

THE SPANISH FARM

A NOVEL OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR

“The most significant work of its kind”
The Times Literary Supplement



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R.H. Mottram

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As hundreds of thousands of young men enlist to fight on the Western Front, the Spanish Farm, standing amongst the undisturbed pastures of Flanders and built to withstand the wars of an earlier century, faces the horrors of the First World War with the same imperturbable stolidity.

Billetted out as accommodation for the thousands of young soldiers heading to and from the trenches, the farm becomes an oasis of enduring sanity for those who pass through its doors.

It is run by the notoriously tenacious farmer's daughter, Madeleine Vanderlynden, a woman with the determination and business skill to rival any man's.

The war may have brought her a profitable business, but it has also taken Madeleine's lover from her - the young and inexperienced Baron Georges, who rode off to the conflict on an impulse.

And Madeline is not content to sit and wait for the war to be over.

Her Spanish Farm becomes a home to the wounded and damaged troops who have experienced the horrors of the Western Front - and a refuge from a world that appears to have gone mad.

The Spanish Farm is both an intricate portrait of the First World War from a civilian perspective – of life lived against a background of bombardment and machine guns - and a stark portrayal of the intricacies and reality of love and romance during wartime.

'The Spanish Farm' is widely acknowledged as one of the great classics of World War One fiction, ranked alongside 'Goodbye To All That' and 'The Secret Battle'.

'The most significant work of its kind' - The Times Literary Supplement

R H Mottram served in France from 1914 to 1919. The Spanish Farm was first published in 1924 and won the Hawthornden Prize. Mottram wrote some sixty books altogether and in 1966 he was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters by the University of East Anglia. He died in 1971.

Endeavour Press is the UK's leading independent digital publisher.

The Spanish Farm Details

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Author : R.H. Mottram

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From Reader Review The Spanish Farm for online ebook

Cphe says

A novel of WW1. This is the story of the pragmatic and independent Madeline Vanderlynden. Madeline is a young woman of Flemish stock a country girl at heart whose farm The Spanish Farm lies on the very edge of the great conflict.

The novel deals with the stoicism of ordinary people. Even though there is a war being fought on their doorstep life must go on, fields must be plowed, a living must be made to survive in a world full of turmoil. This novel offers an interesting perspective of the conflict seen through Madeline's eyes. It's a story of resourcefulness and stoicism.

The novel is also a romance and in some respects it is a coming of age book for Madeline.

Tuck says

fantastic short novel of flemish farmer girl turned hardnosed international holtelier and modern woman on the sexual front. detailed, believable really good novel.

Brett Gibbs says

doesn't translate well from 1924

Janet says

This is a book from a particular place and time about a particular place and time. Although Madeleine is the main character, it is not character driven. Neither she nor any of the other people in the story are more than types. Madeleine is portrayed as being more intelligent than most of the others in her neighborhood and class, but she is neither reflective nor introspective. (And the author remarks on that time and again.) The primary characters are the Spanish Farm itself and World War I. The people in the story live, act, and feel (almost) entirely in response to those greater, impersonal elements. Madeleine is also prompted to act by her passion for Georges, the young nobleman with whom she has been having an affair, but that serves more as a way of broadening the canvas on which the war is portrayed rather than by deepening her character.

Because of that, I had a difficult time becoming involved in the story, but eventually I relaxed into it -- as opposed to getting caught up in it. Once I accepted it on its own terms it became more interesting. It's a war story, but it's not exciting. There are illicit intimate relationships, but no romance or titillation. There are cultures and ways of life running up against each other, but no drama, only transactions. And yet the writing is strong enough that I was able to accept these as choices of style (and, again, probably characteristic of the time in which it was written) rather than weakness.

This isn't a novel for everyone, and I don't know who I would recommend it to, but if the description catches your attention it's worth sampling. Just don't push modern expectations onto it.

Mashell says

I was totally uninterested in this character and all that surrounded her. When I saw it was set during WW1, I thought I'd get more of a flavor for life during this time period, but I was let down. I hoped for less of a 'story' and more history, oddly enough.

Caroline says

It was interesting to get a somewhat different insight into WW1, namely that of a young French woman trying to get on with her life. However, the woman in question was quite irritating and sometimes ridiculous, which spoiled the story for me a bit.

Cathy says

I was thoroughly uninterested in this character, in her activities, and in the events happening around her. When I saw it was set during WW1, I thought I'd get more of a flavor for life during this time period, but I was let down on all counts.

Chaplain Stanleigh Chapin says

Completely different

A different perspective of war, that I found very enjoyable and entertaining. A style of story telling that was captivating.

Paul says

A very well written book. A lot of descriptive words of 1924 when the original book was written. R.H. Mottram served in WW1. I wonder if he came across or was billet at a "Spanish Farm" during the War.

Miss M says

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