act in ways that accurately reflect the era.
4. Dialogue: The [dialogue](#) must be authentic to the time period and should reflect the status of the characters who are speaking.
5. Conflict: The problems the characters encounter should be [conflicts](#) people of that era would encounter. ¹

But how far back in time does one have to go before a story constitutes historical fiction? I have read that a minimum of fifty years in the past is required. But what if the author was alive during the period in which a story is set? Is it still historical fiction? I have a different definition. If the writer was at least eight years or older during the time period about which he or she is writing, then it's not historical fiction; it's something else.

¹ <https://www.masterclass.com/articles/what-is-historical-fiction-definition-of-the-historical-fiction-genre-and-tips-for-writing-your-historical-novel#the-history-of-historical-fiction>

NOSTALGIA - A FONDNESS FOR THE PAST.

Is it accurate to call it Nostalgic Fiction? It depends. Nostalgia is a fondness for the past or a way of remembering the past while ignoring the painful aspects and memories of the past. We may remember a simpler time or the music of our youth, etc... It's not that we have forgotten the challenges and pains of the past, and there's a time to look back and reflect on those events, but fondly remembering our past can simply be fun and satisfying.

Both my books are set in the Lowcountry of Charleston, South Carolina in the 1970s and the reader is introduced to the thoughts of adults, children, teenagers, and young adults. While my stories fit within the suspense/thriller genre, I enjoy describing the setting and writing about events and the cultural norms of that time period in a way that many of my readers will remember fondly. For instance, in *Blood in the Low Country*, one of the characters is watching the 1977 Masters when Tom Watson beat Jack Nicklaus to win the green jacket. The character exclaims that it looks like Jack's best days are over. The reader, if they are a golfer, might chuckle when they read that sentence because many people at that time shared that sentiment, but today we can look back knowing that Jack went on to win four more majors including the 1986 Masters.

As for the dress of the times, if you were a teenager in the 1970s, who doesn't remember Puka shell necklaces and their fathers wearing Sansabelt slacks. Cringe-worthy memories at times, but fond memories, nonetheless.

So, maybe a definition of Nostalgic Fiction would include the five points above plus the following:

6. The writer had to be alive during the time in which the story is set; and
7. The story evokes positive memories of a past time or condition.

Please share with me a book you enjoyed that meets this definition.