



The Spanish Ballad (Raquel, the Jewess of Toledo)

Lion Feuchtwanger

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The Spanish Ballad (Raquel, the Jewess of Toledo) Lion Feuchtwanger

The Spanish Ballad (originally published as "Die Jüdin von Toledo") is a 1955 novel by German-Jewish writer Lion Feuchtwanger. The story focuses on the "Golden Age" of learning in medieval Spain, and also describes the affair of Alfonso VIII with the Jewish Raquel in Toledo.

In Lion Feuchtwanger's prologue to the story, he mentions that the ballad was originally written by Alfonso X of Castile in regards of his Great-Grandfather (Alfonso VIII).

The Spanish Ballad (Raquel, the Jewess of Toledo) Details

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Lion Feuchtwanger

Format :

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Classics, European Literature, German Literature, Cultural, Spain



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From Reader Review The Spanish Ballad (Raquel, the Jewess of Toledo) for online ebook

Nikki says

A bit heavy to read as his prose is rather old-fashioned, but a fascinating story and extremely well-written, full of insights and a vast knowledge of the three big religions in medieval Spain.

Anima says

An outstanding novel that beautifully blends the themes of religious tolerance, power, obedience, love, war, jealousy, wisdom, revenge, and commitment. The events take place in the Spain's 'convivencia', period of time when Muslims were dominating many important cities in the Iberian Peninsula. The major themes are developed within the framework of Muslims, Jews, and Christians coexistence. The book gives us powerful images of the cultural interactions filled not only with persecution and conversion, but also with peaceful relationships and cultural exchanges.

The most attractive part of the novel is the love story between the king of Castile, Alfonso- a Christian knight , and his mistress Raquel, the daughter of his Minister of Finance (Don Yehuda)- a beautiful and intelligent Jewish young woman, literate in Arabic and Hebrew not afraid to proclaim openly her faith.

"...so much of what affected her was strange to him and he wanted to know everything.... Every word which one of them said was important, even though it sounded so insignificant and playful, and if they were alone, each recollected the words of the other and thought about them and smiled. It was marvelous to understand each other so well even though each was so different from the other. In their innermost feelings they were the same; each felt precisely what the other was feeling — a boundless happiness. "

El Segoviano says

Aunque lo lei hace doce años lo recuerdo perfectamente. El libro se escribió en 1.954 y recrea el ambiente en Toledo en el siglo XII y la manera de vivir entre los diferentes grupos sociales, arabes, judíos y castellanos en la que luego sería ciudad imperial.

El libro es muy ameno, recuerdo que me gusto mucho y sobre todo descubrí años después de leer el libro que el lugar donde se desarrollan los amores del Rey Alfonso VIII de Castilla con la hija de un judío importante en Toledo existe, es el Palacio Galiana, y se conserva después de múltiples restauraciones en muy buen estado.

Puedo resumir que el libro con un trágico final, simplemente me encantó.

Eidam289 says

Desislava Filipova says

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Rick Slane says

Highly recommended but hard to find. I'm a reader not a reviewer so I apologize in advance. This book deserves a much better reviewer. So the king falls in love with Raquel and forgets his kingdom and his queen among other things. The king doesn't really trust Jews but he picks Yehuda to be his financial adviser because he is the best choice. Yehuda was raised as a Muslim. He is very cultured and wise. So are his son and daughter. The setting is late 12th century. Spain is divided. How much of this story actually occurred no one knows but I found it to be beautifully translated.

Lucie Novak says

Lion Feuchtwanger is one of my favourite authors, pity he is not widely known in English reading world. This is a very nice historical love story although maybe less good than his other books. Despite gruesome circumstances, maybe a bit too romantic. But a good read, and you find out about Spain in 15th century and the Jewish dilemma,

Carola says

La judía de Toledo es una obra maestra. Mezcla historia y fantasía, amor y desamor en un contexto de

fanatismo religioso, ideal caballeresco, donde lo maravilloso, lo sagrado y lo profano se desarrollaba en tres mundos: el cristiano, el judío y el musulmán. En la España conquistada por los árabes, donde Córdoba y Sevilla eran las ciudades más prósperas y avanzadas del siglo XII y XIII de Europa, el Rey Alfonso VIII de Castilla y su capital Toledo parecían dos bárbaros totalmente prescindibles. Hasta que un día llegaron a su reino los magníficos Ibn Esra, ricos, laboriosos e inteligentes judíos descendientes del rey David. Y a partir de ese momento todo cambiaría.

Leer la novela de Feuchtwanger fue un viaje. Regresé a uno de mis países favoritos, España, y pude recorrer nuevamente en mi mente todas las ciudades que conocí y visité allí y que eran mencionadas por el autor. El trabajo investigativo de Feuchtwanger es de tal nivel que puedo catalogarlo como escritor e historiador.

Definitivamente, tengo un vínculo especial con la Edad Media y con la Madre Patria. Me encanta el arte, literatura, música e imaginación de esta época y de aquel país. No por nada "El ingenioso hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha" y "El lazarillo de Tormes" son mis libros favoritos. Y desde hoy, éste, el de la "Fermosa" judía de Toledo, hace su incorporación a dicho club.

Bhig says

Feuchtwanger lays everything (thoughts, motivations, backgrounds, etc.) in front of the reader's eyes and doesn't make me feel anything. I like him for this.

Alexander Ledovski says

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Torben says

Ja, dieser Roman ist Literatur, "große deutsche" schreibt Reich-Ranicki. Das Buch ist spannend, ohne wirklich viel Handlung zu haben, es lebt von der Sprache und Struktur. Es lebt von den tollen Sätzen und der Psychologie hinter allem. Es handelt von der Schwierigkeit und den "Kampf" Frieden zu halten und der Leichtigkeit, Krieg zu entfachen und so das in kurzer Zeit zu vernichten, was Jahrhunderte aufgebaut wurde. Es handelt von Toleranz und Liebe, von Weitsicht und Engstirnigkeit und Egozentrik. Das alles wird nicht plakativ aufgepropft von Feuchtwanger, sondern ist teil der Handlung und der Figuren, glaubhaft eingewebt in Geschichte und Historie und in die Gegenwart dreier Religionen. Und daher ist es kein leichter Roman für Zwischendurch, aber doch ein Erlebnis. Nur die "Liebesszenen von glühender Leidenschaft und der heißen Sinnlichkeit südlicher Temperamente", die Reich-Ranicki gelesen haben will, konnte ich nicht finden. Da bin ich einfach abgestumpft oder die Welt hat sich in 55 Jahren seit der Entstehung doch etwas verändert.

Olga says

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????? ?????? ?? BookGeek.ru!

Mae says

Una lectura fascinante. Otro libro mas de esos que debieran ser lectura obligada para conocer mas sobre la historia de los judíos en Europa y para la constatación que no hemos cambiado mucho en los últimos mil años.

The author is a fabulous storyteller.

Stas says

The best love story that I have read. Period. Brilliantly written, touching to the bones and incredibly moving. Do not pass this book. I have read it many times and will be reading more times in the future. Also, I suggest to read it in Russian translation.

Telans says

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Alena says

Jeden z moment?, kdy si říkám, že jsem m?la povinný ?etb? v?novat víc energie a ne?íst na truc jen všechno ostatní :)

Abigail Escobar says

He mencionado un montón de veces que para mi es un placer leer novelas históricas y es que al final cuando ha terminado todo recuerdas que esos personajes si existieron, que los lugares aun se conservan y que la vida cotidiana puede llegar a ser digna de un libro.

Lion Feuchtwanger Nos narra la historia de el rey **Alfonso VIII de Castilla**, ok, me equivoco al decir que narra la historia de el en general, es sobre **Alfonso y su amante Raquel la judía, la Ferosa**" de acuerdo a los diarios encontrados del rey, sin duda es increíble la ignorancia en la que puede llegar a estar un pueblo por la religión, creo que en lo personal es lo que me ha quedado de enseñanza, me recuerda a un pasaje en la biblia que dice "*Mi pueblo perece por falta de conocimiento*", la religiosidad desde tiempos memorables ha creado ideas incoherentes, en el pasado eran "*Guerras santas*", ahora me viene a la mente los ataques terroristas o que se yo, los puntos de vista de cada personaje me volaron la cabeza:musulmanes, judíos,católicos, sobre todo estos últimos y como la iglesia ha influido tanto en el poder utilizando una interpretación errónea de la biblia, Raquel me ha parecido alguien Integra hasta el final de su muerte defendiendo sus creencias aun esto molestara a su amado Alfonso, aunque esto no le quita el hecho de que la

confianza ciega en el hombre le ha traído su derrota, por su parte su padre "Don Jehuda" va cayendo de la gracia en cuanto avanza la historia, se percibe la guerra interior entre seguir lo que le conviene o lo que dice su religión y finalmente Alfonso no da ni una en sus ideas, lucha también en su interior "entre lo bueno y lo malo" porque sabe que esta mujer no es como él, pero al final la ama, Alfonso un hombre guiado como todos los reyes por el catolicismo o las ideas erróneas de Dios y lo peor por su ego, no es una buena combinación. No digo que alguien tenía la razón, al final eran tiempos diferentes, tiempos de mas ignorancia ¿o no?, al final no critico a mi protagonista, al final me ha parecido que maduro y empezó a hacer las cosas dignas de un rey.

Puedo decir que el autor ha hecho un buen trabajo, la narrativa es fácil de leer, los personajes son claros y es así que como de *"una novela podemos aprender historia"*, sin duda me quedo con las ganas de visitar alguna vez **"LA GALIANA"**, así que ¡a juntar dinero! jaja.

Becky says

This book was actually painful to read. But it was a sweet pain ;) It was painful because Feuchtwanger gives such keen insight into the psyche of his characters – so much so that you feel their frustrations as if they were coming from your own inner being. You can feel Yehuda's disgust over the king's barbaric ways; you can feel the king's disgust over Yehuda's shrewd ways. You can feel the weight of each moment as if you were standing there with them. One moment you hate a character, the next you are crying for him. This book is about torment and snapping points. It is about foreign bodies assimilating and rejecting. It is a great, sweeping story that is dramatic and enlightening! I learned a lot of history from this book and at the same time was thoroughly entertained. Feuchtwanger, though obviously much more, was an amazing story teller.

Bruno Kos says

Brilliant!

Alex says

It's Spain's Toledo in Castile at times of Reconquest

The pic of history entails both love and war along with Jewish people drama zest

My fellow Jews, who are advisers to the kings - to you I issue my advise

Please read this book and hide your daughters from king's eyes

Or otherwise so much to your surprise

In vanity pursuit and lack of humbling you will find your own family demise

Spanish Ballad

1. Memorable 5

2. Social Relevance 5

3. Informative 4

4. Originality 4

5. Thought Provoking 5

6. Expressiveness 5

7. Entertaining 5

8. Visualization 4

9. Sparks Emotion 5

10. Life Changing (Pivotal, crucial, determining, defining, momentous, fateful, consequential, climacteric, transformational) 4

$(5,5,4,4,5,5,4,5,4) \implies 42/10 = 4.2$

<http://www.goodreads.com/poll/show/51...>

Super-Genius !!!!!!!!

Every Jew should read this book.

The most *critical* (for me at least) part of the plot is the conflict of the opinions between *Don* (I am not sure if Jews in Spain really had the right to have this title ?) Yehudi (the father of Raquel) and *Don* Ephraim (the leader of the Toledo Jewish community) re what Jew should and should not do in the countries of Diaspora (actually applicable to all past and current countries such as Rome, Spain/Portugal, Germany, France, ..., Russia, USA).

Ephraim was of course right and Yehudi was wrong (and paid the heavy price for it !).

The price was assimilation (into Christianity) of his son and the humiliation of the fact that Yehudi's beloved daughter, Raquel, became a mistress of the king of Castile/Spain.

The even more severe and bitter price was paid by the entire Spanish Jewish Diaspora three hundred years later (the action of the novel takes place at about year 1187-1195 time frame) - I refer to the deportation of Jews from Spain in the year of 1492.

According to

http://www.jewishsearch.com/article_4...

"Jews started leaving Spain right after the expulsion command was published on the first day of May of the year 1492.

All Jews, who didn't want to convert their religion to Christianity, were forced to leave Spain during the next three months.

Most of the Jews preferred to be expelled from the country rather than to convert. The last day for Jews to stay in Spain was indicated as July 31st 1492. On that day, 200,000 Jews left Spain.

Out of total of 200,000 Jewish men and women, 120,000 decided to move to the neighboring country - Portugal and to their continuing misfortune they got expelled from there too (just after 4 years of living in Portugal) - so they were forced to choose again between conversion or expulsion."

I could see clear analogy between the historical character - Jewish adviser to the King of Of Castile - Yehudi and the modern US political figure of Jewish origin - State Secretary Henry Kissinger.

Both of them were very helpful and made significant positive contribution to the benefit and well being of their respective countries to which they served (Spain and USA) and both of them were neglecting their Jewish identity and were not making any significant efforts to advance the issues dear to the destiny and well being of the Israel (the people and state).
