

Fiction Author Patricia M. Muhammad Discusses Carnevale and Her Third Historical Romance Novel, Ardor's Prestige.

Carnevale has been a part of Italian history for many centuries with varying iterations and religious overtones. To feast, dance and crowd the town squares became the norm for participants. Masques were a latter feature, a manifestation of sins that Carnevale indulgence bestowed an open arena for many to participate. They were characters themselves, crafted and painted to appear as the inanimate counterpart of those who held them. Yet it was they who used these masques to shield their faces, to conceal their identity so that many would not know who engaged in the welcomed excesses. In Venezia, Carnevale preceded Lent, a carte blanche for local inhabitants to relieve themselves of the vices that would inhibit their participation in the upcoming holiday. Many took advantage of it, others attended from curiosity and still some thought it a cultural obligation. Nevertheless, the season of Carnevale remains a constant part of Italian lore and culture. It is the backdrop of one love story set in 18th century Venice. Two of the ennobled discover each other due to their rebellion against their respective Houses days before the celebrations are to begin. Both are curious and suspicious of the other. The duchessa, Anastasia and her fellow courtier, Leandro, are unable to deny their attraction to each other. How could they? She, a dark haired beauty and he a debonair courtier with a much higher status than she had known. So begins the story of *Ardor's Prestige*, Patricia M. Muhammad's third historical romance novel.

The duchessa is from an esteemed house of the king's court. Her family decides to take holiday in another country, yet Anastasia will not be alone. The senior houseservant has taken it upon herself to keep close watch of the rebellious maiden. Aside from the other maidservants, she is keenly observed by her cavalier servante. He admires her and possesses a deep affection for her. However, he knows that it can never be. The duchessa has often reminded him of such, though he reminisces of how he became acquainted with her at a tender age. One day she leaves the mansion and walks along the open thoroughfare near the waterways. She senses someone watching her. The duchessa hopes it is Leandro. Instead Giorgio appears. She is embarrassed and holds herself for modesty sake. Though her servante wraps a textile around her, Anastasia still senses he is out there, nearer to her than she had seen. The duchessa would be right. She and the aristocrat begin a formal courtship wherein more of her personality is on display. Leandro finds her surprisingly quirky which only draws him further to adore her. One day at the mansion, Duchessa Anastasia witnesses the royal guard by order of the Crown apprehend her servante on the allegation of treason. She looks to a fresco, hoping that its image could somehow hear her plea to save the humiliated Giorgio who now stands too weak to defend himself. As time passes, the duchessa and the duca continue their courtship. Giorgio is eventually cleared. The season of Carnevale is at its peak. Where masques were used to hide one's indulgence, the duchessa thought it splendid to shield others from her bashful nature. The duca convinces her to eventually remove her masque as did she. They remove themselves to one of the gardens where she accepts his proposal. Another, younger servant who accompanied the duchessa seeks to locate her to inform her of what she had learned of Giorgio's predicament. Capriana has an accident and injures herself. She is taken into a chamber and the host has the apothecarist administer a sedative. While she rests in the dark, away from the chatter and decadence, someone enters her room to murder her. Giorgio followed the culprit and intervenes. The ennobled Leandro orders the perpetrator seized. He and the duchessa seek to protect

Capriana until the following day. Leandro reveals his status within the king's court to Anastasia. It is not until the day of their nuptials that they learn who colluded with the murderer and framed Giorgio. Not even Anastasia suspected who it could be.

Ardor's Prestige is available for purchase as an ebook from these online retailers:

Amazon ASIN: B08KB34F57
Barnes & Noble: 2940164274597
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About the Author: Patricia M. Muhammad is a multi-genre fiction author who often incorporates interracial relationships and multi-racial characters as a part of her storylines. She has written 20 novels. Patricia is currently based in the United States.

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