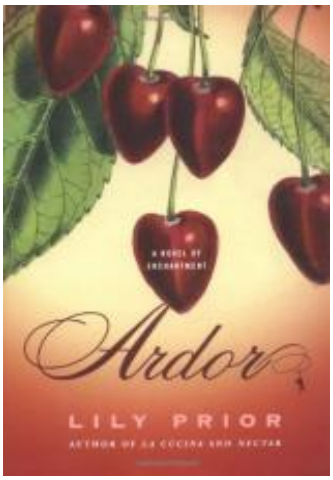
# Ardor: A Novel of Enchantment

by Lily Prior




## About the Book

Set in the sultry heat of an Italian summer, **Ardor** is a delicious romantic comedy about unrequited love, unquenchable lust, and the hilarious consequences of mistaken passions.

When a lonely olive grower, Arcadio Carnabuci, sows his love seeds, he cannot imagine the chaos his magic fruit will bring. While Fernanda Pondrosa, the voluptuous woman of his dreams, evades his spell, Gezabel, a hardworking middle-aged mule, falls head over hooves in love with him. And, as Gezabel discovers, she is not the only one whose stars cross as the olive grower's ardor casts its magic over the region. Suddenly, the butcher and the baker are thinking murder, the village doctor and his nurse are driven to distraction, and a newborn is transformed into an angel. As the villagers alternate between love and war, remarkable phenomena add to the fevered atmosphere, making passions surge higher than the soaring temperatures of summer.

A new novel by the author of **La Cucina** and **Nectar**, **Ardor** is a wildly imaginative fairy tale for adults, full of twists and unexpected delights.

## Discussion Guide

**1.** "She must have had a premonition of the tragedy, for when the boy brought the telegram, he found the house boarded up and Fernanda Ponderosa already gone" (page 1). What news did the telegram hold? What does the prologue tell us about the character Fernanda?

**2.** "These small things they could do. He could accelerate. She could slow down. The law of averages or probabilities decreed that sometimes, yes, they would meet" (page 64). How does the ships-passing-in-the-night romance between Concetta Crocetta and Dr. Amilcare Croce contribute to the novel's theme? Discuss the meaning and significance of these two characters' last names.

**3.** "Although their rivalry stretched back to the time before they were even born, when each fetus had struggled for her own space, her own survival, there was a bond that bound them together, and that neither could sever" (page 68). Why do you think Fernanda and her twin sister Silvana were estranged?

**4.** "A free spirit, she went where her visions drove her, submitting to the will of the time and tides, and the breezes that sent her in new directions" (page 72). Discuss the ethereal nature of Fernanda and how she affects those around her.

**5.** The author's playful humor flourishes in this novel: "He had to murder Luigi Bordino soon or he wouldn't be responsible for his actions" (page 144). Where else in the novel did you find great moments of humor?

**6.** "She always left while she could walk away easily, without a backward glance" (page 149). What made Fernanda decide to leave Norcia?

**7.** "Belinda Fondi squinted her eyes and examined the wings ... Was her baby turning into a bird? ... People would say she was mad. They would try to lock her up in the manicomio, as they did everyone else who didn't fit in" (page 152). What is the significance of Serafino, the flying baby, in the book?

**8.** "But he didn't believe in magic. Or in the devil. Or in God. It was easier for him to say what he didn't believe in than what he did" (page 158). How did the flying baby affect Dr. Amilcare?

**9.** Clearly the story is set in Italy, but the author never says it specifically. Why do you think that is?

**10.** "He would never speak or sing again" (page 197). How does Arcadio lose his voice?

**11.** **Ardor** poses "a lot of questions" about love. "Only one" will matter in the end. What is it?

## Author Bio

Lily Prior is the author of **La Cucina**, **Nectar** and **Ardor**. With her husband, Chris, and pug, Norman, she divides her time between London and Italy, where she finds inspiration for her novels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**Publication Date:** July 6, 2004
**Hardcover:** 224 pages
**Publisher:** Ecco
**ISBN-10:** 0060527862
**ISBN-13:** 9780060527860