



PRESS SHEET — Dr. Barbara

Historical Character Preparation for Actors

Author of »Preparing Historical Roles«

1. Core Positioning

Historical roles don't fall apart on screen — they fall apart when actors are asked one question:

»Why did your character make this choice?«

If the answer is based on instinct or modern logic, it shows immediately.

»The script is not the bible. It's the starting point.«

Most productions don't go beyond it.

Dr. Barbara does.

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2. About Dr. Barbara

»I build the bridge between a forgotten life and the person who must carry it again.«

Dr. Barbara is a German historian specialising in **historical character preparation** — a structured, source-driven approach that helps actors understand the real conditions, pressures and constraints that shaped the person they are portraying.

She works directly with **primary sources**, including:

- diaries
- letters
- receipts
- private documents
- photographs

- overlooked archival material
- domestic records and material culture

Barbara's role is to make the **historical reality clear, accurate and usable**, so actors rely on facts rather than modern assumptions.

The German historian has contributed to **130+ film and publishing projects**. She works internationally and under **NDA**.

3. Why This Matters

British and Irish productions excel at **sets, costumes and dialect**. But the industry still treats **historical character preparation** as optional.

The consequences are visible:

- portrayals shaped by **present-day thinking** rather than historical reality
- interviews where explanations collapse under basic scrutiny
- flattened representations of **queer, marginalised or complex lives**
- overly modern readings of historical figures retroactively labelled as autistic
- **rising actors given prestige roles with little structural support**
- scripts treated as complete truth instead of one historical perspective among many

»If a portrayal cannot withstand a single historical question, the preparation was never sufficient.«

This is not about talent.
It is an **industry blind spot**.

4. What Dr. Barbara Helps Actors Do

- go **beyond the script** and understand what isn't written there
- identify where the script diverges from the historical record
- avoid **modern projection** when portraying people from other eras

- work responsibly with **erased, censored or politically sensitive histories**
- understand the real **social, legal and personal pressures** of the time
- prepare for interviews where **historical reasoning** will be questioned
- work safely with **wartime, queer**, or other demanding archival material

»My work exists to protect both the actor and the life portrayed.«

5. News Hooks

- Prestige historical and biographical roles dominate awards — yet structured historical preparation remains rare.
 - Rising actors are cast into high-stakes historical roles with **limited structural support**.
 - Productions invest in dialect, movement and intimacy, but not in **historical reasoning**.
 - Queer and marginalised histories often receive no contextual preparation.
 - »Preparing Historical Roles« introduces one of the first structured methods for historical character preparation.
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6. Story Angles for Journalists

- Why **historical character preparation** is missing from British production pipelines
- What happens when a strong performance meets a weak **historical explanation**
- Why going **beyond the script** is essential for biographical roles
- The ethics of portraying **real people** without structured support
- The risks of **modern projection** in queer and marginalised histories
- How rising actors carry **historical responsibility** with little guidance

- The difference between **research** and **usable historical preparation**
 - What primary sources reveal that scripts never can
 - Quiet provocations: what productions consistently overlook when using history
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7. Questions Journalists Can Ask

Method & Sources

- How do you help actors go **beyond what the script provides**?
- Which primary sources are most revealing in preparation?
- Where do modern assumptions most often distort historical portrayals?
- What should actors consider when meeting **family members or descendants** of the person they portray?
- How do you use testimony from **elderly eyewitnesses** without letting memory override the historical record?

Industry & Structure

- Why does **historical character preparation** still lack its own department?
- What support is missing for rising actors in prestige roles?
- How should UK agencies prepare actors cast at short notice?

Ethics & Accuracy

- What are the risks of relying on **instinct** when portraying real lives?
- How do you work with **erased or suppressed** historical material?
- When do relatives' or eyewitness accounts add clarity — and when do they distort the history?

Press & Public Accountability

- Why do historically weak explanations become visible during junkets?
 - How can actors prepare for **historically precise** press questions?
 - What distinguishes accurate from inaccurate historical reasoning?
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8. Quotable Lines

»You cannot understand a real life through a script alone.«

»The script is not the bible — it's scaffolding.«

»I'm not here to flatten the past. I'm here to help you feel its sharp edges.«

»Preparation grounded in sources protects actors. Preparation built on guesswork exposes them.«

»My work exists to protect both the actor and the life portrayed.«

»My job as a historian is to point you towards the right aspects of the past. Yours — the actor's — job is to make them *human*.«

9. Key Facts

- **130+ creative projects** across film and publishing
 - German historian with a dissertation on gripping historical storytelling
 - Specialist in **primary sources** and overlooked archives
 - Expertise in **queer history**, private life and domestic records
 - Speed-reading, photographic memory and fast pattern recognition
 - Visited thousand of museums, castles, sites, estates and archives across Europe
 - Strong expert network across archives, museums and private collections
 - Works 1:1 with actors and representation teams **under NDA**
 - Provides **structured historical character preparation**
 - Supports **UK and Ireland** productions and talent agencies
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10. About the New Book

»Preparing Historical Roles — How Actors and Writers Can Avoid Pitfalls in Biopics, Period Drama and Historical Films«

The book offers:

- how to go **beyond the script**
- **common pitfalls while preparing a biopic or historical role**
- how to work with sources under time pressure
- how to avoid **modern projection**
- how to prepare for **historically precise press cycles**

Formats: Paperback + Digital Bundle (PDF, video walkthrough, audio commentary, Q&A).
Preview chapters available for journalists.

11. Suggested Bio

Bio | Short version

Dr. Barbara specialises in Historical Character Preparation — guiding actors, filmmakers, and writers to build living, breathing protagonists from the past through real evidence, not assumption. Her book »Preparing Historical Roles« offers a structured, practical path that helps avoid the common pitfalls of portraying real people from history.

Photo: Author portrait by Anne Riege

Bio | Long version

»My job as a historian is to point you towards the right aspects of the past. Your job is to make them human.«

Dr. Barbara specialises in historical character preparation.
A historian behind more than 130 projects, she works 1:1 with actors, screenwriters, and novelists.

After years spent uncovering lost voices in archives and private diaries, she saw how often actors were asked to carry those same histories with nothing but instinct and pressure — and decided to change that. Too many historical roles rely on guesswork or surface detail.

She replaces that with evidence — selected fragments from real lives that help actors *feel* the past, before they perform it.

The German historian finds emotional entry points in real sources — moments of daily life, private fears, and the quiet pressures that shape human choice. Known for her photographic memory and instinct for finding what others miss, she brings forgotten histories into focus. For her, preparation must protect both the actor and the life portrayed.

Barbara's book »Preparing Historical Roles« distils this work into a clear, structured method — a way to enter the past and build performances that feel real, not rehearsed.

Photo: Author portrait by Anne Riege

12. Press Materials (Downloadable Kit)

- High-resolution **portraits** (print, Web)
 - **Book cover** (front + 3D)
 - **Fact Sheet**
 - **Sample Q&A**
 - **Expert commentary** on request
 - **Press sheet** (this document)
 - **Short and long bios** (this document, page 7)
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13. Press Contact

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