



The Spanish Bow

Andromeda Romano-Lax

Download now

Read Online ➔

The Spanish Bow

Andromeda Romano-Lax

The Spanish Bow Andromeda Romano-Lax

In a dusty, turn-of-the-century Catalan village, the bequest of a cello bow sets young Feliu Delargo on an unlikely path. When a local landowner's wrath threatens his family, the Spanish bow leads Feliu to anarchist Barcelona, then on to the court in Madrid, where a music master's daughter gives him his first lessons in the art of love. There he meets up with the charming and eccentric piano prodigy Justo Al-Cerraz and begins the lifelong friendship and rivalry that will orchestrate a tumultuous course for them both. As a war-torn world careens toward catastrophe, they make splendid music together and clash over women, politics, and almost everything else. Then Aviva, an Italian violinist with a haunted past, enters their lives, and Feliu and Justo embark upon their final and most dangerous collaboration.

Inspired by the life of Pablo Casals and with appearances by Pablo Picasso, Bertolt Brecht, and others who wrestled with the competing demands of art and conscience during the Spanish Civil War and World War II, *The Spanish Bow* is a deeply imagined tale of the passions that accident bestows—and the sacrifices history enacts.

The Spanish Bow Details

Date : Published September 10th 2007 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (first published 2007)

ISBN : 9780151015429

Author : Andromeda Romano-Lax

Format : Hardcover 560 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Music, Cultural, Spain, War

 [Download The Spanish Bow ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Spanish Bow ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Spanish Bow Andromeda Romano-Lax

From Reader Review The Spanish Bow for online ebook

Abby says

Feliu Delargo suffers two accidents at his birth in a Catalan village in 1892. A traumatic birth burdens him with a hip injury and the notary mistakes his mother's intention to name him Feliz, or Happy. When he is six years old, his father, soon to die in Cuba, sends a box of gifts to be distributed among his children. Feliu is drawn to a wooden stick that sets him on his life's course as he learns first to play the violin and then the cello.

Over the course of the 20th century, as Feliu becomes a world-renowned cellist, playing for kings and despots, he develops complex relationships with a volatile Spanish pianist/composer and an Italian Jewish violinist haunted by her past. As history unfolds, Feliu's story traces his struggle to isolate his art from the great political and moral issues of his time, providing unmistakable parallels to the life of the great Spanish cellist Pablo Casals. Historical figures from the Spanish monarchy to Picasso and Hitler play cameo roles and Andromeda Romano-Lax's prodigious research is used effectively. But it is the central characters and their moral choices that drive this impressive debut novel.

This book has epic sweep, complex characters and enough plot twists to satisfy readers of popular historical fiction. But it is a much more thoughtful, lyrical book than is typical of that genre, one that explores the role of art in political life and the human spirit.

Natasa says

The author does an amazing job of weaving in music, politics, history, and relationships throughout the book. It is beautifully written however it seemed to drag.

Travelalong2 says

I'm in two minds about this book. Like many other reviewers here I also wantte to stop half way through but it was a rainy day and I was on holiday so I finished it. I'm glad I did. I like the author's writing style. I loved the music information but I think this is more a history book about Spain, and it bored me. Overall, not a bad read but it dragged on a bit too long.

Mirachil27 says

Too Many Stories

I am of two minds about this book. On the one hand, I loved it - the setting, the scope, the characters. Romano-Lax writes in sweeping bands of poetry. Her imagery takes you where she wants you to go. The story travels from rural Spain in the 1890s through the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of fascism in Europe - Franco, Mussolini, Hitler. If that sounds like a lot of ground to cover, it is. And with the passions of the protagonists whipping us to and fro, it is almost too much. It is a marvelous book and I

recommend it to anyone interested in Spain. Maybe it could have benefited by being two books instead of one. But who am I to judge. This author has a lot more to offer if this book is anything to go by.

Denise says

This book came highly recommended by a good friend of mine. I can see why she thought I would like it; the protagonist is a cellist, and the book follows his life, from his inauspicious birth through his rising career, and finally into his old age, when his life has changed dramatically.

The portions having to do with music are enthralling. It's clear the author has first-hand knowledge of the art, the pull of the instrument, the need to play. As a pianist, I identify with the main character, as well as his fellow musicians, one of whom is a celebrated pianist.

The story is set in Spain, so there is a focus on Spanish music and history, but the characters are classically trained and travel all over Europe, so a variety of real historical figures make appearances in the novel. Picasso, Mahler, Monet, Stravinsky. Hitler, Mussolini, Franco. It is a time of upheaval, both in politics and in the arts.

In theory, this book should be right up my alley. But for some reason, I found myself putting it down frequently, taking forever to get through it. It just didn't grab me. Maybe it's because, interspersed with the inspiring music, the rest of the story was downright depressing. Poverty and wars and disloyalty and depravity and constant struggling. Even when the characters are successful, they aren't happy. There's no light. Every story line that seems hopeful ultimately ends in more sadness. It's gloomy. Yes, I loved the musical aspect, but in my life, music is a good thing, a hopeful thing. I don't want to associate it with such a dreary story.

Jeanette "Astute Crabbist" says

I made it nearly halfway through this book before deciding not to continue. It's a well-written, carefully told story. Perhaps a little *too* carefully told as regards the endless details of Feliu's life. I felt like the author assumed too much knowledge on the part of the reader about the events surrounding Feliu's experiences. I had hoped to learn something about Spanish history, but the author makes a lot of veiled references to events and intrigues with which we're already supposed to be familiar. Perhaps she wrote it for citizens of Spain, who would recognize the references. I was lost, and grew increasingly frustrated at my own ignorance and the author's unwillingness to enlighten me.

Book Concierge says

The novel follows the fictitious cellist Feliu Delargo from his birth in a Catalan village in 1892 to the concert halls of Spain, France and Germany in the early 20th century and finally to the train depot in a small French port city in October 1940.

Romano-Lax has included a number of historical figures from the worlds of art, culture and politics – Kurt Weill, Pablo Picasso, and Adolf Hitler to name just three. The author was inspired by the life of Pablo Casals, but the book is NOT a fictionalized biography of Casals. The novel explores issues of personal

responsibility and what history demands of the individual, in particular those individuals in the public eye; should they use their art and celebrity to advance a particular cause, to warn the populace, or to numb the masses. This is a large topic to tackle and the book covers a significant time frame where wars, disease and economic depressions taxed even the strongest and wealthiest. Romano-Lax manages this very well.

If I have any complaint it is that Feliu seemed too distant from what was going on around him. He was a leaf blown on the winds of change for most of the book. Even when he took a stand in one area of his life, he still drifted along in other areas. In contrast, pianist Justo Al-Cerraz (and Delargo's friend) is portrayed as a larger-than-life, charming and eccentric bon vivant. Justo tries to get Feliu to wake up to life and participate, but it is an uphill battle.

All told, the story pulled me in and kept me turning pages. The author includes just enough humorous scenes to relieve the tension and avoid sounding "preachy." When I got to the end, I found myself wishing the book were longer.

Kate says

Historical fiction featuring a cellist beginning at his birth in Spain in 1892. Beautiful descriptive passages!"Duarte's cello was a glossy caramel color, and the sound it produced was as warm and rich as the instrument looked. It sounded like a human voice. Not the high warble of an opera singer or anyone else singing for the stage, but rather the soothing voice of a fisherman singing as he mended his nets, or of a mother singing lullabies to her sleepy children. When the cellist reached a crescendo on one of the lower strings, I felt a strange sensation, both pleasurable and disturbing. It reminded me of holding a cat, feeling it's purrs resonate with me."

Marita says

Infused with music, history, art and some good writing there is much to commend this novel, but halfway through I felt that I was on a train to nowhere and not getting there anytime soon.

#####

"Inspired by the bombing of Guernica, Picasso finished his mural a month later. It was a marvel: horses, bulls, bare cellars and bare light-bulbs, women with dying children in their arms—an abstract portrait of horror that filled an entire wall with its terrible shades of gray."

Guernica by Pablo Picasso

"And I knew the women would forget what they had seen of Guernica, that I had helped them to forget it. A painting was a dull sword with which to fight a war, and a painter himself could be a hypocrite. But music was a numbing, soothing poison, which—dripped into the general water supply—contaminated everyone."

Edit 06/26:

The novel is narrated by the fictional cellist, Feliu Delargo. The quotes above are his thoughts. He tells us his story from the time of his birth, through his years of travelling and performing with a famous pianist, the fictional character Justo Al-Cerraz. Later they team up with a Jewish Italian violinist named Aviva. The story

takes us through the Spanish Civil War and WWII. He meets an extraordinary number of famous people, and the novel reads like a Who's Who for that period.

Jessica says

I haven't read anything like this in quite a long time. The thing with well-researched novels is that you tend to forget that they're just fiction. Spain is one of my favorite European countries, so you can just imagine my happiness reading about how it was in the olden days - specifically during the Spanish civil war and the World War II. The cameo appearances of Hitler, Mussolini, Franco, Picasso, and King Alfonso of Spain make this novel all the more interesting. You should read this book, I highly recommend it! The Spanish Bow is the latest addition to my growing list of favorite works of literature.

Shana says

If you've read this then you know why this is so sad. It's not entirely bad, it's just that it drags on and on far past the point where you're interested in the main character. I like how the author incorporates known artistic and political figures of the time period in, but that still doesn't make up for the fact that it just drags. Not the best novel I've ever read but out of the bunch I brought home with me, I guess this was the best. *sigh*

Carol says

Feliu Delargo was almost born happy, almost born with the name Felix as his mother had wanted. But instead he was a breach birth, born butt first into a house of chaos that mistakenly thought he was born dead. His name is misspelled on his birth certificate but does this mistake rob him of happiness in later life? He grew up in a small Spanish town in the late 19th century, where as a young boy he is taken to the train station by his mother. He thinks he is there to pick up his father. He is there to pick up a package of items left by his father, killed in Cuba. He is told to choose an item belonging to his father. He chooses from the box of items a cello bow which fascinates him. Feliu longs to learn to play the cello but must be content with the violin and later the piano. It is years later through great sacrifices of his mother, before he is able to pair the bow with a cello and learn to play the instrument. Through the years of turmoil in Spain, of civil wars and World Wars, he masters the cello and travels and plays at first for the royal family of Spain and later all over Europe, traveling with two other players, Justo Al-Cerraz a loud brash pianist and Aviva, a haunted Italian violinist. The trio go from success to poverty to bickering and splitting up and going separate ways and later meeting again to try to escape war and tragedy.

A grim yet engaging epic filled with fiery politics which the central character Feliu does his best to ignore until it touches him personally. The book is filled with the names and compositions of great composers of the time and the history that influences their music. (It makes me sad that I live in a time of Lady Gaga and Justin Bieber.) Feliu shows restraint all his life. He shows restraint with his love for Aviva who he worries about. Aviva is haunted by her past and has self destructive behavior that Feliu and Justo can not comprehend. The reader has a view of Feliu's entire life and it is when Feliu is well into middle age that he reflect and realizes that he has become all that he will be, no greater and no way to change mistakes of the past. Perhaps the restraint is not so much a virtue after all as he does miss out on a lot of opportunities in his life. An excellent read that does not disappoint but takes some patience. The characters while never dull, don't always make you want to jump up and down. The tension at the end of the book made me want to pull

my hair out. You know there is something bad coming but you just do not know what it is. Ay, caramba!

Miss Eliza says

An interesting story of a young boy growing up with a fascination over playing the cello. The relationship of 3 musicians is explored in an historical setting in a culture is some degree of upheaval.

C.W. says

Can art save us from ourselves? In her elegant debut, *THE SPANISH BOW*, Ms Romano-Lax ponders this timeless question through the ambitious tale of Feliu Delargo, a gifted cellist born in turn-of-the-century Spain who receives the unexpected gift of a bow from his dead father and sets himself on a resolute path to mastering his craft. His journey takes him from performing in the defiant streets of Barcelona to the confidences of the queen of Spain and a tumultuous partnership with flamboyant pianist Justo Al-Cerraz, who introduces Feliu to the rigors and joys of life as an itinerant musician as well as the eventual deception of fame. As civil war decimates his homeland and fascism spreads across Europe, Feliu finds himself increasingly conflicted over the relevance of music in a crumbling world--until he meets Aviva, an Italian violinist whose inexorable quest to redeem her past plunges Feliu into destructive rivalry and ultimate sacrifice. From the hypocrisies of the courts of Madrid to the terror of Nazi-occupied Paris, Romano-Lax weaves the upheavals of the first half of the twentieth century into an elegy to the simultaneous power and impotency of art, and the contradictions of the human spirit. (This review was first published by The Historical Novels Review)

Sherry says

Set in Spain in early 1900s. Musical prodigies, art, politics, and more.
