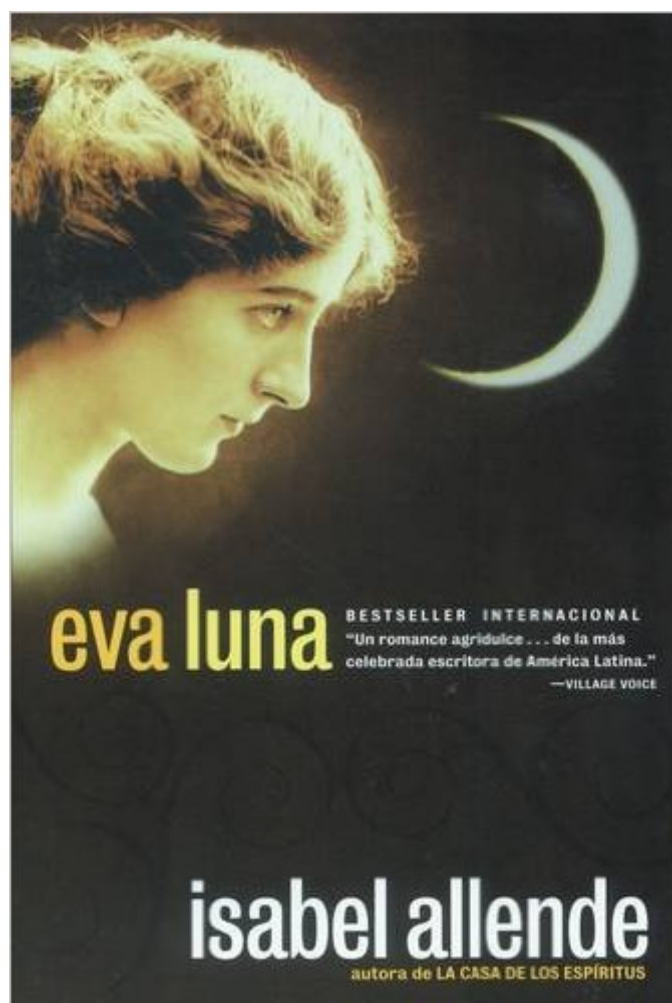


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Eva Luna (Spanish Language Edition)



Synopsis

Las aventuras picarescas de una Sherezade latinoamericana, relatando su nacimiento ilegítimo, su orfandad, su adolescencia sin rumbo, sus actividades contra el gobierno, y su romance con un problemático director de películas documentales. Por medio de su don narrativo, Eva Luna inventa una realidad personal determinada por la magia y el destino.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was the first South American writer that I have actually read...and wow! I was blown away by the lush imagery and the incredible characters. The way Ms. Allende wrote this was like a painting, it was so vivid. Eva Luna is an incredible symphony for the mind. I would recommend this to anyone.

This review is for the English language Bantam Book paperback edition published in September 1989, 307 pages. EVA LUNA did not appear on the USA Today top 150 best sellers list, which was started four years after this book was published. However, four of the author's other novels have appeared on the list. EVA LUNA is the story of an impoverished, illegitimate servant girl, orphaned at age six, illiterate in her formative years for lack of formal education, who simply loves to tell stories and becomes a TV scriptwriter. She is mentored by the evasive ghost of her mother, an opportunistic godmother, a quirky woman who sleeps in a coffin and a confused female transvestite dressed as a woman. The time span is roughly three decades that include the Vietnam War, jet

planes, soap operas and the United States meddling in Latin American affairs, which is perhaps not terribly definitive. The setting is supposedly the Caribbean, but the topography is reminiscent of tropical Peru with the politics of Colombia and the economy of Venezuela. The writing style is magical realism and the theme is melancholy. EVA LUNA is scrambled eggs with a dash of Tabasco, tropical fruit and an aphrodisiac, which turns out tasty and delectable. It reminds me of a quote attributed to Napoleon: You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs.

Eva Luna was born in South America, in a house where her mother was a housekeeper, and she grew up surrounded by mommies, human and animals. Because the house owner was an embalmer. After her mother died, and then the house owner, Eva went to live with her godmother who sent her to work as a housekeeper for rich people, until homeless once again, she met a boy named Huberto Naranjo, who gave her something to eat, and whom she would meet many times again along her life. When Eva was eleven years old, homeless once more, she was adopted by a Turkish immigrant with whom she lived until almost the end of her adolescence. Gone to live in the capital once again, she studies, works, experiences joy and heartbreak through old friends and lovers. Meanwhile, convulse political changes occur in her country, the continent, and the world. In Eva Luna converge dictators and corrupt politicians, homeless children forced to survive using tricks, abusive husbands, fearful women, a mad scientist, immigrants from other continents who came filled with dreams and little resources. But the story goes beyond those things to span the end of the XIX century, the aftermath of WWI seen through the eyes of the inhabitants of an Austrian village, the oil boom in South America, the overthrow of dictatorships, the triumph of Fidelism in Cuba, the emergence of the guerrilla movement, coups d'etat, etc. Even though I think the country described in Eva Luna is a composite between Venezuela and Colombia, the same political chaos has taken place virtually in every country in the region, thus this story acquires a broader dimension. In the same measure that my readings in English have broadened, so has my preference for descriptions and dialogues. Latino American literature is essentially narrative and that was somewhat upsetting when I read Eva Luna. In Eva Luna there is a fusion of social criticism and historical fiction, which make it difficult to read. I suppose my mixed feelings towards Eva Luna have much to do with having read last week To Kill A Mockingbird, which I think is a superior novel than Eva Luna, thus the latter has paled in comparison. I don't mean to say that I didn't completely enjoy it. Some chapters were very funny and were written with much more sensibility than the rest; those chapters were almost addictive, unlike those in which politics is so present that I found them tedious.

It is a slow motion story with historical detail of an unnamed country in which Eva Luna was born as a child who hardly knew her mother and never knew her father. Her childhood and adolescence were full of work for someone which developed her endurance and let her absorb not only various experiences but also an interest for stories, which she finally ended up writing. She is surrounded by various types of personalities- pretty wide spectrum of people, who are usually not considered the core of the society, but are somewhat marginalized individuals... Eva is a self-made woman, who is helping many and is ready to love people that she encounters in her life. The majority of them are less than ideal match for her, but for a lonely soul those who are kind to her trigger her love and affection in response. The book brings together two unlikely characters: her and Carl, who also made his life through own effort, away from parents, in a strange country. Isabel Allende has a talent for developing life stories of people following them through various life periods depicting their character not so much through a description, but through the situations in which they are thrown by life. Overall interesting story, but is somewhat slow and requires patience to read through.

I am about 30% through the book. It is enjoyable but at this point it has not impressed me nearly as much as other books by Isabel Allende. I have read several others...La Casa de Los Espiritus, La Suma de Los Dias, and La Isla Bajo el Mar that I have liked more. But I may have a different story by the time I finish. I am a fan of Isabel Allende and I plan to read everything that I can get of hers available on Kindle. This woman could write about anything and make it interesting. Spanish is not my first language so I read rather slowly. But reading on the Kindle with easy access to the dictionary is fantastic

Magical realism pushed to another level, it is difficult not to get entangled in this fabulous account of two different hemispheres. Eva is wonderful as a narrator, the story is filled with humour and casual details. This book was a delicious read.

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