

## **Plenaria's Next Adventure**

*It has been a while since I have written. My special dinner party went really well and Rinaldo was very pleased. We have gotten really close and I have become his almost constant companion. He has suggested that I accompany him on his journey to Venice to attend a mid-summer festival, feast and evening ball of his cousin Sigismondo. Of course, I agreed and he has promised me a festival book as soon as they become available. With that and my regularly delivered advice, I can be sure that we do not miss anything exciting or important.*

*I have instructed my dressmaker to create another of her wonderful gowns. Rinaldo has gifted me with a lovely gold and crimson silk brocade. Dear sweet Agnolo has painted another of his masterpieces, "Portrait of a Florentine Noblewoman". He let me see it before he finished the painting and the sitter is wearing a dress I must have. My dressmaker, Lucia, has already started on the project and I know that she will have it done with her usual speed and efficiency.*

*I have also commissioned more lace from the local lacemaker, both needlelace and bobbin lace. This time, the lace will adorn a semi-transparent silk partlet with a standing ruff collar also inspired by the portrait. The fabric has the most wonderful white stripes fimbriated with gold threads. My dressmaker will create the partlet and then attach the lace to it once the support has been created. It will be a triumph. Rinaldo has been showering me with pearls of late (knowing my weakness for them) so I'll be able to have a new necklace and jeweled girdle.*

*This is all for the evening of the festival when they have a grand ball. I have often been to this festival and know that it is one of the most important festivals politically and only the elite are invited to attend the grand ball. It is a great opportunity for Rinaldo to renew old friendships and to make new economic alliances as well. I also have many connections in Venice and intend to introduce Rinaldo to all the right people to ensure his success. It will be wonderful to visit with all my old friends there too.*

*As we are stopping at my country estate on the way, I have ordered my cook to prepare an al fresco lunch that will be very intimate and romantic down by the stream. She has already packed all the linens and tableware needed. We will have two kinds of Fresh Sausages with Traveling Mustard, Spinach-Herb Pie, Roasted Onion Salad, and Candied Lemon Slices. We will also have pine nuts, apricots, almonds, cheese and bread to snack on with plenty of fruited water to quench our thirst.*

*Rinaldo has promised me that he will teach me to fish for trout as his friends, Cosimo and Eleonora do. I have ordered some of my staff ahead to make ready for our arrival and to have a refreshing bath and supper ready for us when we return from fishing. We will rest there and then continue our journey on to Venice on the day following. We are not in any hurry since this is such a wonderful time to view all the summer beauty.*

*Once I have all my commissioned items finished, I have only to pack my toiletries and I will be ready to go. I have had the great fortune to discover a wonderful new apothecary, Giovanni, who makes the most divine scents. I have recently taken to purchasing all my perfumes, bath oils, massage oils, mouthwash, body powder, and scented waters from him. He is such a generous man and I have told all my friends about his new business. I must go for now, as Rinaldo is due anytime and I have yet to arrange for tonight's amusements.*

*Until next time,  
Plenaria di Paradiso*