

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE-United States, 2021-July-23 – /ToStories/-American fiction author Patricia M. Muhammad discusses her fifth historical romance novel, *The House of Marchesi*.

There is a cultural norm in the United States that we celebrate those "who serve". Yet service can be more than those you participate in any of the branches of the military. Service generally is a good deed, a kind word or being charitable towards another without expectation of reward. Even still there are others who serve in several capacities, whether voluntary or for wage. They are devoted to those whom they serve. They use their ability for keen observation to their advantage, especially when many overlook their importance based on their status. Yet, quite a few may have pivotal roles in protecting whom they serve. They are the front line to inform others or whom they are loyal to about brewing mischief aimed towards them. They may act without prompt to assist someone who may not even be aware that they are in need of their help. In some scenarios they are the forgotten heroes through which catastrophe may be avoided, including the loss of life.

So how can anyone discern who is hero from villain among them? No one needs to search. Your observation may misguide you. Their words are not for you to understand though you may happen upon their dialogue. Their eyes may never meet yours, nor may you ever know of their identity. Is this not what heroes have been celebrated as in comical lore? To hide in plain sight. To have a secret identity. To be able to avert or mitigate devastation while witnesses, including those practitioners of troublemaking stand in awe. Both sides seek to know who they are, but sometimes it is better left for the heroes to be anonymous—or better yet only those who need to know will. Yet, their service is invaluable and is very much needed. These servants not only exist in the present, they also served in the great Houses of the ennobled. Some took it upon themselves to rectify a most horrid circumstance, to save the life of a duke or duchess. Such was the case in 18<sup>th</sup> century Milan.

It all began when a young maiden, Lilliana, a beautiful duchessa, is thrust from her horse and onto the property of an esteemed member of the king's court. The duca directs his servant to handle her with utmost care as he escorts her into his mansion. Duchessa Lilliana is unable to remember her accident or her identity. Her father, Duca Emmanuele, notices that Duchessa Rosetta displays no maternal concern for their daughter's absence from the House of Montanari. When he searches the Montanari estate in the hopes of finding his daughter, Lilliana's father finds a gold charm. This jewel is part of a bracelet that still adorns the duchessa. He clings to it as a sign of hope for her well-being. During the duchessa's convalescence, she attempts to identify herself. Lilliana examines the furnishings of *The House of Marchesi*. Some prompt her memory, though not fully. Over time, she and the lord of the manor, Duca Alessandro, increase in affection towards one another. He initially endeavours to return her to her home. Unbeknownst to him, this would have been a grave mistake. Yet Providence intervened. Destiny worked through the hands of devoted servants, one of which was a maidservant of the House of Montanari. Noemi witnesses the heavy burden of the duchessa's absence that weighs upon Duca Emmanuele. She silently volunteers to help locate and retrieve the missing duchessa. She recruits her fellow maidservant, Gabriella, to assist. Noemi then leaves the House of Montanari and begins her trek to locate Duchessa Lilliana. Noemi carries no sword. This maidservant does not bear a prestigious title. She likely has no fortune to

boast of. What she possesses is an altruistic intent and a steadfast determination to set the House of Montanari aright. While on her journey, she finds a gold charm that she believes belongs to the duchessa. This is the second charm that has broken from Duchessa Lilliana's bracelet. The maidservant accepts this in the same vein as the lord of the House of Montanari, that this indicates hope. Noemi encounters a proud vendor of pomegranates. He speaks of a tale of a fallen maiden taken into the care of a duca. He guides the maidservant to the House of Marchesi. This proud vendor is neither servant nor aristocrat, yet he speaks the language, though with exaggeration, of those who serve those houses. When Noemi encounters Lilliana's whereabouts she meets with a trusted servant of that house, Rinaldi. He is quite a strict and suspicious fellow, but eventually warms to Noemi. He, just as the manor's unexpected guest, only seek to protect those whom he serves and by Duca Alessandro's caring, this extended to safeguarding Duchessa Lilliana as well. Rinaldi presents her to the lord of the manor. Duca Alessandro allows for Noemi to see Duchessa Lilliana. The maidservant has now entered the House of Marchesi. The duchessa finally recalls her father's identity. The duchessa wishes to learn more of the lord of the manor. Duca Alessandro introduces her to various chambers of the Marchesi mansion. The king and queen hear of a conspiracy against an ennobled one which originated from no other than another member of the king's court. The Crown gathers evidence and secures it in the royal vault regarding a conspiracy to kidnap and harm Duchessa Lilliana. The duchessa and the duca continue their courtship under unusual circumstances. Alessandro proposes to her. Lilliana accepts. The Crown decides to proceed with the planned royal ball. Noemi visits the House of Marchesi once more, this time with a Tahitian pearl necklace that Duca Emmanuele secured away from Duchessa Lilliana's mother who intended to steal it. All of the esteemed of the Milanese king's court are to attend the royal ball. The night of the grand affair arrives. The servants from the House of Marchesi assist Duchessa Lilliana to prepare for the elaborate soiree. Her duca watches over with protective eyes as they continuously drape her in the extravagant pearl necklace. Lilliana believes that the pearls are too heavy but wears them along with a necklace Duca Alessandro gifted to her. She remains true to who she is, but now has become the lady of the House of Marchesi. The duchessa still honours her father by wearing her pearl heirloom. During the ball, the servants of the Houses of Montanari and the House of Marchesi work together to ensure that Duca Alessandro and Duchessa Lilliana's future is forever secured. They enter the royal palace with the assistance of a servant. This royal servant heard of these ongoings by word of the king and queen. In his capacity he serves the Crown to rectify the breach in royal authority, to reconcile the damage within the king's court caused by one of their own as well as the two subject houses. Merely by securing the servants entry into the royal palace, he has helped facilitate securing Duchessa Lilliana from the grips of the perpetrator who was closer to her than she ever knew. The royal servant has also assisted the House of Montanari by extension, now that Duca Alessandro can safely wed his fiancé before the Crown. It is in separate royal chambers that the king and queen officiate Duca Alessandro and Duchessa Lilliana's nuptials. All the while, Duca Emmanuele is right to be concerned for his daughter, for someone has conspired a most wretched plan against the duchessa, but who? Duchessa Lilliana reunites with her father, Duca Emmanuele. Duca Alessandro stands close at his betrothed's side. She reveals the charm bracelet which she has pinned as an adornment within her hair. Lilliana had not worn it as she did before. The duchessa explains to her father that she is now a part of The House of Marchesi. The king and queen reveal who sought to harm Duchessa Lilliana before the king's court. The Crown asks for Duca Alessandro and Duchessa Lilliana to stand with them on the

platform while the perpetrator is adjudged. Lilliana is at the side of her fiancé laden with the pearl necklace. It is no longer a burden, but her crown in the moment that she witnesses justice.

The House of Marchesi is currently available for purchase as an ebook from these online retailers:

Barnes & Noble: 2940162505693

Smashwords: 9781005567330

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