



## **Bird With the Heart of a Mountain**

*Barbara Mariconda*

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*I throw back my tumble of black hair, roll one bare shoulder forward, then the other. The stack of bangles on each wrist shimmies and slides as my hands rise like birds in flight.*

Set during the turmoil of the Spanish Civil War, sixteen-year-old Drina yearns to dance Flamenco. When she dances, she forgets who she is. She forgets what seems to be her legacy: *I am nothing. I belong nowhere.*

Why does her mother forbid her to dance, the very thing that makes her feel alive? She wonders about the secrets her mother holds, about the rumored life she had before Drina was born – a story that somehow still holds them both prisoner. From the wandering Gypsy campagne to the vineyard estate of a paternal grandmother she has never known and the dance halls of Seville where Flamenco reigns, Drina fights to discover who she is and where she belongs. Not quite Gypsy, not quite Spanish, she must carve out an identity all her own and discover what it means to be a bird with the heart of a mountain. Full of mystery, loss and longing, this powerful novel brilliantly captures a young girl's yearning and her adventurous journey to discover her true home.

## Bird With the Heart of a Mountain Details

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Author : Barbara Mariconda

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## From Reader Review *Bird With the Heart of a Mountain* for online ebook

### **Sarah says**

Drina doesn't belong anywhere. She is half Spanish, half Gypsy and not fully accepted by either side. The Spanish civil war is raging all around, taking everything that matters away from her. Everything, that is, except her love of dance and the name that her mother called out from her death bed. When she needs help the most she finds it in the form of a family that she never knew she had but being a Gypsy in war torn Spain is complicated. She must decide who she is and what she values most.

I have always loved historical fiction and have long been fascinated by the Gypsy culture. When I saw this book I knew that I had to read it. I was not disappointed. Barbara Mariconda tells the story of Drina in a picturesque, haunting manor that kept my interest until the last page. I felt the characters emotions, saw the brightly colored skirts and felt the pulse of the Spanish music. It reminded me of some of my favorite books from my childhood. One thing to be aware of is that though this book is written for young adults, it deals with some dark parts of life and is quite graphic in places. I would recommend it for older teens.

I received a copy of this book to review from NetGalley.

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### **Kaitlin says**

Source: I received an e-arc of this book from the publisher through Netgalley in return for an honest review.

I love a good historical fiction novel, but the genre can be a hit or a miss for me. The book is either incredibly interesting or quite dull. In the case with *Bird with the Heart of a Mountain*, it was almost a complete miss. I just didn't connect to it. There wasn't much about the story that I cared for other than a few of the characters. The heroine, though, felt flat to me. She was one of the things about the book that I connected to the least. Overall, hardly anything stood out to me about the story. It didn't work for me.

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### **frances gatewood says**

#### **Heart warming**

This made me think of all people who struggle because of religion, nationality and victims of war torn countries.  
read it

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### **Sarah-Hope says**

Yes, I'm not the first to say it, but good children's/young adult books are good books for anyone. Barbara Mariconda's *Bird with the Heart of a Mountain* is an example of just such a book. Set in Spain during the civil war, the book is narrated by Drina, a young woman who is half Romany, half Spaniard. At the book's

start, she is living with her mother among a small Romany group, but that life is upended when her mother is raped by a Nationalist soldier.

That rape sets in motion a series of events that lead Drina to unexpected places and people—and on each step of that journey she wrestles with the question of her own identity. Lots of people, especially certain young men, are eager to tell her who she should be, but she has the sense to realize that the real question is who she is.

Drina longs to be a dancer—and it's this desire, along with her own questions about her identity that drive the narrative. The passages about dance—flamenco—and music are beautifully written, cultural history lessons themselves, and the book deals with history in other ways as well.

I first wanted to read this book because I was curious how it would make use of its setting in the Spanish Civil War. The war is background here, but important background that shapes the temperaments of many of the people she meets. As a Romany, Drina is so marginalized that neither side represents her. Both Nationalists and Republicans are more than willing to attack and pillage Romany groups. While the narrative makes clear that the position of some characters is more "correct" than that of others, this story never descends into a simple good side/bad side binary. Like the war itself, people are complicated, mixes of good and bad, sometimes compassionate, sometimes blind to the lives of those around them.

This book is currently available from Amazon in hardcover and electronic versions. The electronic version sells for only \$3.99, so it's most definitely worth taking a chance on—whether you're buying it for yourself or for a younger friend.

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## **Paris Carter says**

Originally posted on Paris Carter

*Bird With The Heart of A Mountain* In another one of Barbara Mariconda brilliant novels we are transported back to Spain during the Spanish Civil War during the 1930's, where we learn the story of Drilla a young girl who's trying to find her identity as a gypsy or as a Spaniard in the middle of a nation that's battling between the nationalist and the Federalist.

*Bird With The Heart of A Mountain* is a poignant novel that follow Drilla all the way to finding herself in a nation that's at war. On one side of the story you learn about Drilla and her caring personality and how much she struggles to keep herself together after everything she loves is taken from her, and you learn about the violence and the innocent lives that are taken during warfare. It is a story that will touch readers of all ages young and old.

Drilla is a beautifully written character and as you are glued to page after page you read more about how strong she is as a character, and how much she has had endured. All of the other characters in the novel as Drilla's grandmother, Renato, her father, and her step mother, are all beautifully written and every character was fascinating. Whenever there was a life or death situation you feel even more glued to your favorite character in the fear that this might be the last you read of them.

The one thing that makes this novel so beautiful is the conflict of it all. Reading about how Drilla's fear of become a professional dancer over the fact that her mother might not approve of it, and the fact that no

matter where she is living with gypsies, or with the Spaniards, she's forced to feel like an outsider. Not to mention that all of Spain is forced to choose a side, and

we get to see neighbors turn into criminals and entire families' murder. The reader gets to see the actual war with their own eyes.

Even if you don't know anything about the Spanish civil war, this novel is a great way to learn more about the deep history that flows through the Spain. The novel doesn't go deep into the detail about the civil war, so if you are new to this time period all you need to know is there are two sides fighting. The Republic being backed by the Soviet Union, and the Nationalist being backed by Nazi Germany and Italy.

The only thing that made me angry with the novel was the terrible ending that felt forced and slapped on to the end to get the novel out of the door. The ending was with quick haste, and there seems to be no sequel in sight, there are hundreds of questions still stuck in my mind that go unanswered.

But with the bad ending aside, Bird With The Heart of A Mountain is a wonderful novel that I would recommend to anyone who wants to learn more about the Spanish Revolution, and the culture of Flamenco dance style.

4.7/5

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### **Brianna C says**

**"My fear has turned to stone. What else can hurt me? What else can be taken from me? My terror and longing have become something new--blank, and untouchable. I will not think or feel. I will only do the next thing that needs to be done."**

I am loving the fact that there seem to be more and more young adult novels that involve history. I love history and I love reading about it. This particular one featured a time and culture that I am not overly familiar with so I can't attest to its accuracy. Regardless, I did enjoy this, but I did want more.

Drina is a gypsy living in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. She loves to dance, but her mother does not allow it. When there is a tragedy, Drina's life is completely altered. Throughout the events, Drina stays strong and tries to figure out who she is at the same time. She learns more about her family as well as her heart. She deals with things teenagers typically deal with--boys, love, and parental approval. Her choices at the end, aren't really explained and they honestly didn't make much sense.

The other characters in the novel were pretty interesting. There is the mysterious man she feels she loves, her recluse mother, her new family, pouty "stepbrother", and creepy military man. I liked that they were all different and weren't all exactly the same. A lot of times you see the side characters all ending up very similar, but luckily that was not the case here.

I did enjoy this and thought the writing was good. It was not what I expected though. I wish that the plot made a little more sense. As well, I wish her decisions at the end were better explained. I'm still not sure why she chose to go the way she did. Maybe it's setting it up for a sequel? I'm not sure. I feel I didn't get as much out of it as I could seeing as how I know nothing about Flamenco. It didn't entirely detract from the story though (me not knowing anything about it). Overall I would recommend this to anyone who wants to be

introduced to what could be a new era/culture. This would be a great stepping stone to learning more about this time.

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This review and more on my blog Listful Booking.

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### **Tara Chevestt says**

I've read many a novel about the Spanish Civil War and more often than not, flamenco is tied into the story in some manner. Compared to these two titles--The Return by Victoria Hislop and Golden Earrings by Belinda Alexandra, I found this one somewhat lacking and less inspiring as well as informative, but it should be noted those are aimed at adult readers and this one is aimed at the younger crowd. I do think, however, it could have been more clear about the war, the cause, the divisions, and what exactly was going on. Had I not read the previous two mentioned books, I would have had a lot of questions.

In a nutshell: the heroine is half Gypsy and half Spanish. When her mother meets tragic circumstances, she just "happens to" run into her father's family, whom she's never known of till now. They are dancers. With just a little training, she becomes a wonderful dancer too. Interspersed in the story is the war; an angry priest, a secret hideout, raids, prison, bombs, though the war itself isn't explained in great depth.

I appreciated the obstacles the heroine faces: what world is she a part of? Should she settle for being half this or that? Half of herself? Choose a man—and she has many interested. The dancing...are the rules and instruction hurting her passion? What should she do and for what reasons? She has many choices to make and also you could say learns to forgive along the way. Things are not perfect with her father asap.

Also loved the subtle lesson about being in love. Are you in love or do you just love that he loves you?

Full review: <http://www.bookbabe.blogspot.com/2013/...>

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### **Alyssa says**

A beautiful and gripping coming of age novel. Most won't have a story like Dria's, a tale of war and horror, but everyone can understand Dria's story. wanting to find out where you belong in the world, wanting to rebel, wanting to stand up for what's right and not knowing how. A great, great novel.

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### **Heather Luna says**

#### **Fascinating cultural experience!**

Barbara Maraconda's writing style is captivating, and the storyline is unique and beautiful. This book takes the reader on Drina's journey & envelops us in a mysterious culture in time gone by. Thoroughly enjoyable.

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## **Esther says**

Loved this book , a real page turner. about the life and struggles of a flamenco dancer.

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## **Hoover Public Library Kids and Teens says**

Coming-of-age during the Spanish Civil War in the 1930s is extra hard for Drina, a young woman who is half Spaniard and half Gypsy. She has flamenco dance in her soul (like both her parents), but her mother never let her explore that passion since it led to her own heartbreak. Now that Drina has been reunited with her father's family, she has opportunities. But the horrors of war and her own confused heart still place stumbling blocks in her way.

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## **Elizabeth Curington says**

\*I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for a fair review

I knew nothing about the Spanish Civil War going into this book, but I was intrigued by the premise. Yes, a girl who is part of two worlds but doesn't belong to either is nothing new. Yet the idea is made new here. Drina is the daughter of a Gypsy mother, caught at the beginning of the story between trying to help her mother survive a horrible attack by soldiers and finding a place for herself. In her illness, her mother whispers the name of Drina's father. When Drina sets out to seek him, she is lead to a world divided by factions in a war she doesn't understand. Having grown up a Gypsy outsider, she has only one true love-- dance. It turns out she takes after her father and a side of her mother she didn't know, well-known flamenco dancers.

I found Drina a fascinating character whose confusion in her circumstances let the reader learn things along with her in a genuine way. I could see and hear Spain in the descriptions which were lyrical without detracting from the story. And Drina's grandmother was a character after my own hard-fiercely determined to help Drina and be true to her own heart. I still don't have a firm grasp on the Spanish Civil War, but I don't think that was the point here. It's not a historical fiction novel, but a coming-of-age discovery set against important events in history (as I would like to believe all our stories are in some way).

I loved this story and would give it 4.5 stars if I could.

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## **Diana says**

This book was pretty great. I loved how Drina stuck to her dream and didn't let anything get in her way. I loved the infusion of Gypsy culture and the beauty of the story. The ending didn't quite satisfy me though

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## **Ingrid says**

I received this book for free from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Like the main character, Drina, this book dances and flows. The words are seamlessly attached, leading you on throughout the novel. Mariconda's words are beautiful- just like a dance. I could be lost in this book just for the words, really.

But the words only make up one part of a novel. There are so many more aspects that are a part of creating the sort of book that catches readers in its web. Things like characters, action, plot, and emotion.

Drina is Roma, a Gypsy girl, born of her Gypsy mother and a wealthy Spaniard. Above both of these things, though, she is a dancer. Set in Spain during the time of the Spanish civil war, conflict is rife. There is no safe place for Drina or her people. As tragedy after tragedy befalls her, she finds herself in the throes of the Spanish upper class, and her very own paternal family.

I was cheering for Drina as she fought to find strength in herself, to discover her identity, and to release herself in dance. Her innocence, longings, and girlishness captured me almost instantly, though I admit to feeling frustrated with her as the book went on. She was not exactly a weak character, but she was easily intimidated and almost never truly voiced her feelings. I often longed for her to just break free, and say that she was going to do what she wanted to do. Not what others planned for her. Other than that, she was a good character. Relatable, likeable, and I was definitely rooting for her.

Marisol was a strong character. Kind of a mentor figure, and very good for Drina. She was fleshed out, though a bit stereotypical.

You have all the other figures as well. The 'evil' stepmother who may not have been evil at all (I appreciated that bit, when the 'bad' one is fleshed out, and made to be understandable.) You have both boys that she may love, neither of which I liked much.

In fact, that annoyed me the most. The boys who were always ordering her around, and that was what made the ending of this novel so sweet. Sometimes a heroine (most of the time, I think) just needs to turn her back and take charge. Because her life is her own, not the boys' she may or may not love.

All in all, this book was sweet, painful, beautiful, and dance-like. It's easy to read, enjoyable, and definitely something I can recommend.

3.5 stars out of 5

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## **Rachel says**

A beautifully written book!

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