

# **Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections Study Guide**

**Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections by James A.  
Michener**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Iberia: Spanish Travels and Reflections Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Introduction.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Badajoz.....</a>	<a href="#">8</a>
<a href="#">Toledo.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Cordoba.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">Las Marismas.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Sevilla.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Madrid.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">Salamanca.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Salamanca.....</a>	<a href="#">29</a>
<a href="#">Barcelona.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">The Bulls.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Teruel.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>
<a href="#">Santiago de Compostela.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">42</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">47</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">50</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">52</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">54</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">56</a>



# Plot Summary

Iberia is a book about Spain as experienced by the writer James Michener. He recounts all of his memories, from the first time he set foot in the country, experiencing and unraveling Spanish stereotypes, and socially analyzing the way that Spaniards live their daily lives. Most every story that he tells has a purpose, though the meaning in some may seem obscure at first, he always ties everything back to the root of the it all: why Spain is the way it is. In the first chapter, the reader is introduced to the harsh life of rural Spaniards and not the Spain that everyone thinks of. There are no castanets in Teruel, rather a harsh reality that is covered by the stereotypes clad with flamenco dancers, bullfighters, and paella. The narrator then goes on to explore different cities, and throughout explains different memories taken from different walks of his life through the country.

The next two chapters are about Badajoz and Toledo, two completely different places that cannot be compared. Badajoz is in the region of Extremadura. Extremadura is where all of the conquistadors came from. Their audacity and ravenous nature is directly attributed to the harsh land that they came from. Anyone that comes from such a cruel place is bound to be cruel himself. The narrator talks about his experiences here and reveals his sadness at how untouched this region was by the wealth that came over from the New World that their own people brought over. Toledo, on the other hand, is a city that never lacked wealth. Its geographical position made it difficult for invaders to penetrate and this fortress of a city was well protected for many centuries. It housed many different cultures and religions. Here Christians, Jews and Muslims lived simultaneously with no problems for centuries. This happened in other places throughout Spain, such as in Granada, but it all came to a halt when Isabel the Catholic and Fernando came to power and eradicated all the Jews from the country and did the same with the Muslims.

The next two chapters are about Cordoba, one of the great Muslim influenced cities, and Las Marismas. The narrator goes to Cordoba first instead of Granada, because he wanted to experience Muslim Spain in a different way. Where everyone went to Granada, not too many made it to Cordoba which was actually the stronghold and more important of the Muslim cities in Spain. His reaction to the city was quite negative, and it takes him a while to warm up to the place. Las Marismas is a wetland region where the famous Concha Bulls are bred. He loves the place immediately and experiences Spanish nature at its best. Though the Spaniards are not doing much to preserve the wetlands, and he knows that they won't last for much longer despite the strong northern European push for conservation.

Sevilla and Madrid are next, two of Spain's finest and most important cities. Sevilla is probably the most enchanting city in Spain. The narrator was lucky enough to visit Sevilla during Holy Week and experiences amazing religious processions that date back to the seventeenth century. Madrid, the capital of Spain, is important because of its history and its power. The city was never thought of much before it became the capital, but it is an average international capital with so many people from all around the world.



The city is clad with professionals and intellectuals that help the narrator through his long journey through the country.

Salamanca and Pamplona are then introduced. Salamanca has the finest plaza mayor in all of Spain. While it used to be one of the more important cities, it fell into the control of religious fanatics that slowly deteriorated the city. It used to be the hub of intellectual life and the University of Salamanca was one of the best universities in Europe. Then it stopped accepting Jews, stopped teaching hard sciences and mathematics and registration dropped by over seventy percent. The university then became a type of finishing school for people with titles only and when the narrator was visiting Spain, only large titled families sent their kids to the University. In Pamplona, he takes the reader through the famous running of the bulls and more about the town of Pamplona that isn't usually talked about.

Barcelona is the city that everyone wants to go to and is the essence of Catalan life. It is so different from the rest of Spain that the narrator is enchanted by it, though he says that people should only take the essence of Barcelona in moderation. He then talks about the bulls of Spain and recounts more of his experiences at bullrings. He finishes his book by talking about the famous pilgrimage of Santiago de Compostella and how it is a life altering experience. Spain is a beautiful country that needs to be experienced, though a common mistake is expecting a perfect experience of one particular place in Spain. This never happens, but what does happen is a plethora of different encounters that make the trip worthwhile.



# Introduction

## Introduction Summary and Analysis

Iberia is a book about Spain as experienced by the writer James Michener. He recounts all of his memories, from the first time he set foot in the country, experiencing and unraveling Spanish stereotypes, and socially analyzing the way that Spaniards live their daily lives. Most every story that he tells has a purpose, though the meaning in some may seem obscure at first, he always ties everything back to the root of the it all: why Spain is the way it is.

The narrator begins his journey to Spain as a student from Glaskow. During the summer break worked on a fishing boat. The boat set sail to Valencia, Spain to pick up a shipment of oranges. The narrator had never been to Spain before and was really excited because he had only heard wonderful things about the country. After telling his boss about his interest in the country, he is given permission to land after they finish loading all the oranges. The difficult part, however, is actually getting on land since the ship never anchors at a port, rather waits out in the water for bargemen to bring the oranges to them in wooden crates. Several men tell the narrator that they can take him to shore for a small fee. He promises one man that he will go on shore with him and when the loading is complete he gets a ride to shore which puts him in Burriana. The bargeman invited him to a meal and they enjoyed a traditional sausage, bread, olive oil, and wine. The bargeman, who turned out to be around the same age as him but looked much older, became his tour guide and officially welcomed the narrator into Spain.

He spent his first night in a town called Castellon. There, the bargeman took him out on a "paseo" where men and women walk around the town square, in opposite directions and check each other out. At the same time, women in balconies target other men and throw darts with streamers at them. This means that the men have been granted permission by the ladies to approach their balconies to talk and take them out. The men know which balconies to approach because the streamers match the balconies. The narrator and the bargeman end up meeting with two women and go out to a zarzuela, which is a brief opera, and a comedy show. It was the perfect introduction.

The narrator thus explains his method of traveling. His primary goal is to talk to anyone that is willing to talk to him. He then goes to a bus or train station and buys a ticket to the last stop on the map. He goes to that town and stays there for a few days, sitting, talking, and learning all he can about the people. He observes their food, daily habits, and ways of life. Then he leaves and goes to another city where he does the same thing.

After having spent time in Castellon he buys a ticket to Teruel, a place not visited much by tourists. The train only had third class carriages which were boxcars with limited plank seating. More than half the passengers had to stand. He could tell that all the people were extremely poor as they all huddled together. Most of the trip was uphill and



the terrain was very tough though the people themselves were very kind and generous. The train stopped at a junction where he got off to buy some bread and cheese. He put these items into the pot of food that people were sharing and he was automatically accepted by them. The people were very open about their lives and talked about love, the rural life, and the festivals that happened annually in their small towns. He also found out that the tattered clothes they wore, was their best clothes. Most of them had clothes that had been patched up with several different color swatches and their shoes and hats were shabby with visible tears and holes.

When they got into Teruel he got his first introduction to the impoverished world of provincial Spain. The town was horrible and completely unappealing. He went out for his first walk and ran into a man that he had shared some bread and cheese with on the train the day before. The man invited him into his home, which the narrator regretted going into. The man lived in a tiny house with no floor. The floor was dirt that had been lived on for so long that it was hard and compacted. The walls were made of stone and had been packed with clay so they were weather proof. The house had one table, one chair, one cradle, and one bed in the two rooms. While visiting the man he asked him about everything that he possibly could and soon realized that this man had no real future, but was still happy living a simple life. The man, though poor, still had a good outlook on things and was glad he had as much as he did.

Afterwards he went out further into the city and ran into some church people. They looked completely different from the poorer people he met on the train, yet their behavior was equally as strong and good willed. He got to see a few of the better homes in Teruel and was impressed by the normal things that they had inside such as bookcases, tables, and full cupboards. He left Teruel with a greater understanding of the economic divide in the city.

Going back to Valencia, he was lucky enough to arrive on a Saturday that marked the end of the winter. The city was celebrating this festival by holding its traditional fireworks special. Valencia is known for their fireworks and is the fireworks capital of Europe. It always outdoes itself at the festivals and fallas, which are bonfires.

The people there were all attractive and boisterous, the cafes were filled, and the food there was amazing. The best cuisine they have is seafood because Valencia is a coastal city. The following day the narrator was invited to a bullfight by a professional picador, who personally chose his seat, and he saw three wonderful matadors. The first was very poetic, the second was a classicist, and the third was a new student that was proving he belonged in the ring. He learned what bullfighting was all about and saw it as the theatrical display that it is, and not a sport. It is a "tribal tragedy that dates back to prehistoric times" that is meant to show how man can confront the dangers of nature.

After the bullfight, the picador took him to a café where a famous flamenco dancer was performing. Because he could not understand the Valencian dialect too well, the picador found a woman for him that spoke South American style Spanish, which he understood a lot better. A fat bald man sat on a stool on stage with his guitar and began to play and sing, while the dancer came on stage. The man made the guitar wobble, sob, and sing.



The woman that accompanied the narrator explained the different styles of flamenco, which were malagueños, fandangos, and peteneros. The song that the guitarist sang was a petenero about a Jewish girl and it was absolutely enchanting. The dancer was in her mid forties, not at all that attractive, moved her feet about the floor with amazing talent.

The following day, he fell into the middle of a manifestation and by complete accident met the president of Spain, Niceto Alcalá Zamora. He thought him to be a man of good will, though he was not at all impressed by his presence. He had come to power just after Alfonso XIII left Spain so that he would not be abdicated. The president approached the narrator and said he knew he was a stranger and asked about his time in Valencia. He also asked where else he had visited. When he told him he had seen Teruel his only comment was: "Not many get to Teruel." Then he was gone.

The narrator got back to the shore in time to get back on the ship he was working on. He had seen poverty and wealth and an undying culture. He left Spain with a few speculations which are the reasons he decided to go back and write the book, *Iberia*.

The first question he had was why Spain hadn't evolved the way Italy had in economic and political terms. The second was why Spain had so much indecision when it came to controlling its empire when it controlled parts of Italy, France, and the Americas. It lost everything as a result. The third was that Spain was so hospitable in the past to other religions, holding Christianity, Judaism, and Islam within its borders, then it did a complete turn around and was thus one of the most closed of nations ever. What happened? The fourth is why the people were so different from the form of government that they had. They sought democracy, but they always elected aristocracies. The fifth is how Spain allowed the mismanagement of the wealth from the New World after being warned that, if they didn't manage things correctly, inflation would ruin the nation. The sixth again reflects on bad decisions and why the manufacturing of goods in Spain was not managed the way it should have been. The seventh question addresses the art of Spain. How and why did all the talent leave the country? The eighth is between Spain and the church and the complex relationship that they have that is contradictory to the ideas that Spain has for itself. The ninth is about the inner turmoil that Spaniards have themselves. They are so earthen and liberal, yet so closed off and paranoid.

The book is meant to make people think about these speculations and to try to answer some of the questions, though it does not answer all of them. It is a beautiful land of contradictory values that only its natives can really understand and appreciate.



# Badajoz

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# Toledo

## Toledo Summary and Analysis

When the narrator first gets to Toledo, he is completely turned off by the city and says that anyone that even thinks of spending the night there is completely crazy. It is noisy, the hotel workers are rude, and the accommodations inhospitable. The food is horrible.

He first goes to a restaurant and orders from the regular menu. When he sees that there is tourist menu, which the government has created just for tourists to get a special deal on food and wine, he wants to take his order back and order from that menu. The waiter tells him it is impossible to do so because he has already written it down. When he speaks to management, they tell him the same thing. It is impossible because it is already written down. He decides to leave and eat at a different place. When he orders at this place, he chooses the chicken. He spots an English couple who have ordered the partridge and when they make a face after taking a bite out of the bird, he tells them that it is quite normal, and that is how the Spanish make their food. They don't cook the bird. They simply hang and serve it. The Englishmen don't believe him, until his chicken comes and it is the exact same way. Neither tables were able to eat their meal, and the Spanish say that it is because only the French know how to eat good food.

To really appreciate Toledo, a person has to see it from far away first. It is a fortress that sits on top of a huge rock that is protected by the Tajo River on three sides. The fourth side is protected by a natural escarpment that acts as a bulwark that armies were never able to overcome. There are two main features of Toledo, which are the Alcazar and the Gothic Cathedral.

The Visigoths were a Germanic tribe from the north had the greatest impact in Toledo. They created a tax system, codified law, a sensible government, as well as Spanish character and many of the blue eyes seen in Spaniards. The Visigoths lost power of Toledo when Roderick, a king that took over in 709 raped a young girl that was bathing in the river. The girl was the daughter of Rigoletto who sought revenge on the king by inviting the Muslims into Toledo and showing them how to invade the city. The Visigoths lost, and the Muslims took power and held that power for many centuries.

The Gothic Cathedral of Toledo was started in 1227 and took over two hundred and fifty years to finish. The narrator goes to the big cathedral and talks about the thing with the holes in the walls and why it was such a big deal to Isabel that it be hidden. As soon as he walks in, he sees three things that strike him which are the Capilla de Santiago, the choir and altar in the center of the cathedral, and the large sweep of the isle. The cathedral is filled with stained glass windows, vaultings, crisscrosses with various angles and planes. The first the narrator notices in the Capilla de Santiago, which is a chapel inside the cathedral, is a bright merry-go-round covered in gold and shells. The Santiago displayed in the chapel is Santiago Matamoros, which means Santiago the Moor Slayer. Below are two tombs that house the bodies of Conde Alvaro de Luna and



his wife. The Conde became a confidant of Isabel the Catholics father, King Juan II. He used his connection to gain power and soon had so much money that he became the most "notorious legal thief" in Spanish history. The Queen, Isabel of Portugal, was so concerned that she had her husband find some charge to arrest him. He was executed and buried in the chapel. His family then decided to place a huge portrait statue of him over the burial site. This statue was rigged with a system of pulleys that a person moved during mass to disrupt the service and is thought to be the first mechanical man.

The narrator recounts many wonderful pieces of art, especially panels that depict life in Spain after the Conquest of Granada as Ferdinand and Isabel wanted to remember it, though not as it happened. There are tons of figures that represent the Renaissance movement in Spain from 1539-1543. They were created by a Frenchman named Felipe Vigarni de Borgona, and a Spaniard named Alonso de Berruguete. Some of the most amazing works are the golden reredos, which the narrator describes as being intricate, ornate, and dreamlike. Because of where they are placed, Queen Isabel hired someone to open a hole into the stonewalls behind the main altar so that light could shine through on the reredos and make them more spectacular. The hole is known as the Transparente.

When visiting the sacristy, two things stand out. The first is a piece of art by El Greco, called the Spoliation of Christ where Christ is depicted in bright red and the faces of the people around him pop in agony. The second is the Arresting of Christ on a Mount of Olives and by Goya, a more practical painter. Both pictures depict Christ as if he lived in Spain, and not in Jerusalem. .

Toledo used to make the finest swords in Europe. However, most people buy them in Madrid because they are less expensive, even though they aren't as high quality. This is because in Toledo, sellers used to go through agencies and would sell a two dollar bracelet for three dollars, for example, and then pay the agency the dollar for bringing them business. Senor Simon said he thus started his own business to avoid these agencies, which were discovered by another writer who told everyone to get what they wanted in Madrid, and avoid the middlemen. Senor Simon also tells the narrator that the gold they use comes from Madrid, but he believes they buy it from Germany. In the store they are in, they make everything from brooches, swords, knives, pillboxes, and other metal objects that have been made for centuries. They use ancient Moorish techniques.

Afterwards, the narrator heads to a restaurant called El Placido, owned by a Senor Diaz. He talks to the narrator about the restaurant businesses and explains that his is honest, unlike those in the main part of town that seek to take money from tourists. He says the problem with other restaurants is that they don't understand the tourists that come in. They only like dealing with the French who know how to eat Spanish cuisine, and any other tourist, be they American or British, can't appreciate fine dining, so they choose not to deal with them.

He then wanders into a store that makes marzipan, or mazapan in Spanish. It is a pressed almond paste that is glazed with sugar. The factory the narrator goes to is



owned by Rodrigo Martinez. The key is to get the right amount of almonds, which is around fifty percent, and enough sugar. If there is too much sugar, then the mix tastes bad and you lose the good almond taste. They get almonds from orchards south of Valencia and are considered better than those in the Arab countries are.

After the marzipan factory, the narrator goes to the famed church, Santa Maria La Blanca. Its history dates back to San Vicente Ferrer, a Dominican orator who was famous for his ability to convert Jews to Christianity. During one of his sermons in Toledo the people became so enthralled with his words that they went out into town in search of all the Jews they could find, cut their throats, and threw them onto the rocks below where they stood. Almost all of the Jews in Toledo were killed and their synagogue was converted into the church, Santa Maria La Blanca.

He finishes tour of Toledo by talking about Carlos V and his influence on Spain. It is amazing that there were so many influential leaders in the world while Carlos V reigned, and all of them except him were able to evolve their governments and make their countries modern. Carlos V for some reason just did not do the work. He was rarely even in Spain and was gone for years at a time, the longest stretch being fifteen. He did however go back to Spain to die at a place near Toledo. The priests of the church where he died said it was much more spectacular than it really was. They made it seem like he was getting into tune with natural Spain, that he died alone in deep thought. Yet later it is discovered that he died with several hundred of people with the best of food and had all of the luxuries that he was used to.



# Cordoba

## Cordoba Summary and Analysis

Cordoba was the capital of the Muslim occupation. The narrator chose to go here first because it held onto its Muslim heritage long after the moors were expelled from Granada. It lies on the right bank of the Guadalquivir River. One of Spain's most famous orators and philosophers was from the area. His name was Lucius Seneca and was a Roman and the "foremost Spaniard that ever lived." He was one of the first to realize that Spaniards have a problem with government in that they don't know how to govern themselves. The narrator finds it amazing that this problem was seen so long ago, and yet nothing has really been done about it. Spain considers itself the leading Catholic nation, and places a lot of pride in Seneca because he seemingly embraced Christianity, though this is not completely accepted or confirmed in the academic world.

The narrator then discusses another famous Cordoban, and Spaniard, a Jew by the name of Moses Maimonides whom he says was intellectually the most brilliant Spaniard. He was a medical doctor and a religious philosopher. A statue of him was erected in the town square.

A third person that the narrator introduces is Cardinal Hosius. He was the fiercest churchman and the greatest contribution to church history in Spain. A fourth person that the narrator mentions is Averroes who was a philosopher that codified Islamic thought and introduced Aristotle to the western world. Spain had in one concentrated area the "finest pagan of Spanish history, the finest churchman, the outstanding Jew, and the most brilliant Muslim."

The moors crossed over into Spain on April 7, 711 from Africa and gained control of Cordoba during that year where they stayed until June 29, 1236. Even though they were in Spain longer than the Romans, it is easier to find Roman ruins than Islamic ones because they have been so well masked. Contrary to popular belief, a Moor is not an Arab. A Moor can be black or white and is generally anyone from Northern Africa that follows the Islamic faith. Cordoba was a mightier city than Granada was until the Christians came and conquered the city. The only reason Granada took longer to conquer was because it was geographically harder to invade.

The narrator takes a trip out into Cordoba's country to see the ruins of Medinat Az-Zahra which was a Sultan's grand palace of immense size. Nowadays it is nothing but shabby ruins and almost impossible to understand or imagine how it could have been so grand. The narrator is unimpressed by it and says that if a person does not have a good imagination then he should just stay away from the place. In the east stands the Great Mosque that the narrator is already convinced will be a disappointment. When he entered the mosque, he found himself in an "architectural fairy tale." He then went to see the Mihrab, which is a place that indicates the kiblah, or the direction that all Muslims have to face when they do their daily prayers. It was the best that he had ever



seen, even compared to some in Islamic countries. The Great Mosque was an infusion of the Muslim and Christian religions and it was of such great scale that architects of the day were able to fit a full sized cathedral within the columns of the mosque. This however was a complete monstrosity in the center of the mosque. While it is understandable why the Christians would erect a church within the mosque, they could have done a better job at doing so.

After leaving the Great Mosque, the narrator goes into the old Jewish Quarter, which he is completely enchanted by. After Jewish expulsion, it was inhabited by Christian Spaniards and remains inhabited to this day. One thing that the narrator loves about Cordoba is how the people keep their walls white, and place blue pots outside with their flowers. It is a color known as Muslim blue.

The narrator introduces flamenco in this chapter. Flamenco is a "Spanish art form that combines guitar playing, singing, chanting, dancing and staccato hand clapping. Most people believe that it was brought over by the Moors and Jewish overtones were introduced into it, yet others believe that it derived from gypsy patterns from Asia rather than Africa. That would make Flamenco far newer since the gypsies didn't arrive until 1435. The room for the Flamenco is generally an old stone cellar with old iron doors. The narrator thought he would be in for a treat since his first Flamenco experience in Valencia had been magical. He was fairly disappointed however, by this act. The act was more stereotypical flamenco rather than authentic and was geared more for the tourists than for the creation of art. Here the narrator concludes, "Spain runs a considerable risk of cheapening the very things that made her attractive to tourists." The culture is being made a mockery of, and Spain is doing a good job at helping the sad situation.

He had a great time during his final days in Cordoba, which were better because of the charming parador that he was staying in. He writes that the people in Andalusia have a different accent than Castilian. They don't pronounce much of their consonants or the letter "s" yet they keep the syllables in tact. For instance, the word for "same" in Castilian would be "mismo" and in Andalusian would be "meemo" and whereas bullfighter in Castilian is "matador" in Andalusian it is "matao."

Being in Cordoba made the narrator obsessed with Muslim Spain, so he decided that he would go to Granada. His driving companion decided to show him a different view of Granada, one that the tourists don't usually take. Instead of seeing the might Alhambra first, the driver took him to the edge of a cliff where he could see mountains and valleys, and the town that was protected against the Christians for so long. For such a long time, Muslims helped Christian kings and vice versa. This lasted for until 1482 when Isabel and Fernando finally decided that they wanted the Muslims out and with a united Spain took the city over. El Ultimo Suspiro del Moro, or The Last Sigh of the Moor, is the place where Boabdil is believed to have stopped, looked back at his city and rode on in defeat.

The driver then takes him to the Alhambra where first his attention is drawn to a hill where all the gypsies live, then to the fortress. It is so vast that he doesn't realize the



entire thing is the Alhambra. It is a long enclosed wooded area with beautiful gardens. He was not at all disappointed by the Alhambra and it was much more of a Muslim experience than Cordoba had been. He felt as if he was in a dream walking through the impressive courtyards with reflection pools, arches, and beautiful gardens. Then he stumbled across the shell of Santiago that was used as an ornamental device and was the symbol of force that ousted the Muslims from Granada. In a room off from the Courtyard of Lions was the Star of David and he states that "in Spain, one finds old memories in unexpected places."

The narrator believes that expelling the Muslims from Spain was the saddest thing that Spain had ever done. Since expelling its Moors Spain went into a deep decline of power that it was never able to recover from. A writer named Bertrand believes that the Muslims left three things behind. The concept of the university, though they were terrible, art and poetry, and the individualism that Spaniards have which makes it difficult if not impossible to govern them. He also says that Spaniards are bloodthirsty and have an unnatural desire for gold that is also a Muslim trait and that the Muslim expulsion was the best thing to happen to the country. The narrator only agrees with Bertrand on one aspect and that is their inability to govern themselves. The Muslims are responsible for this because instead of unifying the nation, they set separate principalities with separate economies and prevented Spain to unify. Therefore, economic separatism became a habit of Spain, and its biggest curse.

Though the narrator does agree that Muslims left bad traits, he also says that they brought a lot of class to the country, especially in their architecture. The Alhambra is amazing, though the Carlos V palace that was built inside is a monstrosity and should never have been built. Within the Alhambra are the bodies of Isabel and Fernando. They are buried in a crypt in leaden caskets without any frills. Anyone that wishes to visit their bodies is free to do so. Also buried in the same area are Felipe I, known in English as Phillip the Handsome, who was a miserable king and his daughter Juana La Loca. In the sacristy that is next to the chapel where the four members of Spanish royalty are buried are two wooden statues of Isabel and Fernando kneeling on purple pictures and praying, the way that people always assumed they were. The amazing statues are hand carved and each strand of hair is painted black.

On his way back to his parador, the narrator sees the Torre Bermeja on a map. He never knew that it was a place that actually existed and thought it was only mentioned in songs and poems. He decided to go look at it. It was a Moorish tower that was never taken care of, but would have been impressive if the citizens of Granada cared about it. He assumed that they had other more important things to care about, like the Alhambra, and understood why this was of no comparison. He asked a person nearby about it and he was told it used to be a jail. This side trip served an important purpose to his understanding of Spain. It showed him that the romanticism that exists in the nation is not always so valid. At times, it is carried way out of proportion with reality. Some things just aren't as they are foretold. Spain is thought to have no other alternative to offer rather than romance to the people of northern Europe.





# Las Marismas

## Las Marismas Summary and Analysis

The Las Marismas region in Southern Spain is comprised of tidelands that are supported by the Guadalquivir River and the Atlantic Ocean. It is a region that is forty miles from north to south and thirty-five miles from west to east. It is not a square area, however, and is less than a thousand square miles where only three hundred thousand acres of that area is actually marshland. During the wet season, there is about three inches of water that covers long grasses. The rest is usually dry year round.

The Concha and Sierra Bulls, the most famous type of bulls, are raised in Las Marismas. When the narrator arrives, he meets up with a matador from the area who takes him to see the bulls. They set out on horseback and they spot one bull, then about fifteen or twenty slowly rise from the horizon. They calmly moved towards the two, checking them out as they got closer. The matador said that they wouldn't charge as long as they stayed on the horses.

Las Marismas is a grand bird sanctuary. At different seasons, there are different birds that land at Las Marismas. The Guadalquivir River itself never freezes over and in winter tides from the ocean fall into the swamps. Flooding reaches its height in January, and people move across the area by boat. Animals take refuge on higher ground and several million birds from northern Europe fly down to breed. Three hundred thousand game ducks and ten thousand geese moved in during the winter. They get their food from the marsh grasses. People tend to leave Las Marismas alone during the winter and it is a resting time for the birds and animals.

In the spring, the rain stops and evaporation starts and what used to be all water is now ninety percent grass. Birds lay several hundred eggs in what appear to be floating nests, which are just parts of the land that are elevated, with water surrounding them. People then go around in small boats and collect the eggs. Though they pick thousands altogether, the bird population hasn't seemed to drop at all. In the summer, temperatures reach well above the hundreds. Jackrabbits appear and with them come the lynx and fox, which are always on the prowl. As the water dries up, fat carp become exposed and are easy prey for scavengers. It is hard to believe that Las Marismas is a swampland at all when viewed during the dryness of the summer. Even though it is dry, there are spots where water has accumulated in the earth and quicksand develops. Many people have lost their lives falling into these natural death traps.

In the fall the temperature drops and the first rains start to come in. With this, the first migration of birds begins. The change begins with the first rain, which is September 20th-25th. This is a moderate rain and in October, after the 13th, the heavy rain comes and seeps into the earth reactivating the plants that died in the summer. This is the time that the people focus most on Las Marismas, as it is the best time to hunt for deer they store for the winter.



Las Marismas is naturally beautiful, but the Spaniards have a bad reputation for not caring about natural beauty. The French are guilty for saying that Africa starts south of the Pyrenees. This is so when it comes to natural resource abuse. The only ones who care about the land are the farmers, and in Spain, anyone who works with his hands is a lower class citizen. Being a farmer is not a distinguished way of life, and the abuse of the land begins with class. Interestingly enough, it was fine for people to herd sheep. This was because of the wool that Spanish sheep provided. It was of very good quality and people spent lots of money for it. The nobles decided that it would be in the best interest of Spain to give herders free reign of the land to let their sheep graze. A huge sheep cooperative developed called La Mesta. Only gentlemen were allowed to join, and it was a major economic agency from 1300-1800. All fields had to be open for the sheep to graze and this destroyed farmers' crops. The Mesta began to decline however, and Spain was left with less sheep and even less land to grow food. Whenever a farmer had a good idea about how to manage the land, he was always silenced because it was more important to figure out how to grow the sheep population. With no hope left, most of the gentlemen from the area moved to Barcelona or Germany.

One of the nicest parts of Las Marismas is the Coto Donana or the Wildlife Preserve of Dona Ana. It is a large area that is part swampland, part sand dune. Water forms into semi connected lakes that are strung together like beads. It has lots of single standing oak trees, shrubs, and low grasses and is a near perfect haven for birds. The Coto began with lots of pressure from the northern European countries. They wanted the Spaniards to preserve their swamplands so that the bird populations would survive. If the Spaniards didn't do their part, then nobody would be able to enjoy the beautiful birds that breed in the area and fly north during the summer.

While touring the Coto, Senor Ybarra, the narrator's tour guide, asked about a woman that became a depositada to a Spanish acquaintance he ran into at the park. He explained that in Spain it was tricky to get a good girl to marry into a family. The girl could be married off as yearly as seventeen. The girl is free to marry whoever she wants once she is twenty-one but only if she leaves her parents house, which then lowers her valor as a woman. If the woman stays at home, which most women of good families often do to ensure they maintain a dowry, and then she cannot until she is twenty-five without her parents consent. Parents and the Church usually want a girl to marry early so that she can have children easier. If a girl wants to marry someone that the parents have not approved of, she can go to the court, explain her situation, and then be deposited in another relative's house that become her legal guardians. They then act as the parents and inspect the young man and their relationship. In as little as six months, the relatives can say whether she can marry the man. A loophole exists however, where a man can bypass the courting process altogether and simply "steal" the woman and marry her without any consent. If they do this, however, they lose the dowry and any inheritance they might have had. They also lose respect and shame the family.

Senor Ybarra later tells the narrator about a tragedy that could become of the Las Marismas Madrid is thinking about damming off the Guadalquivir in order to flood areas for rice and wheat production since they want to be part of the European Common Market. In order to do that, they need to show the rest of Europe that they are not



economically backwards and they have to do something to increase revenue and gross domestic product to the nation.

The narrator got to know the Marismas well, as well as the wildlife that flourished from it. He knew however that it would not last much longer and that soon he would only have his memories.



# Sevilla

## Sevilla Summary and Analysis

The best time to visit Sevilla is during Holy Week, which is over on Easter Sunday. About six weeks into the Spring, there are six major diversions. The first is the profound religious festival the second is a huge rustic fair, the third is a congregation of circuses from all over Europe, the fourth is an open-air carnival, followed by a daily program of social events and promenades, and lastly a series of bullfights in Spain's most amazing plaza. To enjoy the six-part spectacle, a person has to arrive before Palm Sunday and stay until Easter, which could be three to five weeks long.

The narrator meets a man named on Francisco Mendoza Ruiz who takes him through the weeks and teaches him the meanings of the rituals. He is a banker with a small family and lives in a small house in the Jewish Quarter. He first unpacks a costume that looks like it is from the Middle Ages. He then takes out a deep purple tunic that covers him from neck to shoe tip and tops off his outfit with a three foot pointed hat with a broad cape much like the hats that the Ku Klux Klan. In fact, the KKK modeled their robes and hats after those worn during Holy Week.

Don Francisco is part of a confraternity. There are about fifty-five in Sevilla alone that all belong to a separate parish church. It is like a lodge or brotherhood, and they meet throughout the year to gather money for their different churches and especially for Holy Week processions. When the sun goes down, it is time for everyone to go to church to begin the first procession that kicks off the next seven days. Each confraternity is responsible for a float. Don Francisco's church has two. The twenty-foot long by nine-foot wide and fifteen-foot tall floats are carefully inspected before they begin their trip through the city. The route that the floats follow was created over a century ago and takes about twelve hours to complete. Each float holds a religious depiction of some sort, one of which shows "Christ at the Crucifixion surrounded by Roman guard," which goes out first. Another is of the Virgin Mary, and she gets the most attention. When her float enters, the public people cry out "Oh darling Virgin," "sweetest Virgin," and even "you make all the other virgins look like whores." Many people cry as she passes them by.

The floats, some dating back to the seventeenth century, are carried by men of the city. It is taken very seriously and is an extreme honor to be able to help carry a float. It takes thirty-five men to carry one float. Each one of them has to dress alike, and carry a sack of sawdust and sand on their head. They then go underneath the float, which is built on top of a flat wooden board and is held about four feet off the ground so the men can crawl under. The men's legs are masked by a brocade skirt that hides their feet, and they then parade through the town with the float atop their heads, giving the illusion that the float is moving on its own. The men are directed only by the captain's orders and are paid one dollar each to carry the half-ton float. Usually a few extra men will follow along and substitute in for another when the task becomes too difficult. If there is a traffic jam



due to another float crossing in a different direction, the men will lower the float, wait for the other to pass and scramble out for air. It also isn't uncommon for the men to wander into a bar for drinks while the other float passes.

One hundred floats go out on different schedules. Some go out at one in the morning and their carriers stagger home at noon. It is a huge honor to carry a float and it serves as penance, or forgiveness of sins. Don Francisco says that the greatest honor is for a man to carry a float of Jesus Christ on Good Friday, and to do so barefoot has no match.

There were three things about the processions that stuck in the narrator's mind. The first was that each float was accompanied by armed Spanish soldiers. The second was that the Guardia Civil was always nearby guarding the processions for the church, waiting for someone to cause chaos. The third was that every politician had an active role in Holy Week since it was clear they wouldn't get elected if they did not openly participate in the processions. He also had two insights to Holy Week that he would never forget. The first was when Don Francisco's float came to a stop to rest and the narrator stood face to face with the overly exhausted man. He could see Don Francisco's devotion to the procession and to Jesus Christ as he stood by the float looking as though he was about to faint. The second was watching La Macarena pass by in the Sierpes, the most romantic street in all of Sevilla.

When the floats pass by, it is common for people to go into a religious fervor where they simply have to shout, cry, and sing when their beloved statues are passing by. These are known as saeta, which are religious outcries. While most are spontaneous, some are obviously staged because of their perfection and beauty.

Part of the processions path is through Sevilla's Cathedral. It is enormous, and the most impressive in Spain. One of its corners has a great Moorish tower, called La Giralda, which used to be part of a mosque that was torn down to put the cathedral in. The other is the Patio de los Naranjos, or Court of the Orange Trees, which is a walled in garden of orange trees. When the floats arrive to the cathedral, they stop to get blessed, the penitents and the confraternity kneel in front of the altar, then everyone gets out to relax and freshen up at the nearest bar before they have to get back under the float and go back home.

Holy Week isn't simply about religion, and there are things that go on, like drinking and initial sexual experiences that prove that. It is a time when boys look up women's skirts who stand on the balconies above, or when a float passes through Sierpes, a boy and girl will press up against each other and kiss as the Virgin goes by.

Once Holy Week is over, there is a huge gypsy fair and the famous horse fair that dates back two thousand years to Roman times when the Romans would buy horses for the generals of the armies. Horse traders from all over Spain go to the fair to test their trading skills against the gypsies who are said to be the best at trading, bargaining, and swindling. It is a wonderful game that people of all ages participate in. The Spaniards will use the gypsies as middlemen, because two Spanish farmers can never trust each



other. The middleman gypsy is called a comprador, or a purchaser, and his goal is to bring suspicious farmers into contact with each other and do all the bargaining between the two and to get his commission from the buyer.

After the religious processions and the gypsy fair, the real Sevilla fair, as it is commonly called, takes place. Circus tents go up in the center of Sevilla with acts from all over the world in the first area. In the second area, there is a carnival with rides, games, and restaurants. The third area is filled with casetas, or little houses, that have been erected by locals and each has food, music, and entertainment, however these are private and a person has to be invited to go in. Some large businesses will put up their own casetas and charge a fee for people to get in. This is usually the only way for an American, or any other foreigner, to experience a caseta. Everyone goes to and from all three of these attractions, young and old, and everything is open twenty-four hours a day.

Each day at noon there is a parade where a person can view the Spanish high society of Sevilla. Horses are lined up and men get saddle up in fine clothing with their women dressed in traditional gypsy costumes sitting behind them across the horse. Members from the gentry also ride in this parade and everyone dresses in dark colors. However, the most stunning visions are the beribboned horses and the ornate carriages that pull along beautiful women in colorful gowns. Anyone can join in on the parade simply by hiring a horse drawn taxi.

After the parade, the narrator lays in bed thinking about Spanish history and its nobles. During the 1400's most of Europe cut down on the absolute power that the nobles had, while Spain continued to give their nobles god-like strength. In fact, the nobles were given even more power than they originally had and they dominated well into the nineteenth century. They told priests what to preach, terrorized schoolteachers, put newspapermen out of business, and controlled over the cabinet, the army the Church hierarchy and agriculture. This power ultimately doomed Spain because the nobles were anti-industrialization, they misused the military, and they didn't allow the Church to modernize. The nobles only cared about themselves and let the divide between them and the commoners grow wider into two extremes of rich and poor. "No nation in Europe, except possibly Hungary and Romania, has been so badly served by its upper classes as Spain."



# Madrid

## Madrid Summary and Analysis

The Puerta del Sol is an intimate plaza that is shaped like a half circle with ten streets that debouch into it. Puerta del Sol means the Sun's door and is the spirit of Madrid. The Plaza Mayor is the main square in Madrid. It is absolutely beautiful with massive buildings and stone arcades. An equestrian statue stands in the middle that summarizes the history of the plaza. The Plaza is directly linked to Spain's most unfortunate king, Carlos II, or el Hechizado (the bewitched), as he was called by the people. He used the Plaza to hold inquisition trials and sentencing. He was the last member of the Spanish Habsburgs and had inherited all of their weaknesses, suffering severely from mental disorder. When he died, the Borbon rulers took the Spanish throne. The Plaza Mayor has since lost its vigor and is an empty area where not much goes on though it is a portal to the famous Rastro, or slaughterhouse, which is an amazing open-air market where thousands of people go to buy anything from clothes to Chevy carburetors and Roman coins.

The narrator prefers Madrid to what it used to be like, rather than what it is. He states it is an overcrowded metropolis with too much new growth, horrible traffic, and teenagers with no respect for the old ways of life. However, the newspapers have gotten better and the heavy censorship that they used to live under is being lifted a bit so people can get a general idea of what is happening in Spain. The culture in Madrid has changed dramatically. One of the biggest changes has been the "revolution of the Sueca."

Suecas, which literally means Swiss women, are considered any woman coming from the northern European countries. They are much more liberal and free spirited than the Spanish women and flock to the beaches of Spain during the winter months. They go topless, which makes it hard to enforce the rules that the government established for people at the beach that made everyone, including men, keep their shirts on. These women are also extremely eager for winter love and short affairs with Spanish men. They are supposedly easy to get into bed and once their vacation is over, they go back to their countries with no guilt or remorse. Getting a Sueca is easy for Spaniards and according to the narrator makes them happier, more free spirited, and anyone with a Sueca lives a better life. For a Spaniard to get a Spanish woman he used to have to go through a set of steps that were required for proper courtship. He had to watch her in church, say a quick hello afterwards, could walk her home, and was allowed to hold her hand for five minutes at a time at a show. Other small steps would eventually lead to a kiss, another date, meeting the families, and maybe even marriage. If a man didn't go through all of the established steps then a woman felt cheated and therefore could stop a man dead in his tracks for not respecting her enough. However, when the Suecas came, the women were losing their men and started getting a bit more liberal too, which included kissing in public, something that nobody had ever done previously. In the end, the men actually believed that the old way was better in the long run, because they could never really respect a woman that was not a virgin when she got married. It was



better for society for a woman to preserve herself, but much more fun for everyone if she didn't.

The narrator later seeks out a man named Manolo Torres who he had read about several times in papers and reviews. He was an esteemed man with a positive reputation. He was famous for his flan. Flan is an egg custard with a caramel encrusted top. Everyday he makes a batch of flan around noontime and people from Madrid flock to eat it. He is so famous, and makes such good flan that it became customary for top business officials to have his flan before making a big decision. It brought some kind of good omen to a business deal and became part of Madrid superstition. After Don Manolo tells the narrator how to make his wonderful flan, the narrator asks him what else he does. He mentions that the rest of his spare time is devoted to the theatre, especially the zarzuela. A zarzuela is a small play that is half spoken and sung that has dancing comedy, and music and came about in the nineteenth century, though it died off in the twentieth. What it lacks is a sustained musical narration that makes it a lesser art form than an opera and it does not have mature dramatic themes. Don Manolo states that he likes them that way and that they are part of Madrid's charm and should be left alone.

Zarzuelas led to a very fun custom in Madrid, which are tapas bars. In the Teatro de Zarzuela district, there are tons of tiny bars all lined up that each specialize in a different tapa, or appetizer. Some of the most famous tapas are: Serrano ham, manchego cheese, anchovies, eel, mussels and clams. There are many more, and almost anything can be a tapa. The best thing to do is to eat only the best tapa that a certain bar has, then move on to another bar that has a different specialization. One downfall that the narrator states is that each tapa is served with mayonnaise, which he finds appalling since most of the food can stand by itself and is delicious the way it is.

Another important aspect of Spanish life is soccer. The Estadio Bernabau is the home of Real Madrid, Madrid's home team. The main problem with soccer is that the people get so wound up in the game that they may take things too far when the referee makes a bad call, or a seemingly bad call. Referees have to consider their safety at all times and many have been badly hurt, and even kicked to death when the home team suffers a loss due to a call. After going to a few games, the narrator realizes how the referees work to ensure their safety, and usually games will end up in ties, or close losses where the home team usually wins.

The narrator discussed this with his friends in a tertulia that he became a part of. He breaks down the way a tertulia works by showing colorful narrative. First, the tertulia starts by talking about soccer, which branches into the way Spaniards speak. A respectable Spaniard speaks the Castilian dialect, which means that whenever there is a "C" or a "Z" they pronounce it as a "th" and not an "s" as it is done in other regions of Spain and all throughout Latin America. Only one third of Spaniards use this dialect, but if a person wants to be taken seriously in business or academia, he or she must adopt the dialect. The tertulia then veers into talking about the first person who circumnavigated the globe, which to most people was Magellan. However, the Spaniards believe it was a Spaniard named Sebastian Elcano. The tertulia goes on for





days discussing this issue, each man bringing research day in and day out until finally they all agree to disagree and hold their own beliefs. Finally, things go into politics, which is a tough thing to talk about in Spain, and the men discuss the fate of Spain after Generalissimo Franco dies.

Most of the answers were similar stating Spain would survive as it was without a civil war, but that things couldn't change too drastically because the Spaniards wouldn't be able to handle it. Spain is like a three-legged stool and cannot be treated too roughly or it will tumble. The three parts are the church, the landed families, and the army.

The Church is separated into two halves, one being a conservative part, the other liberal and both constantly fighting for power. The second leg is the army, which nobody can talk bad about because it is what has kept the nation together for so long. The third leg belongs to the landed families that have been true to Spain, are educated, disciplined, and conservative. A landed family in Andalusia will live much as it did one hundred years from now despite pressure from the army and the church to liberalize a bit. The legs of the stool are in a power struggle and if one tries to change another too fast, the entire structure will fall.

When Franco dies, this oligarchic structure needs to remain intact, because nobody wants to go through another civil war. Because Spain is so pro-monarchy, one possibility is bringing in a member of the previous royal family to come in and rule, however he will be more of a representative monarch rather than a dictator. There are three possible men up for the throne, of which the young Juan Carlos has the best chance of taking the throne. It is hard to really be sure if a monarchy is the way to go because Spain has had such bad luck with their rulers in the past who have shared so much mental disorder. In addition, the monarchic lines have died out twice in Spain already so that it doesn't share the consistency that other monarchies have.



# Salamanca

## Salamanca Summary and Analysis

Salamanca has the best plaza in all of Spain, and possible in the world. It is very harmonious with matching balconies and windows and is filled with sidewalk cafes with deep human warmth that other plazas lack. The best part of the Salamanca's Plaza Mayor that is lined with fine stores and serves as shelter from the heat as well.

The University of Salamanca used to be the best university in Europe. However, over time, it became a place where only the nobles could go. During the civil war, it lost all of its authenticity. It stopped teaching Jews, boys from untitled families, and it even stopped instructing its students in mathematics. It became a finishing school for the nobles and registration dropped from seven to eight thousand to only three hundred students by the year 1824.

One of the best things that the narrator encountered was being in the room where Queen Isabel the Catholic was born. She makes all other women of her age, and even some of the men seem puny and insignificant. She accomplished much and confronted war, Muslims, and philosophical ideals and triumphed over all the challenges she faced and left the kingdom more solid than ever before. "She was a colossus of her age," though she was never fully recognized as such. "Militarily, financially, and spiritually she left Spain a bulwark among nations," and did a much better job than her grandson Carlos V and great grandson Felipe II did in ruling Spain, though they are often given much more credit. When she died, the country separated again and her husband was so upset that the Kingdom of Castilla went to his daughter Juana, he remarried a few months after Isabel's death. His nineteen-year-old bride was Germaine de Foix of France and he married her to piss off the Spaniards and to create an heir to his throne of the Kingdom of Aragon. Their first son died, and she had apothecaries make a concoction for him to be more fertile since he was so old, but the potion ended up killing him instead.

Isabel's daughter Juana, known as Juana La Loca or Juana the Crazy One, is said to have been mentally instable. She bore a son Carlos V, who when he became old enough took the throne and had his mother locked away for more than fifty years. The narrator says that he finds it hard to believe that Juana's sane son ruined Spain and believes the insane Juana would have done a better job at ruling.

The narrator recounts a story about Spanish and Portuguese power struggles. Felipe II always wanted Portugal to reunite with Spain. After all, it had always been part of Spain throughout history. Portugal only had two royal members left. King Sebastian was childless. When he died, power would go to Cardinal Henrique who was also childless. When Henrique died, the crown would go to Felipe II because he was the Sebastian's cousin and next heir to the Portuguese throne, and then he would be able to unify Spain and Portugal. King Sebastian didn't want to unify, but did have ambitious goals of



conquering parts of Africa. He sent out the Portuguese armada. Felipe II said he would help, but changed his mind at the last second, knowing that Sebastian would fail, and Sebastian was killed during battle, though nobody knew when or where. When Cardinal Henrique took power, he tried to get the Pope to approve a marriage between him and a thirteen-year-old to attempt to make an heir. The request never got approved and Henrique died without an heir. Felipe II thus took Portugal and unified the two countries, though the Portuguese never let go of their identity and never accepted being Spanish. The people of Portugal then came up with a theory that King Sebastian had to be alive. They said that since nobody saw him die, he was surely in hiding because he knew that Felipe II wanted him dead and he was just waiting for the right time to come out of hiding. It had just happened in Russia, so surely it could be possible in Portugal.

In Madrigal de Las Torres, a beautiful and intriguing place for an old King to be in hiding, Dona Ana de Austria, one of Carlos V illegitimate granddaughters, was being held in a convent. She had a good relationship with her confessor, a man named Fray Miguel de los Santos who was an Augustinian monk. What the family did not know was that this same Fray was the former preacher to the royal family of Portugal. He put it in Dona Ana's head that it was horrible for her to be locked in this convent and that she would be a better suitor to a King. Then he would tell her about all these visions that he had about a tall elegant fair skinned, blonde man with blue eyes that God told him was a King. One day, his vision made it clear that this man was her cousin, Sebastian of Portugal and that he was alive and God wanted them to be married. Dona Ana believed it all, and she waited for the day that her King would come out of hiding.

There is a lot of controversy as to what happened next. It centers on a person named Don Rodrigo de Santillan who was a confidential agent to King Felipe II. There is question whether he was really the mayor of Madrigal or not, and it has been told both ways. He had a daughter named Maria and was actively searching a suitor for her. Subsequently, a new man named Gabriel de Espinosa, came into the town and opened up a bakery. He was tall, blonde, and very well mannered for a person of his status. People began to gossip that he must come from a good family, and that he may be a noble waiting to receive his titles. Maria fell madly in love with him, but her father opposed to her wanting to be with a pastry maker. They continued their affair, yet the pastry maker was identified as Fray Miguel to be Sebastian of Portugal and took him to the convent. He thus started a love affair with Dona Ana, who had renounced her vows as a nun. She gave him several gifts and habitually called him your majesty. She then gave him a cup that had very intricate designs on it and one day he used it while he was talking to another woman. This woman knew that a pastry maker would never have such a cup and so she turned him in to the mayor, Don Rodrigo. They uncovered a few of the letters that Dona Ana had written him and saw how she called him your majesty. He was tried, tortured, and convicted for treason. He was hung, decapitated, his body quartered, and nailed to four different trees. Dona Ana was stripped of her freedom and lived in solitary confinement for years until Felipe III released her and gave her power of Las Huelgas where she ruled successfully and fairly until she died. The Fray confessed during torture that he was trying to help Portugal gain back its independence then he was stripped of his title and hung in Madrid. Nobody ever found out who the pastry maker really was, though the most popular rumor is that he was Sebastian's half brother



since Juan of Portugal, Sebastian's father, had a child with the beautiful daughter of a pastry cook from Madrigal.

One thing that has haunted Spain for a long time is the Black Legend. This legend states that it was the Inquisition that crushed Spain's spirit and turned it into a backwards nation. It states that the Inquisition crushed Spanish creative life by silencing people and terrorizing Spanish society. As a result, science and invention ceased and speculation, which is necessary for art and progress, stopped completely. Many Spanish intellectuals have fought back against this so called Black Legend. Dr. Cesar Sillio Cortes states that the inquisition was originally an Italian invention and was not introduced by Isabel as many people think. It was more dangerous in other countries and is always blown out of proportion when it comes to Spain. The inquisition actually saved lives, according to him, because it let Spain avoid entering into the European religious wars of the time. It actually encouraged intellectual life in Spain and it did not deter science. The punishments were also less severe in Spain than in other countries. During this period, Spain actually had its greatest intellectual achievement ever and there was no inhibition of artists, writers, or musicians. The inquisition was necessary to eradicate the Jews and in no way was a hindrance to the Spaniards. His final point is that the inquisition was adequate and necessary.

The narrator draws his own conclusions after explaining that he read every possible book ever written on the inquisition. He agrees that Spain's Inquisition was no crueller than other inquisitions in other European countries and that the people executed did not exceed other countries' records. Spain was able to publish more books than Italy at the time, and Spain actually reached a Golden Age of culture during the time. No Jew was ever executed. The only people that were executed were Catholics that had converted from Judaism that reverted to Jewish ways so that they were killed as Catholics, not Jews. The main reason people only remember the Spanish inquisition is because it went on for so long. The last public burning was in 1781. Henry Kamen, a University of Edinburgh professor, stated that the Inquisition helped create a closed society where no new ideas could ever come in. This was the real tragedy of the Inquisition. It started out as a religious tool, but ended up being used as a racial tool where purity of blood was very important and anyone with Jewish or Moorish blood was contaminated and had to be eradicated. The people of the Inquisition just had to find the loophole to try people as mixed blooded and thus used religion as a precursor. It created a mania of homogeneity that still exists today. For almost four centuries, the Inquisition enforced conformity of all kinds and anyone with new ideas was rejected. Spain suffered as a result because "an oyster can live to itself, but without grains of sand for agitation it cannot produce pearls."



# Salamanca

## Salamanca Summary and Analysis

The narrator begins this chapter talking about the differences between Spain and Portugal. One thing is for sure: people feel safer in Portugal than they do in Spain. Portugal is simply a cleaner, more organized, and safer nation than Spain and people prefer to go there. It is the oldest English ally and northern Europeans go there as a big vacation spot.

When he arrives in Pamplona, he notices how many garages there are with young men working on their Citroen and Ford engines. Everywhere he looked he saw many northern Europeans all huddled together in groups, and tons of cars. He saw lots of lumberyards, workers' benches and cordage shops and knew that Pamplona would be an unusual city. He also saw men walking around with garlic necklaces, as if they were precious pearls, and this was how he knew that a feria, or festival, was about to start.

He goes to visit the Pamplona cathedral and is very disappointed by the ugliness of the building, though he calls it the ugliest beautiful church he's ever seen. The outside is the ugly part that he calls a Greco-Roman horror with a huge green neon cross at the very top courtesy of the twentieth century.

He meets up with his friend, Robert Vavra, and they go to a tavern to eat. They order menestra, which is a dish that starts by sautéing garlic cloves in hot olive oil. They then add all kinds of vegetables until a soup is formed, shellfish, and a boiled chicken which is all placed in the oven then served with onion bread and grated chest. Afterwards they were served flan and then him, Vavra, and a few other friends had a long conversation about Ernest Hemingway, who frequented Spain often.

Pamplona is all about the running of the bulls. It starts on July 7, which is San Fermin day. Just before midnight, barriers are put up to prepare for the running. They are rushed through the streets and placed in a corral until the next morning where they will prepare for the run, then their death at the bullfights. People from all over the world are jammed into the city. People sleep in their cars, and crowd into the banks sleeping on the steps. Those not lucky enough to secure a spot sleep on the street. For the next eight days, the majority of the people are drunk. Just before six o'clock, the bands begin to play. By then, the streets are packed with twenty to thirty thousand people of all ages. These people then walk over to the bullring that is strategically nearby and makes Pamplona the perfect place for such an event. At six thirty men line up for the running and at seven a loud shot is heard and the herd of bulls is freed from the corral where they can run straight to the bullring. Usually the bulls stay with their herd and pay no interest to the men around them, though they sometimes run over a few fallen men. The best way to escape is to lay flat in the gutters. The danger is when a bull becomes separated from its herd in which case he will try to grab and hook at anything or anyone nearby. Surprisingly there are rules to running with the rules. The most important is to



not attract attention to the bull by flailing ones arms or anything else. A person is also not allowed to run at the heels of the bulls once the bulls have passed. Women cannot run, drunks cannot run, and runners cannot wear any unusual costumes. It should take about three minutes for the bulls to run into the bullring corrals. If it is longer than that then apprehension grows and people begin to worry that there are loose bulls about. A heifer is released into the bullring first, and she is more vicious than the males. She runs around for about ten minutes. It has become customary for college students to position themselves along a gate, with sixty to eighty bodies and await a charge of the heifer. The students get banged up pretty badly, yet they protect their heads and accept the beatings. They are the heroes, and entertainment of the day. This goes on all morning and into the night. Then the following days are for the bullfights themselves.

After the Feria de San Fermin, the narrator takes a trip into the Basque country with his friends Vavra and Fulton. He wanted to pay his respects to a notable Basque named Don Inigo Lopez de Recalde, who was from the own of Zapeitia. When they got to the town, he saw that it was as he imagined: a small town, with a forgettable church where the people greeted everyone in French. However, he was surprised when he saw the memorial to Don Inigo, commonly known as St. Ignatius of Loyola. He was the man who established the Society of Jesus, known as the Jesuits. It was a huge basilica made of the finest marble. St. Ignatius helped keep a religious balance in Europe between the Lutherans and the Christians. He used to be a soldier and while fighting for the King of Pamplona he became wounded in the leg. While recovering he converted to Christianity and devoted himself to the Church and to converting as many people as he could. He influenced many Italians and Germans, which is why he is said to be the scourge of the Lutherans.

The three then went on to Santillana del Mar where the Caves of Altamira are. In 1869, the world's first prehistoric paintings were discovered in the Caves of Altamira by accident. The town of Santillana was itself very decorated, and it had become customary over the centuries for families to display decorative shields outside their houses. It has turned into a competition to where now the shields are very large and every year people try to outdo each other with bigger, better, and more colorful shields. This made the town famous even before the caves were discovered. The narrator found that the paintings were all very lively with perfect outlines and many beautifully drawn. He expected to see poor, faded drawings. His friend Fulton noticed that there were no hunters or weapons in the pictures, meaning that the people who drew the bulls must have really loved and respected them. The caves were discovered when a hunter's dog fell into one of the entrances. The dog was pulled out, and six years later, Marcelino Sanz de Sautuola decided he would go and explore the cave.

The narrator then writes that not everyone can go to the Feria in Pamplona and Sevilla and lists the differences between the two. He says that one can learn more from going to Sevilla and it is far more beautiful, but if a person doesn't have much money, he can't fully enjoy the feria. In Pamplona, if you have legs, you can enjoy all of the festivities. The parades in Pamplona are by far more impressive. As far as music, both cities have their charm and he states it isn't fair to compare music because it is all beautiful. The food is better and easier to get in Pamplona than it is in Sevilla. The bullring is better in



Pamplona only because of its location, though the one in Sevilla is architecturally more alluring. Pamplona has the running of the bulls, whereas Sevilla does not, but Sevilla does have wonderful and authentic flamenco. Sevilla has a better carnival than Pamplona and it is more charming to have a picnic in Sevilla. Finally, an issue, which may sway a person one way or another, is acceptance. In Pamplona, all a person needs to be accepted is a white shirt, a red scarf and sash, tennis shoes and a bottle of wine, where in Sevilla outsiders are never accepted. The narrator, however, doesn't mind this and all he wants is to not have bottles thrown at him while he enjoys his trips to Sevilla. When the ferias are over, it is most mournful in Pamplona where people cry "Poor me, poor me! How sad am I. Now the Feria of San Fermin has ended. Woe is me!"



# Barcelona

## Barcelona Summary and Analysis

Barcelona is the intellectual capital of Spain. The narrator decides to go to Barcelona one day out of the blue while he is visiting in Granada. On his way up, he stops in the city of Guadix and gets out to talk to the locals. One man tells him that almost all of the sensible men leave Andalusia and go to Germany where they come back to Spain only to marry. They don't go back to their hometowns, however, because they end up going to Barcelona, where they stay. If they don't go to Germany, they end up in Barcelona anyways to make a better living. When the man uttered the word Barcelona, he said it as if it were a benediction, a saving place where a person could turn his or her life around. He says that life in Barcelona is hard, but he gestured money with his fingers, then food, and finally grabbed the collar of his shirt signaling the ability to buy nice clothes. He told the narrator that nothing has changed in Andalusia in centuries because the landed families own the region and don't want any change. The church is the second reason where it is a form of repression. If the people of Andalusia keep leaving, then the Church and the landed families will be better suited to continue their repressive actions and they will have won everything that they've sought after.

The drive to Barcelona was especially eye opening. The narrator and his wife drove up together and experienced coastal Spain. It was covered with large condos all along the coastline and more growth as far as they could tell. It was an "endless ribbon of vacation land." They crossed over into Cataluña, and his wife began to narrate the region to him, building him up with anticipation for the great city that had no comparison. When they get to Barcelona, they see a huge monument of Christopher Columbus, which is the exact spot where he told his King and Queen about his official account of the new world. Afterwards the drove into a place called Las Ramblas, a wide and beautiful commercial boulevard where people could buy flowers, newspapers, and get food. It is a beautiful promenade where anyone can easily spend hours walking up and down or relaxing. Opposite the boulevard is the Gothic quarter where a person could get tapas twenty-four hours a day.

Catalan patriotism is alive and well, and not very popular outside of Cataluña. Catalans have a superiority complex and one Catalan said it's because they are a perfect mixture of different people from Celt-Iberian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, French, Aragonese, Catalan, Visigoth, Moor, to Jew. It is because of this that Catalans are able to see everything in its entirety, especially Europe. While Catalans live in Spain, they feel a greater affinity towards the French. Their language is a mixture of French and Spanish, with more French influence than anything. Yet the French do not share this warm affinity with them since they have tried to create their own nation, and many of the Catalans live in the south of France, which they wanted to separate as well. Dr. Jose Maria Poal answered many questions about Catalan identity for the narrator. He asked about the future of Cataluña and where the province was headed. Dr. Poal said that the days of separating are over, and that the best thing for everyone is to unify completely with





Spain. Cataluña needs Spain, and Spain without Cataluña would be a dreadful place. He then asked about whether immigrants from Andalucía and Extremadura were a positive thing and he affirmed saying that they couldn't go to a better place. Though very few of them learn to speak Catalan, which is probably better for the unification of Spain, it creates apprehensions with the Catalans. The dilution of Catalan may be inescapable because of immigration and intermarriage, but the Catalans are proud people that will hold on as long as they can.

In Barcelona, music is the most important thing that exists. A Catalan and his music can never be separated and a Catalan would rather go hungry than give up his music. The narrator and his wife decided to go to an opera to see first hand what the music was like. Though they could not go in on opening night, because they didn't have the appropriate dress, they were able to attend the show at a later date for a performance of Turandot. "There were fourteen different conductors from nine different nations" and they used "singers from all parts of the world." While there, they learned more about the close connection that the Catalans have with the French. A man sitting around them said that they are not Spaniards, but Catalans. Another said that he would die if he could not read another French book, since France is where they get their intellectual stimulation. The censorship is so bad in Spain that he has papers delivered from France and though they are old, they are the only true information that he has.

La Vanguardia is Barcelona's best newspaper, though censorship has been so bad that it is almost a worthless paper. Newspapers were banned in Cataluña after the war, and La Vanguardia was the only one that was allowed to circulate. However, Madrid appointed their own editor for the paper, who was from Madrid, and he made sure that the printed paper was safe from Catalan influence.

Afterwards, the narrator takes a walk through the museum quarters of the city and is led through a subterranean museum in the Gothic quarter by an archeologist named Margarita Tinto. They went through a collection of buildings called El Pueblo Español, which is a complete village with eighty-one major buildings copies from the originals found throughout Spain. The narrator went to visit the Picasso museum and was greatly disappointed because they had such few Picasso's there. Spaniards just don't ever collect their work for some reason, which is a tragedy that contemporary Spain faces. Spain has destroyed a lot of their own art and muffled many of its esteemed poets like Garcia Lorca's work and Pio Baroja's work. The dictatorship forbid the "Artistic statement and has therefore crushed it, for the authentic statement once stifled cannot later be revived."

In the Gothic Quarter every Sunday after mass, orchestras gather together to play music for the people. The people crowd around the orchestras, and what happens next is pure Catalan. Out of the blue, a woman will place her coat on the ground, then a man will place his coat on top of hers and this creates a chain reaction where everyone places all their belongings down and form a circle where they start a folk dance called a sardana. The sardana begins with slow steps to the left, then to the right, with arms interlocked. Then they speed things up a bit while lifting their arms. Many of these sardanas form throughout the Gothic Quarter and all around different orchestras.



Montserrat is Barcelona's mountains range. It means serrated mountain, and starts at sea level and goes up to 4,072 feet. The ascent from the north is the best approach and a person encounters a series of massive buildings that are built into crevices. These house religious hermits and date back to the year 700. These hermits run the telepheriques, which are lifts that take people up and down the slopes and go up high enough to see the Balearic Islands.

Because Spain is a religious nation, educated people are not as respected as they are in other countries. Spaniards always hold their priest dearer than a university professor and think that the problem with younger people is that they spend too much time learning about irrelevant things than praying. The only educated person that a Spaniard trusts is a doctor, because he can physically do something to help them, where a person talking about theories or books cannot. Censorship has a lot to do with this way of thought, because the papers and the government have tried to control the people for so long that the people fear intellectuals. They have a sort of paranoia that was instilled by the state and know that the Church will always defend them. Students who try to change the system, or try to bring attention to the issues of censorship are against the state, and against the Church and therefore a danger to society. Students in Spain are regarded very negatively and they are stuck in a rut where if they speak out about anything, it turns into a political problem, even if they are not even speaking about politics. If they start a manifestation, the police get involved and shut everything down, often hurting the students in the process. The narrator says that if he were an intellectual Catalan, the best thing would be to leave the region and go to Madrid. This is because a Catalan could help guide policy decisions towards Barcelona in favor of the Catalans by showing Madrid that they are not trying to separate. If there is no communication between the two regions, then nothing can be done.

Finally, there is a very important Catalan by the name of Ramon Llull. He was one of Europe's greatest philosophers and was a child of Muslim-Christian inheritance, born on the island of Mallorca. He joined the Franciscan Order as an adult and devoted his life to converting people, mainly Muslims, to Christianity. He took a Muslim slave, whose sole purpose was to teach Llull Arabic so he could go down to Africa and try to convert as many people as he could. He wasn't as convincing with his slave however, and failed to convert him. He ended up killing him in a fit of rage. He was in great remorse afterwards and was then when he created the famous quote "he who loves not, lives not." Llull was responsible for creating the doctrines of the Immaculate Conception, Intercession and Assumption, which is connected to the cult of the Virgin. This makes Llull one of Spain's prime movers of all time. Many people wanted to make Llull a saint, but nobody could conclude whether he was in fact a saint or a heretic because of his philosophical beliefs. There was about to be a shrine erected for him in Mallorca, but because of the sentiment against him, it was never finished. "Mallorca has never been able to make up its mind" and most people just look at the fact that he was more a Frenchman than a Spaniard. The narrator appreciated Llull because he was willing to give up his life to help unify mankind, though his efforts still go almost completely unrecognized. It is sad that even his own Church that he worked so hard to help and promote rejects him and it is all as he was an intellectual.



# The Bulls

## The Bulls Summary and Analysis

Ever since the narrator's first bullfight that he saw in Valencia, he has been in love with bullfighting. He loves the art of it, but more than anything, he loves the bulls. They are magnificent creatures and when they are in their own environment are even more spectacular. While in Pamplona in 1966, the last day of the bulls was not the last day of the fair. Rather, it was a day reserved for a concurso. This formal competition had two characteristics. The first was a panel of judges that judges the bravest bull and the second was that the public could choose to spare a bull's life if it is particularly brave. All the bulls that compete come from the same ranch, which is more meaningful since they grew up in the same type of environment with the same stimuli.

The most feared bull is the Miura bull from the Miura ranch. This type of bull has killed more matadors than any other bull. Its reputation is so bad that some matadors refuse to fight them, though one thing that is overlooked is the fact that these bulls have been around longer than most others, making their kill depth chart a lot longer than bulls from other ranches. Robert Vavra, the narrator's friend and expert on bulls, explained to him that these bulls have swayback bodies, small heads and big necks that may account for their agility. The Cobaleda bulls, a breed from Salamanca, are also quite popular but are far inferior to the Miura bulls. Vavra explains that for some reason, bulls from Andalucia are just better, stronger, and more dangerous. There is a theory that the soil in Andalucia is tougher and rockier and this makes the bulls' legs stronger whereas Salamanca only has soft soil. However, the Concha bulls in Las Marisimas walk in soft marshland for half the year and are still stronger than bulls from Salamanca.

In a match a torero, which can be any person actively engaged in the fight and can be a picador, matador, or peon or bandillero, has a cuadrilla or crew of people that help him during a fight. A torero has a cape that is yellow on one side and magenta on the other. In the first act of the fight, a picador comes out to place a long steel pickled lance in the bull. A bandillero will then come and place short colorful sticks, known as bandillas, in the bull's shoulders. In the third act, called the faena, the matador comes out with a muleta, a red flannel cloth. The kill ends the fight. A fight is very intricate and in order for it to be perfect, it must follow a set of rules. First, the bull is released and the matador does a few initial passes with his large cape. The bull then has to attack the picador three times, who rides atop a horse, and the picador has to handle his lance carefully and skillfully to get the bull just right. After the bull gets pricked by the picador the three toreros in the ring have to lure the bull away from the horse with intricate passes from their capes then three pairs of bandilleras have to be strategically and skillfully placed into the bull. The matador then begins the faena where he has to make six passes that make sense and finally kill the animal over the horn, finishing it with one thrust. There are very few perfect scenarios like this, and a person would be lucky to see one perfect fight in his lifetime.



Many people try to be bullfighters for the prestige, though few ever even get close. Young boys practice their charisma and charm in front of mirrors and in parks trying to create a persona that will lure people to support them and hopefully to tame a bull. Out of a thousand boys that work hard to become fighters, only about one hundred will succeed. Of these hundred, only a handful will ever be remembered. Being a bullfighter is not a lucrative job and many fighters will end up having to pay to fight in the ring. They get paid very little and have to turn to family members and friends to support their passion. Sometimes they will get lucky and meet a businessman who had a passion to be a bullfighter in his day but was never able to do it, so he lives vicariously through a younger bullfighter. At the end of the day, however, the bullfighter has to pay back his endorsements and is left with nothing again. One of the most famous fighters, Curro Romero, is popular for the few ways he has mesmerized the crowd. He isn't always fantastic, yet the times that he has been have all been well worth ranking him as the top fighter. In fact, the narrator saw him fight over forty times and never caught him on a good day. In addition, he would never fight a Miura bull, and if things did not start out perfectly, he would quit. Once a bull entered the ring the wrong way, and he gave up in the first few minutes of the fight. Spaniards believe that only Spaniards can be good bullfighters and are very prejudice against non-Spaniards trying to enter into the sport. When the narrator mentioned to Vavra that in America, teams allow people from all over the world to play in their leagues, as in baseball for example where many of the players are from Latin American countries, Vavra said that he shouldn't be too quick to judge the insular attitude of the Spaniards. In soccer, Spain recruits from all over Europe to get the best players they can. However, they don't have to go out of Spain for bullfighters because Spain naturally has the best in the world and this is what everyone believes.

While most people in Spain are very tolerant of bullfighting, there are groups of educated Spaniards that are completely against the sport. However, for every Spaniard that opposes bullfighting, there are at least two that support it. There have been a few laws established to try to make bullfighting safer for the fighters and less daunting to the bulls, but these laws have not been successful in stopping the sport or even curbing supporters. Bullfighting is not a dying sport, as some people would think, and it will be part of Spain for as long as it can. After watching about fifteen hundred bullfights, the narrator has only seen one complete fight and he never expects to see another. He compares it to a beautiful opera, where much can go wrong, but every once in a while, you get the perfect experience.



# Teruel

## Teruel Summary and Analysis

On his way to Teruel, the narrator gets lost and ends up in a town called Castielfabib. At first, he was upset at the place he had to stay, but the woman that was tending to him was so cheery and friendly that he immediately felt better. The Moors had run the city about a thousand years ago and the name was a play on the phrase Castillo de Habib. She showed the narrator a tunnel that had been carved out to mine for silver and copper that was used for coins. When the narrator had entered the city, the first thing he noticed was that the church seemed to be impenetrable. He asked the woman several times about the entrance but she ignored him, until finally she told him he would never believe it, he had to see it. She led him to a path that seemed to go off of the edge of a cliff. Just before it did, it shifted to the right then down a tunnel that ran directly below the church. Then the two walked up a steep flight of stairs that led to the entrance of the church. It was a great interruption to his trip to Teruel.

He was very excited to reach Teruel, the first Spanish city that he had experienced. It was always very personal and dear to him. However, when he began to approach his beloved city, he noticed that everything was different. There were apartment complexes and buildings that weren't there when he knew Teruel. Suddenly he knew that his town was changed and by a magnitude that he could not understand.

The Christians attacked the town of Teruel to rid it of its Moorish inhabitants. King Alfonso was able to hold his men strong and be victorious over the Moors. During their celebration, the Christians saw a symbol of their triumph. One bull survived the stampede the Moors released on them and remained on the crest of the hill, shaking its head up towards the sky. The Christians shouted "he has been converted to our side!" and that site became the official site of Teruel.

The narrator meets a man named Don Francisco Cortel Zuriaga who tells him about a town legend, the Lovers of Teruel. He took the narrator to the church where he showed him two coffins. These coffins held a man named Diego and a woman named Isabel. Diego came from a poor family, while Isabel from a wealthy one. He made an agreement with Isabel's family that he would leave Teruel to build a fortune and in five years would return to marry her. He did not come back exactly at the five year mark and Isabel was married off to another man. Just after the wedding, Diego galloped back into town with his amassed fortune. He begged to marry Isabel, but there was nothing she could do, so he asked for a kiss. She denied him the kiss, and he fell at her feet, dying of a broken heart. At his funeral, Isabel showed up in her wedding gown. When she went to give him the kiss she denied him while he was still alive, she fell on top of the corpse and died of a broken heart. The town was so moved by this portrayal of love that they were buried next to each other in the church. There is a lot of debate about whether this really happened or if it was a fabrication of a tale Italy's Boccaccio told using different names that was written three hundred years before. What the narrator



found interesting was that after five years, Diego went back to his town. There seems to be a great affinity to leaving one's town, then going back. Equally similar is when people leave their town to earn money, and then go back to a town that is completely changed where their wealth then means nothing to them. Just as Diego had left his love, the narrator had left Teruel, and upon returning, everything had changed.

The next day the narrator went around revisiting places that he had seen the first time around. He saw many changes to the way things were before the civil war. Teruel was protected by ten thousand of Franco's troops. The Republican's tried desperately to enter the city and take it over. The attacks lasted for twenty-four days and Franco's general finally turned the city over to the Republicans. However, Franco did not give up, and wanted to take Teruel back. The Republicans ended up evacuating the city. The ability for men to govern themselves perished when Teruel fell and Almeria, Murcia, and Cartagena surrendered not too long after. The war had 900,000 casualties. Even nuns and priests were killed brutally.

The narrator had great guilt for not being able to fight in the civil war, for many Americans were sent over to support the Republicans. He had very negative feelings about the new Teruel, until he saw the new hospital that was modern and amazing. It put many American hospitals to shame. However, it had one major problem. It had no patients and most of the modern facilities had remained unused.

The narrator writes that he never wanted to visit Spain again after the Republicans had lost but didn't want to surrender to Franco. The nation didn't die, it was reborn and this happened many times throughout history all throughout the world. Nations have cycles, cities have cycles, and America too is changing. Policies have to change, and if America tries to use 1920 policies in 1970, it is doomed for disaster. The same is true of Spain, and watching it rebuild is one of the more fascinating things about the nation.



# Santiago de Compostela

## Santiago de Compostela Summary and Analysis

Santiago de Compostela is a very important place to Spain and Christians. It is where it is said that St. James, the cousin of Jesus, is buried. St. James is the patron saint of Spain as many claim that his assistance is what has helped Spain win so many military battles. St. James has created many miracles for Spaniards, including reviving a woman's fiancé who had disappeared into the ocean. He appeared covered in cockleshells, and the shell is now the sign that people wear when having made the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. The site is now one of the three places where a Christian can go for a pilgrimage, the other two being Jerusalem and Rome. If a person goes to all three, then they are especially blessed and lucky. The pilgrimage is completed through the Jacobean route, known also as the way of St. James.

There are seven different types of groups that go on this pilgrimage to Santiago. The first are the devout Christians that are out to seek salvation, the second are soldiers who vowed to make the pilgrimage if they survived in battle. The third are monks and priests who make the pilgrimage to honor themselves and their church. Fourth are criminals who were told they could spend five years in jail or do the pilgrimage. They usually choose the pilgrimage, where they have to get a certificate of authentication proving they were there. However, they can usually purchase these from businessmen who make the pilgrimage themselves then sell the certificate to the criminals. The fifth group consists of beggars, forgers, and other who leach off of the devout pilgrims. Sixth are merchants, architects, painters, weavers and others that use the road as a marketplace. Last are government officials who make sure that the foreigners that are coming in don't establish too much influence in the region. It is believed that Frenchmen enter the area and erect buildings for use as stepping stones for the French King to come in and take over the land.

Regardless of the group, everyone making the trip wears the same uniform: a heavy cape that acts as a raincoat, blanket, and comforter, an eight foot staff with a gourd for water, a heavy hiking sandal for the nine hundred mile hike, and a broad-rimmed felt hat that is turned up in the front marked with three or four shells.

The people set out at a pace of nine to ten miles a day. There isn't enough food along the way, and storeowners in the towns guard their stores with locks and dogs. There are people who are assigned to bury any dead pilgrims that die within their town. More than half a million people make the pilgrimage each year.

What the narrator loves the most about Santiago de Compostella is how ornery it has been throughout history. When Isabel and Fernando were expelling the Jews, Santiago gave them refuge. It managed to keep the Moors out for centuries as well as other kings that beat at its gates trying to subdue them.



The narrator then states that he has never liked Gothic architecture and that he is biased to Romanesque buildings. However, while he was in Leon, a priest by the name of Father Vinayo surprised him at two in the morning one day and took him to the Leon cathedral. He had seen it during the day and was an average gothic cathedral with nothing out of the ordinary. Yet at night, it was spectacular because more than half of it was made of glass, and the reflection of the stars off the glass was amazing. Father Vinayo takes them inside and he is even more awe struck by the stained glass than he was outside. When Pope John XXIII saw the Leon cathedral by night, he said, "Leon has more glass than stone and more faith than glass."

As there were many pilgrims, many people took advantage of them. There were many evil Germans and Frenchmen that made the roads dangerous. Therefore, the Spaniards created the Order of Santiago that was comprised of brave knights that protected the pilgrims. Foreigners established their own congenial fraternity to protect their own pilgrims so that they wouldn't be abused by the Spanish order. A problem occurred where the knights would proclaim that they were the bravest knights even though they weren't. Suero de Quinones was a knight that grew tired of people claiming they were brave and decided that he would stand at the bridge at Rio Orbigo and fight off every knight that passed for thirty days, which meant fighting about thirty or forty fights. During his fights, he made the other knights swear that his woman was more beautiful than theirs before killing them.

When the narrator and his friends arrive to Galicia, they arrive at the cathedral where all pilgrims reach and are made to shower before entering to pay their respects to St. James. When they got to the rivulet, Don Luis cried out "Mount joy! I am king" which is what you are supposed to say once you reach the end of the pilgrimage and whoever in the group says it first is the king of the group. The cathedral is unique because it can be seen from four different sides, each housing their own plazas. The cathedral is very ornate with two towers and the second plaza is ranked the second best in Spain. The Plaza de las Platerias is dominated by the bell tower of the cathedral. The cathedral's best piece of work is a statue of King David playing his fiddle. The eastern plaza is the narrator's favorite. It is of Romanesque style with a large ornate wall and has the Puerta Santa, which is only opened during special pilgrimage years. The north plaza, the Plaza de la Azabacheria would be more spectacular if it was built in Toledo, because it competes with three better plazas in Compostela.

The cathedral is most famous for the Portico de la Gloria, which is a fifty-one foot long by thirteen foot wide, and sixty-foot high work of art, which is a Romanesque work of art. It is very profound and one of the most delightful works of art. "It depicts laughter, not tears. It contains hundreds of separate figures and a huge proportion of them having a good time." Even Jesus is having a good time.

While the narrator attended the celebration mass for the pilgrims, there was one aspect of it that seemed very foreign to him. It was a segment where the priests announced that Spain would never forget the "Light of Faith" and the "Doctrine of Christ" that it had received by St. James having perished within it. Religious unity was the most important thing to the Spaniards and it would never let anything get in the way of that ideal.





However, the narrator points out that while Spain is a religious country, it had done a lot to upset the Pope throughout history. Even today, the Pope has a hard time appointing the bishops to Spain than any other country. The Spaniards choose six candidates, the Pope chooses his top three of those, and then the Spaniards pick their favorite from the three. It has been said many times by other priests, "It is now the role of the Spanish Church to save Rome from itself."

The Church in Spain even allied itself with the army and landholders during the civil war, which is why the lower class believes that the Church is their enemy. Younger priests want to make sure that the people know this is not the case, and have tried to separate themselves from the army and landed families. The Church will always have a stronghold on Spanish life, and Spain will always be a Catholic nation, regardless of liberal priests and liberal people who want to separate from that way of life.

The narrator then begins to talk about the glories of Galicia and the beauty of the region. English travelers believe it is the best part of Spain because of the "hard, cold, dour land" that resembles Scotland. This is another reason why the narrator loves Galicia, since he got his degree in Scotland. The food is very heavy, the dress is very colorful, and Galician music comes from the bagpipe. The secret of the land is that it is made up of hard granite and the Galicians build everything he needs from the stone, whether it is a house, a barn, or a corncrib. Even fences are built of granite where they could be easily be made of wood. The curse of the land is that it is divided by the entire family, rather than by the eldest son as it is throughout Spain and other cultures. The lands have been divided up so many times that one piece is not nearly enough for a family. Each new subdivision is separated by the granite fences so that eventually the entire region will be slabs of granite. During the last sixty-six years from the time the narrator wrote the book, the Galicians had been going into self-exile so that they wouldn't keep dividing their land.

The Galicians are very superstitious people and one of their main concerns is to make sure their girls are safely married off into good families. The most dangerous place for a girl was the water well because she could meet men there easily. The Galicians thus placed water rats in the wells that could look at men and everything would be fine, but if the rats looked at a girl, she would die right then and there.

The narrator then comments on his time in Spain. He is always out to see the best flamenco, have good paella, or see Curro Romero fight a good bullfight. Yet in Spain, one rarely finds what he or she is looking for. The thing about Spain is that a person sets out for this perfect moment, and in return ends up encountering many different wonderful and haunting moments that he or she never expected. This is the beauty of the country and the way it should be approached.



# Characters

## James Michener - Narrator

James Michener, the narrator, is a talented travel writer that has an impressive way of showcasing the places he has visited. He had a strong desire to learn about Spain and he took his travel strategy and applied it to the wonderful place. He first starts out in a random place where he talks to anyone that will talk to him and answer his questions. He walks around, looks at buildings, goes inside and uses the services that the city has to offer, all in order to better understand the people, their city, and their way of life. He did this all throughout Spain, going to different cities and meeting different people trying to uncover the meanings of Spanish stereotypes and whether or not they were valid. He set out with the goal of answering a few questions that are stated in the introduction of the book so that he is not just writing about what he sees and experiencing, he is analyzing everything. Along the way, he encounters many different things that were never on his initial list of experiences. He sets out with expectations that are never met, though some are far exceeded. For instance, he thought the Great Mosque of Cordoba would be spectacular, but it wasn't in his eyes. He also didn't think that the Alhambra would be as wonderful as most people say it is, yet it was far more impressive than even his friends had described it. He is a wonderful writer, a passionate man, and loves Spain for all that it is. Even though he wishes Spain were a more prosperous country, if it were, then it would not be the Spain that he loves.

## Isabel the II

Isabel the II was known throughout history as Isabel the Catholic. She was one of the greatest monarchs in history, though she is never given the credit that she deserves. She was very religious and wanted to ensure that Spain would be a unified nation under God. She managed the conquests of the New World with strict goals, yet the men that went out in her name did little to respect her wishes of converting all the natives to Catholicism. There was little she could do about it. She also allowed the Inquisition to sweep her nation of heretics after having expelled the Muslims and Jews. She wanted her nation to be completely unified and couldn't see this happening with people of other religions in her nation. She bore five children of which Juana La Loca is the most known because of her mental illness. She died before her husband Fernando, who remarried.

## Carlos V

Carlos was one of the most beloved kings of Spain. He was the son of Juana La Loca whom he kept locked up in order to be able to rule. During the time that Carlos V reigned, he was unable to evolve his government and make Spain a modern country like most other European countries were doing.



## **Juana La Loca**

Juana was the daughter of Isabel the Catholic. She was deemed crazy and put away by her son, though most believe that she would have been a better ruler than him.

## **Francisco Franco**

Franco was the dictator that took over after the civil war.

## **Isabel of Portugal**

Isabel of Portugal was the mother of Isabel the Catholic.

## **Fernando**

Fernando was Isabel's husband. Him and Isabel ruled together and made huge decisions that shaped modern day Spain. After his wife died, he was not allowed to take control of the Kingdom of Castilla, which was given to his daughter Juana La Loca. To seek revenge, he married a French woman to try to create an heir to the Kingdoms that he did manage, though he was not able to and ended up dying of poisoning.

## **Dona Ana**

Dona Ana was one of the illegitimate daughters of Carlos V. She was put away in a nunnery, as all illegitimate daughters were, to make sure that she wouldn't marry and create heirs to the throne that would be unsuitable to rule. She was manipulated by Fray Miguel de los Santos to believe that her cousin, the former King of Portugal, was still alive and that they should wed.

## **Fray Miguel de los Santos**

Santos convinced Dona Ana that she should marry her cousin, who he claimed was still alive and would come to marry her. He did this all to help Portugal.

## **Tertulia**

Tertulias were the group of people that Michener conversed with in Madrid. They were a group of Spanish and American intellectuals.



## Bargeman

Though his name is never revealed, Bargeman is the first person that the narrator meets in Spain. He runs a barge that sends out barrels of oranges to ships that wait out in the sea. Since Valencia does not have a port, this is the only way to get the oranges aboard. The narrator agrees to pay this man to take him to shore. Later the man takes him out in the city of Castellon where he teaches him about Spanish life and the different customs that they have.

## Ramon Llull

Lull was one of Europe's greatest philosophers and a child of Muslim-Christian inheritance, born on the island of Mallorca. He joined the Franciscan Order as an adult and devoted his life to converting people, mainly Muslims, to Christianity. People want to make him a saint and build a monument for him, but the church is still confused as to whether he was really a saint or a heretic.

## Carlos II

Carlos II, or el Hechizado (the bewitched) was a King that used the Plaza Mayor to hold inquisition trials and sentencing. He was the last member of the Spanish Habsburgs and had inherited all of their weaknesses, suffering severely from mental disorder. When he died, the Borbon rulers took the Spanish throne.

## Religious Monks

Monks live in crevices of Montserrat. These people run the telepheriques and recite mass.

## Niceto Alcala Zamora

Zamora was the President of Spain during the time the narrator was traveling. He thought him to be a man of good will, though he was not at all impressed by his presence. He came to power after Alfonso XIII left Spain.

## Alfonso XIII

Alfonso was the next heir to the Spanish throne who left Spain so that he wouldn't be abdicated.



## Senor Don Pedro Perez Montilla

Montilla was a man that spends his days at the Casino with a tertulia, an informal club, and hangs out to gossip everyday.

## Guardia Civil

Guardia Civil guards would travel in pairs throughout Spain. They knew everyone in their respected area and everything that was going on. Spaniards believe that it would be impossible to live in Spain without them because of the protection that they provide. They were given the name, La Benemerita, similar to the name of New York's Police Department or New York's Finest.

## Conde Alvaro de Luna

The conde became a confidant of Isabel the Catholics father, King Juan II. He used his connection to gain power and soon had so much money that he became the most "notorious legal thief" in Spanish history. The Queen, Isabel of Portugal, was so concerned that she had her husband find some charge to arrest him. He was executed and buried in the chapel.

## El Greco

El Greco was one of Spain's most famous artists. He was really of Greek decent, which is why he is called "the Greek Man." His paintings were always very bold and spectacular, portraying strong emotions, especially agony.

## Goya

Another of Spain's famous artists. His style was more neutral and focused on showing the average Spaniard working in the countryside.

## Lucius Seneca

Lucius Seneca was a Roman and the "foremost Spaniard that ever lived." He was one of the first to realize that Spaniards have a problem with government in that they don't know how to govern themselves.

## Moses Maimonides

Maimonides was the most famous Jew in Spain and the most brilliant Spaniard intellectual. He was a medical doctor and religious philosopher.



## **Cardinal Hosius**

Hosius was the most fierce churchman and gave the greatest contribution to the Spanish Church's history. .

## **Averroes**

Averroes was a philosopher that codified Islamic thought and introduced Aristotle to the western world.

## **Francisco Mendoza Ruiz**

Francisco Mendoza Ruiz is the man who introduces Michener to the Sevilla Holy Weeks and teaches him the meanings of the rituals. He is a banker with a small family and lives in a small house in the Jewish Quarter.

## **Suecas**

Suecas, which literally means Swiss women, are considered any woman coming from the northern European countries. They are much more liberal and free-spirited than the Spanish women and flock to the beaches of Spain during the winter months.

## **Lovers of Teruel**

The Lovers of Teruel are a couple that were from two different classes. Diego was a poor man that asked for five years to amass a fortune to be worthy enough to marry Isabel. Her parents agreed but counted five years down to the day. When he didn't return, they married her off to another man. He returned on the day of the wedding and, when she wouldn't kiss him, he died at her feet. She died at his funeral, and the two are buried next to each other in a church in Teruel.



# Objects/Places

## Teruel

Teruel is the first city that the narrator falls in love with. The people are very friendly and accepting once the narrator opens up to them and shares his food. In Teruel, he sees the great economic divide between the rich and poor that exists throughout Spain. When he revisits Teruel later on, much has changed, and he is impressed yet saddened by the modernity of the rural town.

## Burriana

Burriana is the town that the narrator lands in when he first sets foot on Spanish soil. This is also where the bargeman is from. His town is constantly made fun of.

## Concha and Sierra Ranch

Concha and Sierra Ranch is where the Concha and Sierra bulls are raised.

## Las Ramblas

Las Ramblas is a wide and beautiful commercial boulevard in Barcelona where people could buy flowers, newspapers, and get food. It is a beautiful promenade where anyone can easily spend hours walking up and down or relaxing.

## Rio Guadalquivir

Rio Guadalquivir is a river in southern Spain that supports Las Marisimas, the swamplands in southern Spain.

## Rio Tajo

Rio Tajo is the river in Toledo that surrounds and protects the city.

## Toledo

Toledo is a fortress of a city built on a rock that was established by Germanic tribes then run by Muslims. It holds the famous Gothic cathedral and the Alcazar and is surrounded by the Rio Tajo on three sides.



## **Santillana del Mar**

Santillana del Mar is the town where the Caves of Altamira were discovered in 1869. The Caves hold ancient paintings of bulls.

## **Estadio Bernabeu**

Estadio Bernabeu is the home stadium of the Real Madrid soccer team.

## **University of Salamanca**

The university used to be the best university in Europe. However, over time it became a place where only the nobles could go. During the civil war, it lost all of its authenticity as a teaching institution. It stopped teaching Jews, boys from untitled families, and it even stopped instructing its students in mathematics. It became a finishing school for the nobles, and registration dropped from eight thousand to only three hundred students by the year 1824.

## **El Tibidabo**

El Tibidabo is where the Spaniards believe that the devil tempted Jesus. It is a point where you can see the mountains and the sea of Catalonia. The Spaniards believe that there was no way that the devil could have tempted Jesus anywhere near Jerusalem as there is nothing to tempt anyone with in the desert.

## **Shrine of Guadalupe**

The statue was sent to Spain and buried in the banks of a remote river during the Muslim takeover. The statue remained in the river banks for six hundred years until Gil Cordero uncovered it. It is said that she is responsible for the victories of the Muslim armies.

## **Puerta del Sol**

Puerta del Sol is an intimate plaza that is shaped like a half circle with ten streets that debouch into it. Puerta del Sol means the Sun's door and is the spirit of Madrid.

## **Plaza Mayor**

Plaza Mayor is the main square in Madrid. It was used by Carlos II to hold Inquisition trials.





## **Merida**

Merida is a city known for its Roman influence. The Romans built better and more important cities than Merida in Spain. However, this is the best preserved. There is a structure with 30,000 seats where chariot races were held, a 14,000 seat amphitheater, and enormous aqueduct, and many arches and memorials throughout the city.

## **Jerez de los Caballeros**

Jerez de los Caballeros is the town where the famed Balboa, the man who found the Pacific Ocean, and Hernando de Soto were from.

## **Medinat Az-Zahra**

Medinal Az-Zahra used to be an immense palace for the Sultan during Moorish rule.

## **El Ultimo Suspiro del Moro**

The Last Sigh of the Moor, is the place where Boabdil is believed to have stopped, looked back at his city and rode on in defeat.

## **Coto Donana**

Coto Donana is a large area that is part swampland, part sand dune, and lots of water that forms into semi connected lakes that are strung together like beads. It has lots of single standing oak trees, shrubs, and low grasses and is a near perfect haven for birds. The Coto began with lots of pressure from the northern European countries. They wanted the Spaniards to preserve their swamplands so that the bird populations would survive. If the Spaniards didn't do their part, then nobody would be able to enjoy the beautiful birds that breed in the area and fly north during the summer.



# Themes

## Fear of Diversity

Homogeneity came from the Inquisition. The Inquisition created this culture of fear where everyone needed to be the same to survive. Everyone had to be a good Catholic and a traditional one at that. If new information came in, people turned their heads because they feared learning new things. If they tried to learn something new, or preach something new, they were going against the Church and the state and could be condemned or killed for doing so. This created a great deal of paranoia within the state and anyone that was considered different was turned into Inquisition officials where they were then tried, tortured, and killed. The easiest people to target were those of different religions, being the Jews and the Muslims. They were given time to leave the nation, and those that didn't were killed. The saddest thing is that before the Inquisition, all three religions got along. Even though the Catholics, Jews, and Muslims all believed three completely different things, they were tolerant of each other, which is something that rarely ever happened throughout history. How three religions could coexist is a mystery and sheer beauty, but it was stopped completely by the Inquisition.

## The Church as a Stronghold on Society

Spain is undeniably a Catholic country. When Isabel and Fernando ruled this notion became solidified. Isabel the Catholic wanted to make sure that her nation was a unified Christian nation and is a reason why she expelled the Jews and the Moors. It was a very sad thing that she did this. There aren't many places in the world that are tolerant of more than one religion in the same area, especially in homogenous societies. As a result of solidifying Spain as a Catholic nation, a certain fear evolved of everything that was different. This paranoia led to the Spanish Inquisition, which is the most notorious Inquisition in history.

This still exists today and the Church still has a lot of power over Spain. It is one of the main supporters of the nation, though Spain has done much to upset Rome, who Spain says it must constantly save from itself. There are two parts to the Church, which are the conservative and the liberal sides. The conservative side wants everything to remain as it has, using the old church system of subordination to control the people of the countryside in order to keep a stronghold on them. The liberal side wants to educate the people and show them that the Church isn't all bad and actually wants to help them elevate themselves and better their ways of life. So far, the liberal side has not been able to do much to convince people that they want progress for them, and the conservative side is still the majority. In addition, because so many men leave the countryside to go to Barcelona or Germany to find work, the Church is able to control the less-sophisticated people that do stay.



## Spanish Communication and Censorship

Spain never moved along as well as other nations did for several reasons, but none as great as their nobles. The people of Spain have been censored since the times of the Inquisition. This is because of the paranoia that they developed from saying the wrong thing to the wrong person and being accused of heresy, which was punishable by death. The Spanish Inquisition lasted a lot longer than most other inquisitions, going well into the 19th century as an established law, though nobody was killed then. Since it lasted so long, the fear continued in the hearts of people and therefore they never talked about religion, because it was assumed that everyone was Catholic, and if they weren't they would never admit to it let alone talk about it to other people. They also never talked about politics because in the time of Isabel and Fernando, religion was synonymous with politics. While Michener was visiting, this fear of politics still existed. Nobody talked about what would happen after Franco died because they were scared to. University students were censored so much that they couldn't even ask questions about subject material that was unrelated to politics. Newspapers could only write about certain topics, usually the Church, the arts, and history.

This censorship led to a drop in intellectuals in Spain. Intellectuals were so ill regarded that most had to leave Spain to do anything meaningful with their lives. Spanish people simply didn't trust them, and trusted the church more than anyone. They only educated people that Spaniards did trust were doctors because they could actually do something good for them, whereas intellectuals could only harm them and possibly sway them into believing something that the state did not agree with. This censorship has made it easier for the Church and the state to control people, which was always the ultimate goal since Isabel and Fernando's time. It is a sad thing that Spain cannot progress because of its government institutions.



# Style

## Perspective

The book is written completely in the first person. It is the writer's first hand experience with the country of Spain. Since Michener's main reason for writing this book is to recount his own stories, his writing is very biased, and all of his tastes are clear to see. He has a sincere love of Romanesque art, yet can't stand anything Gothic. He says very little good things about the Gothic cathedral in Toledo, ye

## Tone

The writer is reporting to the reader everything that he experienced in Spain. However, since the book is a first hand experience about the writers travels through Spain, it is full of his own biases towards the things that he loves. He does include things that he doesnt like as well, like Gothic architecture which is a very important component to Spain. The tone of the book makes it a quick read, though it is well over 900 pages. The sentences flow along very well and it is overall an easy read which will make the reader want to go to Spain to have his or her own experiences. The flow of the book has no relation to the way that it is divided and almost reads as one chapter because of how much he jumps around. It is almost as if it is written as a letter to a friend, without ever personally addressing a person.

## Structure

The book is divided into thirteen different chapters all titled with different Spanish cities. However, each chapter is not just about the city that it is named after. What Michener actually does is writes about the focus city for the chapter, and different cities around it including as much information as he can. This isn't always a successful writing style because he doesn't always mention whether he is talking about a region or a city. Also, he goes back and forth between memories too often and will begin talking about the Teruel of the present, then talks about Teruel of the past so that the text is very jumpy. It is obvious that he tried his best to organize the vast amounts of information that he had, but he could have picked a better way. Instead it seems as though he just writes about everything that he remembers about a certain visit, and not a certain place. For instance, his chapter on Barcelona starts out in the Southern region of Andalucia where he travels through small villages and learns more about why people travel to Barcelona. However, the detail is so great, that the reader forgets the reason why the chapter is about Barcelona in the first place. He also adds a lot of historical information that he sees fit. He tends to fall into tangents that lead nowhere then excuses his tangent with an explanation and sometimes an apology of why he had to include that information. He also uses a lot of interviews with local Spaniards and many of his friends that are visiting along with him. This lets the reader understand more of the cultural side of



Spain and see what the people are like. He writes very honestly of them, and doesn't hide any of their bad attributes, attitudes, or ideas against Americans.



## Quotes

"Viva Yo"

"If a man is tough enough to love this land, he will never forget it, never." Chapter 2, pg. 93

"Won't piss in the streets, but will against your door." Chapter 2, pg. 103

"Corn is for pigs and Mexicans." Chapter 2, pg. 109

"Men always come back to Extremadura." Chapter 2, pg. 115

"I could make an intellectual pilgrimage to the four statues and thus pay homage in turn to the finest pagan of Spanish history, the finest churchman, the outstanding Jew, and the most brilliant Muslim." Chapter 4, pg. 197

"You do well, my son, to weep as a woman for the loss of what you could not defend as a man." Chapter 4, pg. 219

"in Spain, one finds old memories in unexpected places." Chapter 4, pg. 220

"Spain, I'm afraid, is stuck with the romantic legend portrayed in Don Alvaro: people shivering in Sweden and Germany want sun and romance, and Spain has no alternative but to provide them." Chapter 4, pg. 246

"I am convinced that a good Spaniard must give part of his life to the Church and all of his devotion to the Virgin." Chapter 6 pg. 317

"An oyster can live to itself, but without grains of sand for agitation it cannot produce pearls."  
Chapter 8, pg. 536

"No nation in Europe, except possibly Hungary and Romania, has been so badly served by its upper classes as Spain." Chapter 6, pg. 356

"If she had done these things, she'd now be a better Spain. But she wouldn't be Spain."  
Chapter 8, pg 536

"In Barcelona, there is hope." Chapter 9 pg. 643

"One Catalan starts a business, two Catalans organize and organization, three Catalans form a choral society." Chapter 9, pg. 655



"No matter how disastrous the fight, and some of them can be deadful, there is an ancient drama of hopeful man and savage beast and the mysterious bond that exists between them." Chapter 10 pg. 753

"Pinch a man on the streets of Barcelona and if he doesn't cry out in pitch he's not a Catalan." Chapter 9, pg. 661

"Barcelona has the heady and dangerous quality of champagne and should be taken into moderation." Chapter 9, pg. 723

"He who loves not, lives not." Chapter 9, pg. 727

"Poor me, poor me! How sad am I. Now the Feria of San Fermin has ended. Woe is me!" Chapter 8, pg. 636

"Leon has more glass than stone and more faith than glass." Chapter 13 pg. 871

"It is now the role of the Spanish Church to save Rome from itself." Chapter 13, pg. 913



## Topics for Discussion

Why do you think the Spanish Inquisition focused on more than other inquisitions that were equally or even more terrible?

Spaniards are scared of change, and would rather marry someone of poor taste from a lesser region of Spain than marry an outsider. Why would a Spaniard be willing to lower himself within society than marry outside of their country?

The Christians, Moors, and Jews lived harmoniously, or at least tolerantly of each other for centuries. Once Isabel and Fernando came into power, they expelled the Moors and Jews. Why would they do this if the system of tolerance that they had was working so well?

Even though Spaniards do not like outsiders, why did they embrace the work of El Greco, and reject work of other artists like Lorca?

How was censorship used in Spain, and what was the effect on the general population?

The Catalans are very proud people that don't want to be considered Spaniards. They say they are more open than them, yet they are so introverted that they follow the same general stereotypes that most Spaniards have. Are the Catalans paranoid just as the rest of Spaniards are and for the same reasons or is it something else that fuels the introversion?

During the Sevilla horse fair, Spanish men use gypsies to do the bargaining for them. However, gypsies are regarded as dishonest lower class citizens, if citizens at all. Why are the men so easy to trust the gypsies with high priced horses?