

# [PDF] A Venetian Affair

**Jeff Woodman, Andrea Di Robilant, Paul Hecht - pdf  
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**Books Details:**

Title: A Venetian Affair  
Author: Jeff Woodman, Andrea Di Robi  
Released: 2003-08-01  
Language:  
Pages:  
ISBN: 1402557736  
ISBN13: 978-1402557736  
ASIN: 1402557736

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## **Description:**

It's hard to imagine a more romantic real-life story than the long, forbidden love affair of the 18th-century Venetian nobleman Andrea Memmo and a half-English beauty named Giustiniana Wynne. Andrea Di Robilant's *A Venetian Affair* is drawn in part from a cache of letters discovered by the author's father in his ancestral *palazzo* on the Grand Canal. In 1753, his ancestor Andrea Memmo had been introduced to a lovely girl of uncertain station (illegitimate, although her parents later married). The Wynnes's position was precarious enough in Venice's rigid society, and Giustiniana's mother took every step to prevent the young aristocrat from corrupting her daughter. But the two

lovers began to meet in secret: exchanging letters through confederates and communicating in public through an elaborate code of nods and gestures. They even came within a few days of being married before further dark revelations about Giustiniana's family put a permanent end to their hopes. Although Memmo went on to have an illustrious career in the dying Venetian Republic, it is Giustiniana's astonishing later life that really captures the reader. *A Venetian Affair* provides both a rich picture of the times—including cameo appearances by that scamp, Casanova--and a convincing account of an enduring passion. --*Regina Marler* --This text refers to the edition.

**From Publishers Weekly** The genesis of this engaging book was a stash of letters the author's father found in the old family palazzo in Venice. Written in the mid-1700s by his ancestor, Andrea Memmo, scion of an ancient Venetian family, to Giustiniana Wynne, the illegitimate daughter of a British father and a Venetian mother, these letters helped complete the picture of a romance-much of which had been detailed in the memoirs of Giacomo Casanova-that has long intrigued scholars. Taking a novelistic approach, di Robilant, a correspondent for La Stampa in Rome, weaves a narrative around selected quotations from these letters. Andrea and Giustiniana met in 1753, when he was 24 and she was not yet 17. They fell in love but couldn't marry because of their different social positions and Venetian marriage customs that protected the interests of the ruling oligarchy. Giustiniana's mother, fearing that the affair would jeopardize her daughter's chance to make a respectable marriage, forbade her to see Andrea, so the two met secretly and carried on a clandestine correspondence, writing hundreds of passionate letters full of the intimate details of their daily lives and other love affairs. In 1758, her mother took Giustiniana and her siblings to London. On the way, Giustiniana, helped by Casanova, went to a French convent and secretly gave birth to a baby that may or may not have been Andrea's, though she never mentioned this to him in her letters. The letters by themselves can be somewhat repetitive, but by skillfully combining well-chosen passages with historical background, di Robilant spins a lively, poignant tale that says much about life in 18th-century Venice and the social mores of the time.

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