

**Patricia M. Muhammad
presents**

Stolen Grace

Interesting Facts

Stolen Grace is an historical romance novel set in 18th century Versailles, France. The story centers on the House of Moreau, a Creole family with ancestral ennoblement recognized by the king.

1. *Stolen Grace* is the author's fifth historical romance novel and the first one set in France.
2. Versailles, France was home to the French royal palace for centuries before the king relocated to Paris, France, making it the new seat of the Crown.
3. The author researched the possibility of a Creole (in the modern understanding) family with established royal rights in France. In earlier times, ambassadorships were the primary form of diplomacy. This existed between France and Ethiopia, as rarely as interracial marriage between such relations.

There are two children of the Moreau house, Penelope and Armand; both of whom are of age. Armand is Penelope's younger brother. He becomes the center of controversy when members of the gentry spread rumours that he is responsible for the royal jewel theft.

4. The author often uses jewelry or gems to further the story in her historical romance novels. Most time jewels represent a matter of good or triumph for the protagonist. Here, the theft of the king's favourite jewel is an awful matter that could lead to the erroneous death of an innocent.
5. Jewelry and gemstones were among the prized possessions of French kings, for one it was an especially large diamond.

Penelope takes the helm in exonerating her brother. Armed with one clue and the friend of the Moreau household, Count Montegau, it is the maiden who begins as the hero to save the life of an innocent, specifically, her brother Armand.

6. Traditionally written historical romance novels often set the hero as the male lead. Though male aristocrats, Count Montegau as well as Lord Pierre LeMercier assist, the author scribed Penelope and eventually a female servant, Capriana, who are at the fore in saving Armand and sparing the reputation of the House of Moreau.

Count Alexandre Montegeau hires a third possible source of help in the Moreau plight, Gustav. Gustav departs from Versailles and to Paris.

7. The author researched what format did 'news' take place in 18th century France. She discovered that there was no formal network or necessarily verification of what was shared. Those who wished to know the happenings of the day, whether it be of the social scene, international affairs or the king's court would gather in an agreed upon area to share all of what they knew. Some of their discussion was conjecture, other was rumour and at times some of what was said was based in fact. The author wrote the character Gustav to be the discerning agent as to what he would return with and disclose as the most reliable information that would assist in proving Armand's innocent and clearing the Moreau name.

Duke Pierre LeMercier is a tall, handsome gentleman of the king's court. He encounters Penelope near the beginning of the story when she attempts to retrieve her brother from the public's eyes. Pierre quickly notices Penelope. She is barely polite, but this does not deter the nobleman. They begin a courtship and he too vows to assist in the investigation.

8. The author performed research on the most popular names for both males and females in 18th century France to help create Penelope's and Pierre's characters.
9. Pierre is of high esteem, well-groomed, and a gentleman. The author wrote his character traits contrary to one other—he is as relentless in his pursuit of Penelope as she is determined to exonerate her brother. Together their obstinate natures morph into an adoring courtship in which both are able to now easily express their vulnerability to one another.

Pierre and Penelope are at an outing in a park. A vagabond attacks the ennobled who are at leisure. Though Pierre acts quickly to save Penelope, she is slightly wounded. He takes her to the LeMercier manor to see that she is cared for.

10. The author wrote this scene as the foothold in which the usually strong Penelope becomes even more softened towards Pierre. She is reliant not only on his rescue, but upon securing her from further harm. Penelope worked diligently and with determination to care for her brother, that she now finds herself in the same position with her fiancé Pierre. Lord Pierre, however, is kind and merciful towards her. He has no ego that he directs towards the sole manifestation of his affection. The author writes Penelope lying in the bedchambers with her beau hovering over her. This juxtaposes their initial encounter wherein Penelope quickly excuses herself to concentrate on the investigation. Right here, in this moment and soon it will always be that Pierre will be the one who garners her sole attention.

A royal soiree is soon to commence at the Château Versailles. Often in historical romance novels, such grand gatherings are the very events in which characters meet and commence their courtships.

11. The author often writes royal balls or similar grand affairs as the near end point of the plot. This is the portion of the story where a final declaration has been made concerning the fate of the guilty, the celebration of the innocents take place and the resumption of normalcy among the members of the gentry. The author tends to incorporate such events towards the end of the storyline.

During the ball, Pierre's younger sister, Guinevere is falsely imprisoned and accosted in one of the chambers on the same floor level. She is rescued and, as a whole, leaves the scene unscathed.

12. This scene was written contrary to the attack in the park. There, Penelope is attacked by a violent plebian, while Guinevere is attacked by a fellow courtier. The author wrote this to demonstrate that good and bad people appear in different forms regardless of their social or economic standing. The author also shows this when the thief of the king's jewel is revealed.

Penelope and Pierre have now become wife and husband. Their courtship had unexpected obstacles and some may consider it an unusual winding path which has led to their nuptials.

13. The author penned Pierre's and Penelope's relationship to reflect the genuine affection that they shared. None could truly interfere with what destiny had determined for the two to become, that is husband and wife. Historical romance novels are often wrought with the 'whirlwind romance' but even during the 18th century, man and woman, courtiers encountered unseemly obstacles before they were able to consummate their marriage. However, the time has finally arrived for Pierre and Penelope to not be distracted by the envy of others nor the problems which lie external of them. Here and now is the time that Penelope and Pierre receive their due, a lifetime of happiness which was destined for only these two kindred hearts to share.