

THE ARNOLFINI ART MYSTERIES
By Rich DiSilvio
Published by DV Books
Available at Amazon.com

The private eye is a reliable character who always entertains readers. A complex mystery is solved with an array of fiends, villains and intriguing characters. Leave it to Rich DiSilvio to add to this literary tradition with an original twist. In-

stead of murders and kidnappings, DiSilvio gives us art forgeries, fakes and stolen relics. The detective for hire is Armand Arnolfini, once a professional soccer player from Italy, who now roams the world solving art crimes for dealers, gallery owners and museum curators.

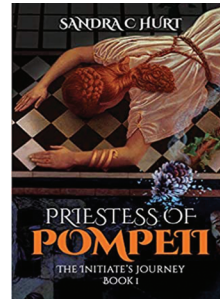
"The Arnolfini Art Mysteries" is a joy to read for anyone who loves art, history and the hard boiled detective genre. The author knows his subject well. Not only a commercial artist who created album covers for rock star Alice Cooper, Rich is also a well-renowned historian with "The Winds of Time," an ambitious work he wrote on the fullness of history.

"The Arnolfini Art Mysteries" is a collection of short stories about Arnolfini the detective. The first is titled "The Phantom Forger" set in New York in the late 1970s. A manager of the Cloister Museum in the Bronx discovers his newest acquisition, "The Virgin Annunciate" by Antonello da Messina, is a fake. Arnolfini quickly discovers that underneath the famous painting is an abstract work. He then uncovers other Renaissance paintings forged in the same manner. What follows is a journey of clues and a confrontation with the culprit.

Arnolfini approaches each case with an intrinsic understanding of suspects. A love of art is the common denominator. His reflection on one malefactor is not without sympathy: "His mission of gaining financial compensation was not borne out of self-interest or greed, but rather a philanthropic endeavor to right the injustice of an often cruel and imperfect world, a world that often overshadowed or even trampled over many with extraordinary talent..."

Carnegie Hall is the setting in "The Russian Link" when Silvio Riccadella's "Tchaikovsky Memorial" is stolen. None other than John Lennon and Yoko Ono are involved in another story when Arnolfini is called to find a strange and esoteric creation in "The Yoko, Oh No! Mystery." Other cases take our detective to Bridgeport, Connecticut and The Barnum Museum in "The P.T. Barnum Mystery" and to Hartford and the Mark Twain House and Museum in "The Mark Twain Mystery." The final story, "The Ghent Mystery" is indicative of art's international market when Arnolfini travels to Belgium for a special case.

What's not to love about "The Arnolfini Art Mysteries"? Art, music, history and mystery all come together to make this a book to be enjoyed by all. No bookshelf should be left without it.



**PRIESTESS OF POMPEII:
THE INITIATE'S JOURNEY -
BOOK 1**

By Sandra C. Hurt
Published by Thyrsus Publications
Available at Amazon.com

What is it like to go back in time and observe the daily lives and customs of antiquity? Not much different than what one will experience when reading Sandra C.

Hurt's phenomenal new novel, "Priestess of Pompeii - The Initiate's Journey, Book One."

The book is the closest we can get to actually visiting the time prior to the birth of Christ and seeing for ourselves how people lived in ancient Rome, or, more pointedly and according to the premise of the novel, how people lived in ancient Pompeii.

Sandra C. Hurt has provided us with a novel that goes far and beyond most works of historical fiction. Her research is extraordinarily thorough, precise and all-encompassing. She shares her immense knowledge of antiquity in her soft touch of crisp, declarative sentences, coupled with a vivid imagination and her passion for the past.

"Priestess of Pompeii" is an epic tale of the Istacidii family of Pompeii, their close relatives, friends and servants. As rich landowners, they must face one of the most important eras of history: The rise and fall of Julius Caesar and the ascension of his grand-nephew Octavian Augustus. The battles and intrigues play out on the Italian peninsula while Mount Vesuvius hovers in the distance ready to explode and destroy Pompeii, one of the great cities of antiquity.

The protagonist is, no doubt, Rufilla, a girl, abandoned by her birth parents; only to be later adopted by Rufus and Aridela Istacidii, along with their son Cil, some years older than her. The book follows the time of childhood through adulthood for Rufilla and Cil, while living the traditions and customs of Pompeii as dictated by pagan worship, a mix of Roman, Greek and Egyptian gods and goddesses. Rufilla is considered unique as a child, when it is discovered by one of the priests that she has the power of prophecy. As events unfold in Pompeii and Rome, not to mention Greece and other lands of the Mediterranean, Rufilla and her family must rise to the challenges of survival.

"Priestess of Pompeii" is that rare novel that is both entertaining and educational. Mrs. Hurt provides all the necessities of an intriguing page-turner with contrasting characters and engaging subplots. What is most praiseworthy is the history. The author gives all the incredible details of how Pompeians lived: The food, feasts, wines, clothing and decorations. "Priestess of Pompeii" is an extraordinary novel to be read and relished by all Italian Americans, especially those who take great pride in what was, perhaps, the greatest civilization in history - ancient Rome and Pompeii.