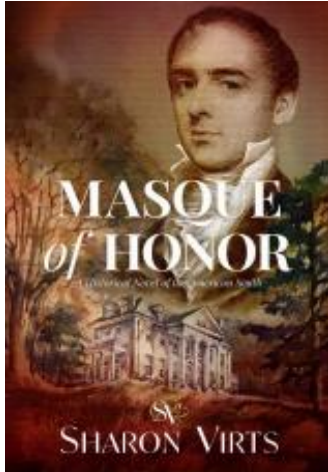


Masque of Honor: A Historical Novel of the American South

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 successful entrepreneur and visionary who, after more than 25 years in business, followed her passion for storytelling into the world of historical fiction. She has authored three books: *MASQUE OF HONOR*, *VEIL OF DOUBT* and *THE GRAYS OF TRUTH*.

Sharon's passion truly lies in the creative. She is an accomplished visual artist and uses her gift for artistic expression along with her extraordinary storytelling to build complex characters and craft vivid images and sets that capture the heart and imagination.

She has received numerous awards for her work in historic preservation and has been recognized nationally for her business achievements and philanthropic contributions. She was included in *Washington Life Magazine's* Philanthropic 50 of 2020 for her work with education, health and cultural preservation.

Sharon and her husband, Scott Miller, live at Selma, a prominent historic residence that they saved from destruction and restored to its original stature. She is mother to four sons --- James, Lucas, Zachary and Nicholas --- a stepmom to Ben and Avery, and ?Nana? to Charlie, Bodhi and Aubry. Sharon and Scott live in Selma with their three Labrador retrievers: Polly, Cassie and Leda.

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