

★ **The Spanish Daughter****Lorena Hughes**

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In Lorena Hughes's panoramic novel *The Spanish Daughter*, World War I left Spain devastated. Puri, a chocolatier, and her novelist husband leave their Seville home for lush, tropical Ecuador, hoping to claim the inheritance left to Puri by her estranged father.

Puri knew that she was going to a land renowned for its cacao plantations, but what she did not know was that she would be ensnared in family secrets, jealousies, and lies. Left a widow, she's forced to assume the identity of her husband, Cristóbal, to bring his murderer to justice.

Aware that she, and not Cristóbal, was the killer's intended victim, Puri suspects a member of her Ecuadorian family. Though hoping her disguise will protect her until she can discover the truth, she soon finds that learning to live as a man in a man's world is not easy. While relieved at leaving restrictive women's clothing and the need for a husband's permission behind, her feelings shift to fear as she confronts situations that require excessive drinking, riding horseback, engaging in fisticuffs that leave her sore and bruised, and even visiting the local brothel.

Puri's emotions are in turmoil. She reckons with the loss of her husband, the effects of her father's abandonment when she was two, and the discovery that her father established a second family in Ecuador. Threatening to unhinge her mission is her longing to become part of that extended family—as well as her attraction to a man who becomes a surprising ally.

Passionate and suspenseful, *The Spanish Daughter* is a satisfying historical mystery set in a lush tropical land.

KRISTINE MORRIS (January / February 2022)

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