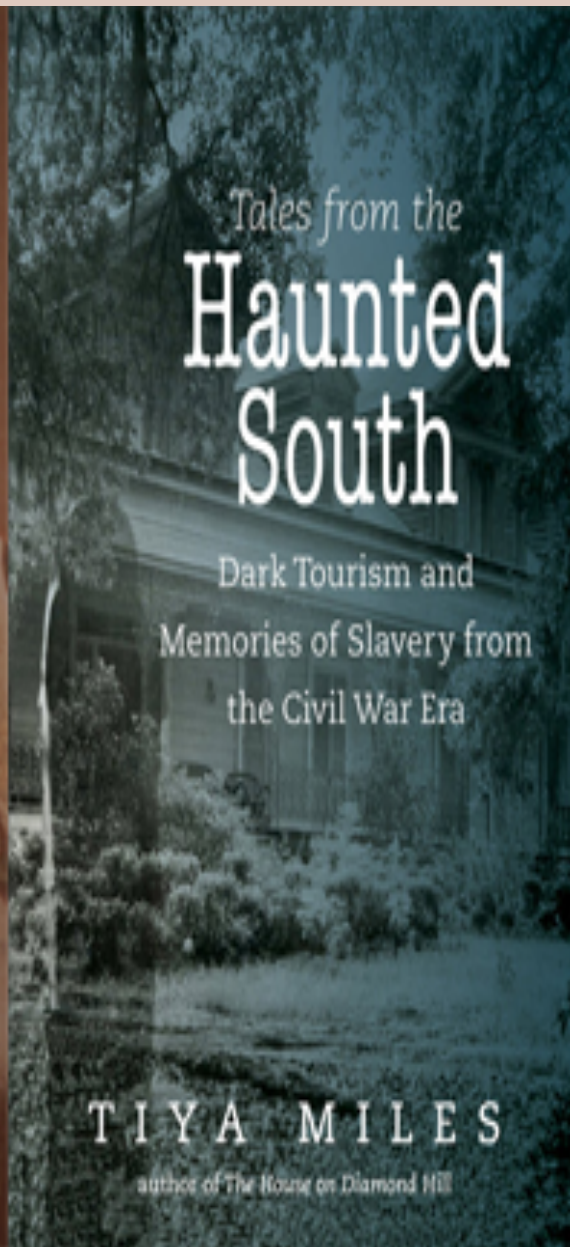


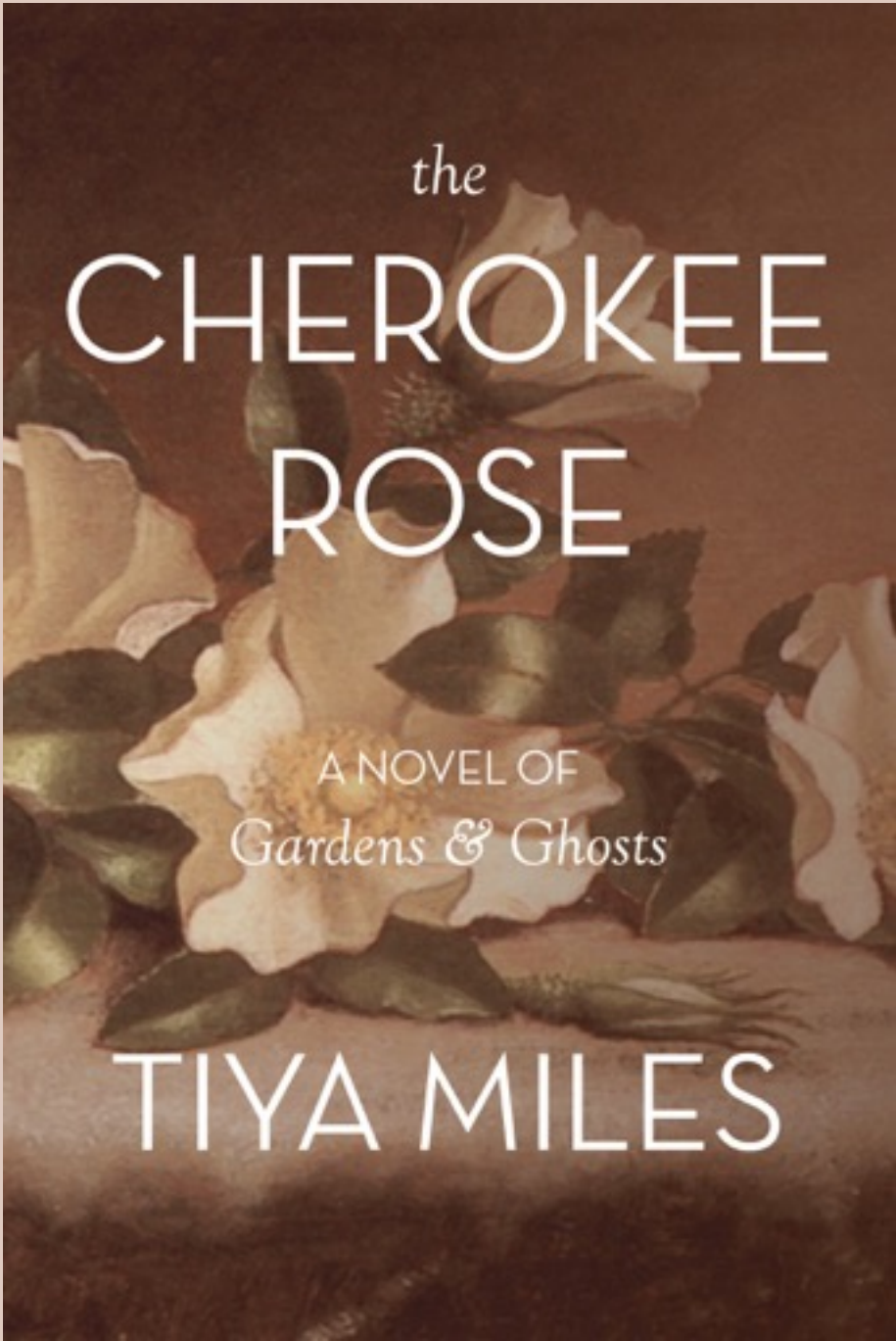


WELCOME
TO
BEHIND THE
HISTORIAN'S STUDIO

Dr. Tiya Miles

Mary Henrietta Graham Distinguished University Professor





the
CHEROKEE
ROSE

A NOVEL OF
Gardens & Ghosts

TIYA MILES

“Cheyenne drew open, naked stares from attractive men-and a few women, too. People were transfixed by her willowy figure, toffee-toned skin, and swirling dark tresses. The hair was her inheritance from the mysterious Cherokee ancestor who jealous women including Toni loved to dismiss as fantasy. Most female friends she’d ever had were just like Toni-secretly wishing to see her fail, but hoping her charms would rub off on them like some kind of magical fairy dust.”

The Cherokee Rose, 28

What were your goals when interweaving the embodiment and physicality of the historical underpinnings of the gendered competitiveness that can paralyze communities of women and men embattled about their histories and historical common ground?

“The Hold House could be completely redone in modernist style-straight lines, nickel fixtures, green finishes, textured throw pillows. The contrast between 19th century architecture and the clean look of her interior design would be to die for.”

The Cherokee Rose, 29

The entrepreneurial erasure of history through the imaginaries of the characters at the center of *The Cherokee Rose* are evident throughout your description of the homes and gardens grounding this novel.

What were your incentives for fleshing out the anxieties and illusions behind such misguided, present, and impactful erasure of convenience?

“Her father humored her with fabricated interest in the draft charts that filled the pages of her *Black Indian Genealogy Workbook*. Her mother didn’t even pretend to care, waving away her grainy prints of family census records. To them, genealogy was a hobby. To her, it was a quest to find missing pieces of an inner puzzle that could finally tell her who she was. Cheyenne was a throwback, her grandmother used to say, to an unknown branch of the Cotterell family tree. She fully intended to find that branch and brandish it.”

Throughout *The Cherokee Rose*, there is an emphasis on the resonance of history, most especially the implications of investigating, disseminating, and implementing a historical approach.

Why was it a priority to demystify the hard work of becoming and excelling as a historian across a diversity of contexts and relationships?

“Delta was wearing her light blue maid’s uniform, a cotton dress with buttons lined straight as a ruler down the front. A white apron dusted with flour curved around her ample middle. Her short gray hair was pressed and curled, shining from a recent visit to May Bell’s Beauty Shop. Miss Delta always took care with her appearance, even now that she was knocking on the door of her seventy-eighth birthday.”

The Cherokee Rose, 54

Respectfully frank generational inclusivity is revealingly engaging throughout *The Cherokee Rose*. Is this creative move inspired by an investment in having this novel travel as a community rich narrative of coming into one's history with one's respective notions of community and community habits and engagement front and center and at every turn?

“Cherokee and Cheyenne . . .Right . . . Because they both start with “Ch,” Jinx said. Cherokee Princess Syndrome pissed her off. This woman was probably about as Indian as that Chief Hold Hotel sign on the road leading into town. Jinx saw a smile start at the corners of Ruth’s full lips. This was getting a little mean, and Chocolate Eyes was enjoying it. As much as she wanted to see that smile, Jinx knew she should check herself. She wouldn’t disrespect anybody’s grandma, even the grandma of a black Indian wannabe. And she certainly didn’t need to make enemies if she wanted access to this place.”

The Cherokee Rose, 97

The insecurities, traumatic experiences, doubts, and differences that can tear apart or devastate the possibilities of collaboration and to varying degrees solidarity among characters in *The Cherokee Rose* elucidate the rigors of historical research, recovery, and awareness. Why do you think it is urgent to not underestimate such investigative realities, and in turn, make them priorities in fiction writing?

