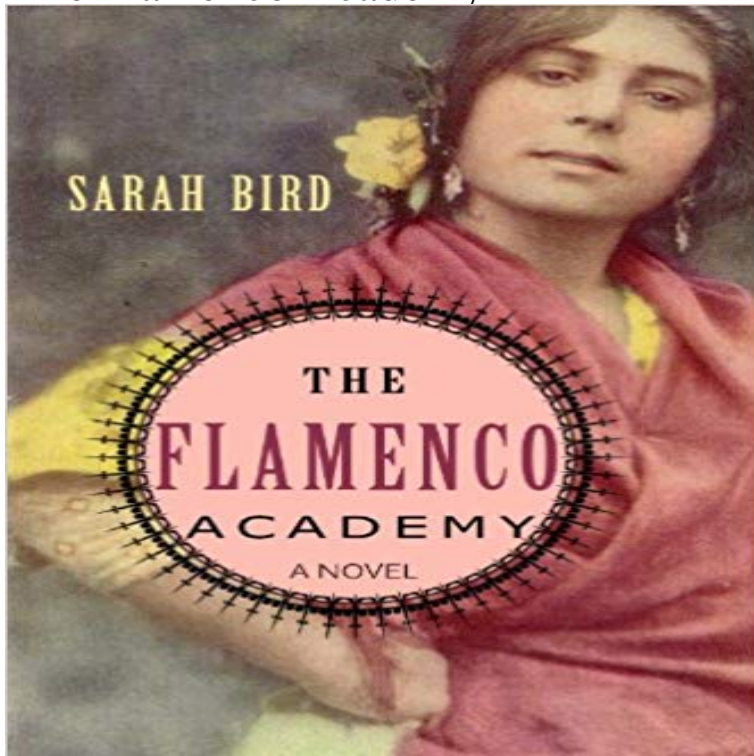


The Flamenco Academy



Bird captures the staccato passion of flamenco in a rapturous love triangle. People Magazine Page Turners The stuff bestsellers are made of . . . funny and beautifully structured to create anticipation and suspense, with lush moments of romance ... Kirkus Reviews (starred review) . A heady brew of a novel, lushly romantic at one turn, wryly and wittily observant at the next. Houston Chronicle The pulse and passion of flamenco take center stage in Sarah Bird's ambitious sixth novel. It's a tale of love and longing and transformation, one the gypsies who created the dance form centuries ago would surely understand. Bird has done her research, and everything from the folklore to the footwork of flamenco is on display here. It's against this backdrop that lonely Cindy Rae falls obsessively in love with Tomas Montenegro. He's a gorgeous guitarist whose physical beauty is exceeded only -- and just barely -- by his artistry. -Veronique de Turenne, NPR From the author of the widely praised *The Yokota Officers Club*, a superbly alive novel about two young American women caught up in the fevered excitement of the flamenco revival sweeping the Southwest. The place is Albuquerque. Cyndi Rae Hrcir, called Rae, seventeen and shy, is twice spellbound, first by high school bad girl Didi (*Dirty Deeds*) Steinberg, already embarked on a search for stardom, then by a devastatingly handsome young flamenco guitarist, Tomas Montenegro. Soon the girls are in college, where they abandon themselves to the disciplines and demands of the university's flamenco academy and to the hypnotic storytelling of their teacher, Dona Carlota, Tomass great-aunt. While never losing the insistent beat of the dance, Dona Carlota mesmerizes her students with the complexly embroidered story of her childhood growing up among the cave-dwelling Gypsies of Andalusia. She

initiates them into the traditions, the rhythms, and the steps of flamenco puro, with its central imperative: Dame la verdad Give me the truth. Locked in a volatile triangle and driven by obsession Didis with stardom, Raes with Tomas, Tomass with his mysterious heritagethese three emerge as the brightest stars on the New World flamenco scene, while secrets and desires, longings and betrayals pulse just beneath the glittering surface of their compelling performances. A sense of passion and danger has always surrounded flamenco. In The Flamenco Academy, Sarah Bird delivers a novel with a sense of history and character that matches the drama of the dance it so brilliantly celebrates. The Flamenco Academy opens so boldly . . . that you have to wonder how [Sarah] Bird can sustain such high drama. But it quickly becomes apparent that shes mapped her novels treacherous terrain and planned accordingly, building characters sturdy enough to stand firmly, even when their emotions are spinning out of control. The New York Times Book Review A deft exploration of love, desire and jealousy told against the backdrop of that most complex of dances, flamenco. Baltimore Sun Sarah Bird brings humor and authenticity to her sixth novel, the story of two teenagers struggling to adapt to lifes unexpected twists and turns... She writes beautifully about the art of flamenco, Gypsy culture and Spanish history. -BookPage Notable Title Good conflict makes good fiction, and thats what gives ``The Flamenco Academy such irresistible energy and narrative drive. And what really makes the novel more than just an exceptional summer read is Birds wonderful ability to create a milieu, from the Albuquerque prowled by teenage girls to the Spanish caves inhabited by Gypsies. Best of all, she gives us the complex lore and intricacies of flamenco, which Didi -- always one to get the last word -- describes as ``obsessive-compulsive disorder set to a great beat. -San Jose Mercury News

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