

Book Review: Behind Yesterday
By Richard D. Taylor

Books that feature an element of time travel will almost always draw my attention. The same for accounts of World War II. So, when I saw an ad for Richard Taylor's "Behind Yesterday," an historical fiction novel set during World War II that encompasses time travel, I had to check it out.

And I'm glad I did.

As the story unfolds, Thomas Watson, a history professor, is on a cruise ship in the Caribbean on New Year's Eve, 1989. He visits the men's room and, after gazing into the mirror and experiencing a surreal moment of feeling there was an actual person on the other side of the mirror, turns and finds himself in a completely different bathroom.

In London.

In 1940.

He quickly learns that he is married to Margaret (which is interesting since he had just met a woman named Margaret on the cruise ship prior to visiting the men's room), though he has no idea who she is. And while he is unaware of his previous life (back in 1989), he is completely aware of the historical events unfolding.

Britain is currently losing the battle with Germany, and soon Prime Minister Winston Churchill will have to make a monumental decision to either surrender or fight on. Armed with his knowledge of events to come, yet not knowing why he knows what he knows, Thomas knows he must do something.

Thus begins a fascinating and perilous journey to gain audience first with Alan Turing (real person), a mathematician and computer scientist whose contributions to the war effort may have saved Britain, and later with the Prime Minister himself. Thomas must share the

information he has yet do so in a manner that doesn't paint him as a raving lunatic who foresees the future. In this case, it's a good thing he can't remember his prior existence.

Oh, and of course, the Thomas Watson of this time period is being sought by the Russians for failing to deliver sensitive information he was assigned to procure. So, he's also running for his life.

The narrative moves slowly, but the writing is engaging and descriptive – in particular Taylor's description of 'The Blitz' that began on September 7. I'm sure, though, that a bit more brevity could have been employed throughout.

My only real disappointment was the ending, which I won't spoil here. But suffice to say it raised more questions than answers provided. And while there is a sequel, "Target London," which I will soon review as well, there doesn't appear to be an opening for that smooth transition.

Still, I highly recommend "Behind Yesterday" and give it four out of five stars. Especially if you're a history and time travel buff, you ought to check it out.