

The Fountains of Silence

Ruta Sepetys

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Set in the 1950's, *The Fountains of Silence* takes place during the harsh dictatorship of General Francisco Franco. Daniel Matheson is the 18 year-old son of a wealthy American oil executive who travels to Madrid, the home of his Spanish mother, while his father meets with Franco to discuss business. He is an aspiring photographer who wishes to enter the world of photojournalism but is weighed down by the expectations of his family. At the hotel that his family is staying at, Daniel meets a maid named Ana who longs to escape her current life in Spain. Together, the two discover the truth behind Franco's regime as well as the lasting consequences of his rule on the Spanish people.

The novel does a good job of weaving together the stories of the different characters so that they neatly come together to form an overarching narrative. It is divided into two parts, the first and longer one taking place in the 1950s and the second, shorter one focusing on the characters about twenty years later. The fact that the story constantly switches between the perspectives of each main character can make the book hard to follow at times, which may discourage some readers. Still, the plot of the book was intriguing enough to hold my attention and keep me wanting to learn more. The characters and their relationships were truly the backbone of this novel. The struggles that Ana's family went through were heart-wrenching and revealed so much about the harm that Franco caused through his reign. I also appreciated the use of historical documents and references throughout the book since I feel that it really grounded the story in the reality of Spain's history.

This book is a solid pick for those who are interested in historical fiction, especially when it involves romance. It is also a good way to learn more about the tumultuous history of Spain in a gripping format. I would recommend this book to readers 13 and older, especially those who are fans of Ruta Sepetys' writing style. I suggest borrowing this book from a library instead of buying it since the structure of the book may not be suitable for everyone. In summary, *The Fountain of Silence* is a good choice for readers looking for a slower-paced, dramatic novel with a unique setting and rich story.

Recommended Books:

Lovely War, Julie Berry

They Went Left, Monica Hesse

This Tender Land, William Kent Krueger

Code Name Verity, Elizabeth E. Wein