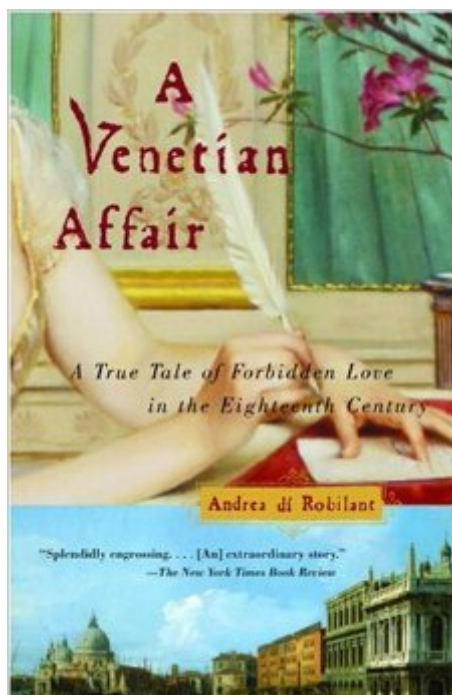


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A Venetian Affair: A True Tale Of Forbidden Love In The 18th Century



Synopsis

In the waning days of Venice's glory in the mid-1700s, Andrea Memmo was scion to one of the city's oldest patrician families. At the age of twenty-four he fell passionately in love with sixteen-year-old Giustiniana Wynne, the beautiful, illegitimate daughter of a Venetian mother and British father. Because of their dramatically different positions in society, they could not marry. And Giustiniana's mother, afraid that an affair would ruin her daughter's chances to form a more suitable union, forbade them to see each other. Her prohibition only fueled their desire and so began their torrid, secret seven-year-affair, enlisting the aid of a few intimates and servants (willing to risk their own positions) to shuttle love letters back and forth and to help facilitate their clandestine meetings. Eventually, Giustiniana found herself pregnant and she turned for help to the infamous Casanova himself infatuated with her. Two and half centuries later, the unbelievable story of this star-crossed couple is told in a breathtaking narrative, re-created in part from the passionate, clandestine letters Andrea and Giustiniana wrote to each other.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an absolutely beautiful and fascinating look into a great passion between a young patrician and a woman with a questionable past. The author's approach - it was really a family enterprise based on the 250-year old letters his father found from a direct ancestor - is to paint a wide tableau of the era from the point of view of two young and doomed lovers. Though this may sound melodramatic, it is the perfect vehicle for an incredible historic narrative, one of the best I ever read. Andrea Memmo is the scion of an ancient Venetian family, destined by blood and talent to become one of the most powerful politician-functionaries of a dying republic. Memmo is steeped in

the ideas that were "in the air" of the Enlightenment and reform, mentored by some of the most brilliant men of the era, and friends with such colorful figures as Casanova and Denon, the later founder of the Louvre for Napoleon. Also witty and handsome, he seemed destined for greatness from the youngest age. Then he met Giustiniana, a semi-aristocrat whose mother was Greek and whose father was of "solid stock" from Britain, and Andrea's life took an unexpected turn involving passion, secrecy, and impossible hopes; she was one of the great beauties in the British expatriot circles. However, by tradition that extends to the Venetian bureaucracy, Memmo must marry a "correctly" aristocratic woman by family arrangement. The author does a brilliant job of placing these two in the context of the times. As the reader, you sympathise with the concerns of all the protagonists, from Andrea's familial obligations to Giustiniana's difficult mother who wants to avoid unnecessary prying into her murky past.

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