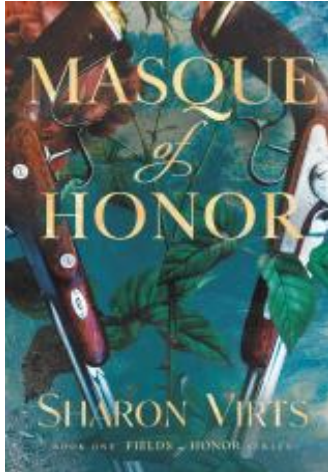


Masque of Honor: Book One in the Fields of Honor Series

by Sharon Virts



About the Book

In this coming-of-age tale set in early 19th-century America, two sons of the Virginia aristocracy risk it all to defend their dreams and determine their own destinies.

General Armistead Mason and John "Jack" Mason McCarty are brothers-in-law, second cousins and descendants of founding father George Mason IV. Ambitious and headstrong, together they set out to find love, acceptance and honor on their own merit. Armistead, by nature a politician, demands respect and strives for perfection. Jack, by inclination a rover, looks to forge his own path.

When Armistead is challenged by corruption in the political machine and is denied a seat in the US Congress, the two become embroiled in a bitter dispute that sets in motion an irrevocable chain of events, leading them to the dueling grounds and an outcome that changes everything.

Based on historical events of the 1819 Mason-McCarty duel, MASQUE OF HONOR is a story of courage, conviction and the cost of sacrificing one life to forge another.

Discussion Guide

1. What does the title "Masque of Honor" convey about this novel?
2. So many of the main characters lost their fathers. Discuss the impact of this early loss on the lives of Armistead, Jack and Lucinda.
3. Power and position were clear drivers of Armistead's ambition. What was important to Jack, and how did his

motivation and perspective put him at odds with his cousin?

4. Who bears the greater responsibility for the feud, Jack or Armistead? Why could they not let the conflict go? What was at stake?

5. What symbolism do the jackets worn by the characters represent in the book? William's coat with the McCarty family crest? The jacket of Armistead's uniform? Armistead's overcoat with the heavy skirts?

6. How would you contrast the influences that Sally and Polly had on the lives of their children? How did those influences play out on Armistead and Jack in particular?

7. What impact did Jack's trip to Natchez have on his outlook on life?

8. How important was Emily's role in Jack and Lucinda's relationship and within the family dynamic overall?

9. When Jack observes the orphans playing in New York, he asks himself two questions: "Was I ever that happy?" and "Why not?" What do you think was the answer to his second question?

10. Forgiveness is an important theme in the book. What impact does the act of forgiveness have on the characters and the story?

» [Click here](#) for the enhanced book club guide, which includes "Behind the Book" material, food and drink recipes, and more.

Author Bio

Sharon Virts is a bestselling historical fiction author, gifted painter and passionate preservationist. After more than 25 years as a successful entrepreneur, she followed her deepest conviction: that the past is not a subject to be studied at a distance --- it is a living force that shapes who we are, how we see the world, and what we choose to protect.

She has authored four novels: *MASQUE OF HONOR* and *BARGAINS OF FATE* (books one and two of the six-part *Fields of Honor* series), the macabre mystery *THE GRAYS OF TRUTH* (an International Book Award winner), and the true-crime thriller *VEIL OF DOUBT* (a finalist for Best Historical Fiction 2024), with four more *Fields of Honor* novels forthcoming. Her work spans Virginia drawing rooms, frontier Florida, and post-Civil War Baltimore --- always grounded in meticulous research and vivid, breathing characters.

Sharon is also a visual artist --- a landscape painter who captures scenes the same way she writes: quickly, in the moment, wondering who else has stood in that same place. Her paintings have been exhibited and collected across the country.

In 2016, Sharon and her husband, Scott Miller, rescued Selma Mansion --- a historic 1810 Virginia estate on the verge of demolition --- and undertook a meticulous, top-to-bottom restoration that captured over 109,000 social followers and

became one of the most-watched preservation stories in America. She has served as board chair of the Loudoun Museum for nine years and hosts a monthly TV segment, "Between the Lines," on Scripps stations, including WMAR Baltimore.

Every dollar from Sharon's books and paintings flows to the Virts Miller Foundation, funding education, health care and cultural preservation in Loudoun County. She lives at Selma with Scott and their three Labrador retrievers --- Polly, Cassie and Leda --- and is mother to four sons, stepmom to two, and "Nana" to Charlie, Bodhi and Aubry.

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