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Isabel Allende Interview, plus links to author biography, book summaries, excerpts and reviews

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Isabel Allende

How to pronounce Isabel Allende: Ees-abel Ay-enday (or ä-YEN-d?)

[Isabel Allende Biography](#)

An interview with Isabel Allende

Isabelle Allende talks about her characters, what writing means to her, and the challenges of getting published.

19 books, translated into 35 languages. More than 57 million copies sold. 12 international honorary doctorates, 50 awards in more than 15 countries and 2 international movies; these are Isabel Allende's impressive numbers. Lucy Hannau contacted her for an interview and was rewarded with a prompt and kind answer. We thank Ms Allende immensely for her friendship and we praise her for her incredible modesty, since there aren't many award-winning and internationally famous authors who answer 'yes' to an interview request in less than 48 hours! This is an incredible gift to you, fiction-fans, from the Lost in Fiction team and one of the most sensitive and talented living authors in the world. Her next book, *Maya's Notebook*, will be out in English in 2012, please don't miss it, it would be a shame!

Which of your characters do you feel more connected to? why?

I heard once that the author is in every character and that every character represents an aspect of the author. I don't identify with one character in particular but in most of my books the main female protagonist is a strong willed, independent and rebellious woman who struggles to beat the odds against her. She is also sentimental and passionate. I feel very connected to those protagonists.

What does "writing" mean to you?

Life. Telling stories is the only thing I want to do. Writing is like breathing. Literature has given me a voice, has given sense to my life and it has connected me with millions of readers worldwide.

Getting published is always hard, how did you find Carmen Balcells?

My first novel, *The House of the Spirits*, was rejected by several publishing houses. One day the receptionist in one of those publishing houses told me that there was no hope of being published without a good agent and she mentioned Carmen Balcells. Later, Tomas Eloy Martinez, an Argentinian writer, gave me Carmen Balcells address in Spain and recommended her as the best agent for Latin American literature.

In one of your interviews you said, you have a cinematographic vision when you write. New technologies are changing our lives today, almost everybody is on facebook or tweets daily and then there is the e-book revolution: how do you relate to them both as an author and as a person? What do you think about e-books?

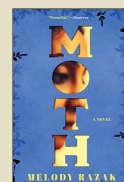
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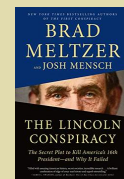


Moth

by Melody Razak

On August 15, 1947, India gained independence from the United

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The Secret Plot to Kill America's 16th President—and Why It Failed

Who Said...

I don't have facebook and I don't tweet because I have no time: I am too busy writing. Usually I have a pile of books on my night table waiting their turn to be read. I like to touch and smell books, but I prefer E-books when I travel because I can carry as many as I want in my iPad. I think that in the near future books will be rare items for collector and libraries and we will be reading everything on a screen.

It's been many years you have been living in California where your "tribe" lives too. How do you keep your written Spanish so "polished", without even a minimal English interference in the vocabulary or in the syntax?

Oh! I wish that was true! My Spanish has deteriorated gravely. Willie, my American husband, thinks that he speaks Spanish but his syntax sounds like Polish and when he doesn't know a word, he makes it up. After 25 years in his company I am writing the way he speaks. A young man in Spain, Jorge Manzanilla, corrects my manuscripts to eliminate Willie's pernicious influence.

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A Conversation With Isabel Allende about Zorro

The narrator addresses the reader directly at transition points in Zorro. Why did you decide to introduce the narrator's voice into your novel in this way?

Talking directly to the reader, as if in a conversation, is a tricky thing because it may sound awkward. However, I thought that in this case it would create suspense. The reader would ask him or herself, Who is this narrator? Also, it established an ironic tone, which I needed for the novel.

What research did you do to establish your fictional characters in California, Spain, and the Caribbean in the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries?

I usually research thoroughly. I consult books and the Internet; I watch movies to get an idea of the clothes and ways of life. It took me six month of intense research to be able to write the book. I needed a lot of information about sailing ships, Indians, Gypsies, secret societies, fencing, politics in Europe, etc.

You are better known for writing literary fiction than adventure novels. How did you decide to take on the legend of Zorro in this novel?

The character of Zorro is owned by Zorro Productions. Three people from that company came to me in the summer of 2003 and asked me to write a novel about Zorro. I thought about it and decided that because the historical period is so fascinating, I could come up with an original story about Zorro.

Were there any special challenges you faced in choosing Zorro, a cultural figure widely known, as the hero of your book?

The challenge was to imagine something that had not been done before. I knew it would not be easy because so much had already been said about him in comic books, TV and movies. But little had been said about his childhood and youth. Why and how does a boy becomes Zorro?

Your critics have described Zorro as "one of those rare and perfect matches of subject and author." To what extent do you agree with this observation, and did you feel especially connected to the fictional character of Zorro as you wrote?

I asked the people from Zorro Productions why they thought of me to write this book and they said because I am Hispanic, I know the Spanish culture (I even write in Spanish!), I have written a book about California and the Gold Rush (*Daughter of Fortune*), and the theme of justice has always been present in my books. I have also written Young Adult fiction, so I have some experience with action heroes and adventure. From my side I can say that I have always loved Zorro because he is brave and smart, he is not particularly violent, he is playful, histrionic, and eternally young. He risks his life to help the underdog but he does it with a lighthearted and ironic attitude. There is nothing tragic about him. He is fun!

2005

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for a lifetime of listening
when you'd rather have been
talking

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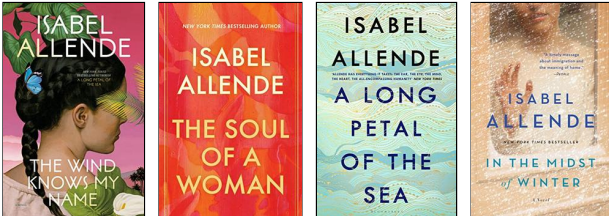
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Henry William Brands was born in Portland, Oregon, where he lived until he went to California for college. He attended Stanford University and studied history and mathematics.

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