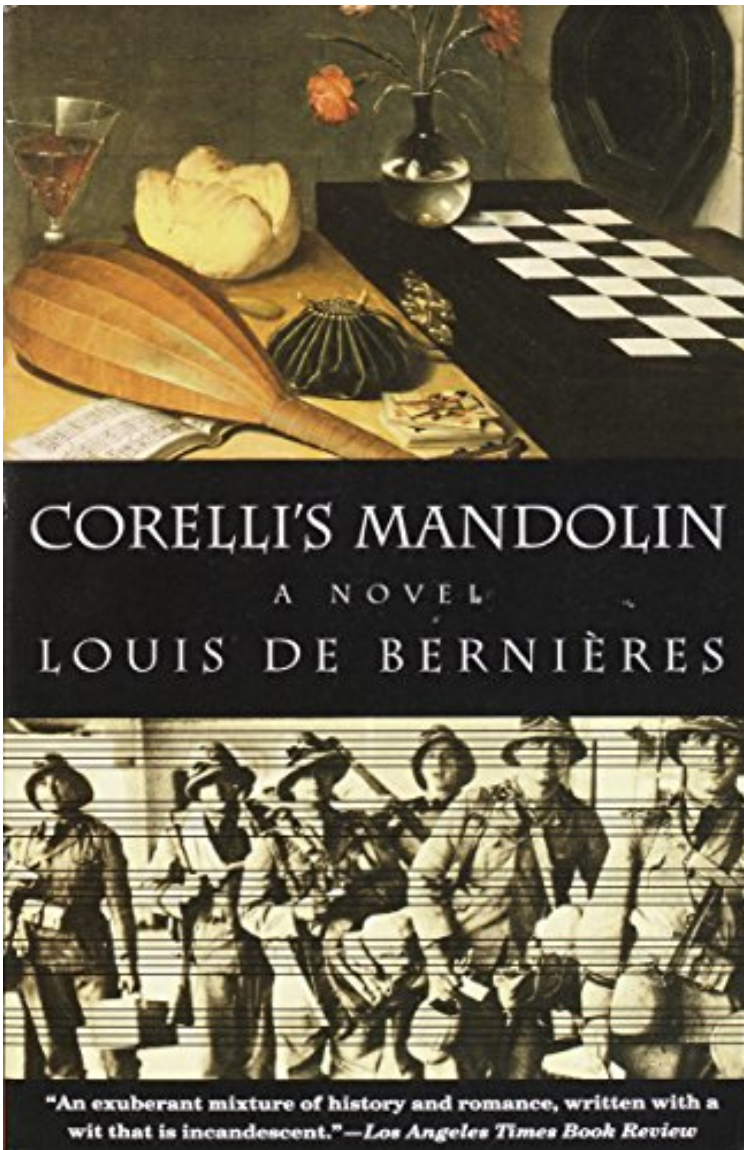


[Mobile library] File size: 34.Mb

Corelli's Mandolin: A Novel



Par Louis de Bernieres
*ePub | *DOC | audiobook | ebooks |*
Download PDF

Dtails sur le produit Rang parmi les ventes : #368148 dans eBooksPubli le: 2012-10-17Sorti le: 2012-10-17Format: Ebook Kindle

[Mobile library] Corelli's Mandolin: A Novel

Par Louis de Bernieres : Corelli's Mandolin: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Corelli's Mandolin: A Novel:

Download

Read Online

Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurExtravagant, inventive, emotionally sweeping, Corelli's Mandolin is the story of a timeless place that one day wakes up to find itself in the jaws of history.The place is the Greek island of Cephallonia, where gods once dabbled in the affairs of men and the local saint periodically rises from his sarcophagus to cure the mad.Then the tide of World War II rolls onto the island's shores in the form of the conquering Italian army.Caught in the occupation are Pelagia, a willful, beautiful young woman, and the two suitors vying for her love:Mandras, a gentle fisherman turned ruthless guerilla, and the charming, mandolin-playing Captain Corelli, a reluctant officer of the Italian garrison on the island.Rich with loyalties and betrayals, and set against a landscape where the factual blends seamlessly with the fantastic, Corelli's

Mandolin is a passionate novel as rich in ideas as it is genuinely moving. From the Trade Paperback edition. Extrait Dr Iannis Commences his History and is Frustrated Dr Iannis had enjoyed a satisfactory day in which none of his patients had died or got any worse. He had attended a surprisingly easy calving, lanced one abscess, extracted a molar, dosed one lady of easy virtue with Salvarsan, performed an unpleasant but spectacularly fruitful enema, and had produced a miracle by a feat of medical prestidigitation. He chuckled to himself, for no doubt this miracle was already being touted as worthy of St Gerasimos himself. He had gone to old man Stamatis' house, having been summoned to deal with an earache, and had found himself gazing down into an aural orifice more dank, be-lichened, and stalagmitic even than the Drogarati cave. He had set about cleaning the lichen away with the aid of a little cotton, soaked in alcohol, and wrapped about the end of a long matchstick. He was aware that old man Stamatis had been deaf in that ear since childhood, and that it had been a constant source of pain, but was nonetheless surprised when, deep in that hairy recess, the tip of his matchstick seemed to encounter something hard and unyielding; something, that is to say, which had no physiological or anatomical excuse for its presence. He took the old man over to the window, threw open the shutters, and an explosion of midday heat and light instantaneously threw the room into an effulgent dazzle, as though some importunate and unduly luminous angel had misguidedly picked that place for an epiphany. Old Stamatis' wife tutted; it was simply bad housekeeping to allow that much light into the house at such an hour. She was sure that it stirred up the dust; she could clearly see the motes rising up from the surfaces. Dr Iannis tilted the old man's head and peered into the ear. With his long matchstick he pressed aside the undergrowth of stiff grey hairs embellished with flakes of exfoliated scurf. There was something spherical within. He scraped its surface to remove the hard brown cankerous coating of wax, and beheld a pea. It was undoubtedly a pea; it was light green, its surface was slightly wrinkled, and there could not be any doubt in the matter. 'Have you ever stuck anything down your ear?' he demanded. 'Only my finger,' replied Stamatis. 'And how long have you been deaf in this ear?' 'Since as long as I can remember.' Dr Iannis found an absurd picture rising up before his imagination. It was Stamatis as a toddler, with the same gnarled face, the same stoop, the same overmeasure of aural hair, reaching up to the kitchen table and taking a dried pea from a wooden bowl. He stuck it into his mouth, found it too hard to bite, and crammed it into his ear. The doctor chuckled, 'You must have been a very annoying little boy.' 'He was a devil.' 'Be quiet, woman, you didn't even know me in those days.' 'I have your mother's word, God rest her soul,' replied the old woman, pursing her lips and folding her arms, 'and I have the word of your sisters.' Dr Iannis considered the problem. It was undoubtedly an obdurate and recalcitrant pea, and it was too tightly packed to lever it out. 'Do you have a fishhook, about the right size for a mullet, with a long shank? And do you have a light hammer?' The couple looked at each other with the single thought that their doctor must have lost his mind. 'What does this have to do with my earache?' asked Stamatis suspiciously. 'You have an exorbitant auditory impediment,' replied the doctor, ever conscious of the necessity for maintaining a certain iatric mystique, and fully aware that 'a pea in the ear' was unlikely to earn him any kudos. 'I can remove it with a fishhook and a small hammer; it's the ideal way of overcoming un embarras de petit pois.' He spoke the French words in a mincingly Parisian accent, even though his irony was apparent only to himself. A hook and a hammer were duly fetched, and the doctor carefully straightened the hook on the stone flags of the floor. He then summoned the old man and told him to lay his head on the sill in the light. Stamatis lay there rolling his eyes, and the old lady put her hands over hers, watching through her fingers. 'Hurry up, Doctor,' exclaimed Stamatis, 'this sill is hotter than hell.' The doctor carefully inserted the straightened hook into the hirsute orifice and raised the hammer, only to be deflected from his course by a hoarse shriek very reminiscent of that of a raven. Perplexed and horrified, the old wife was wringing her hands and keening, 'O, o, o, you are going to drive a fishhook into his brain. Christ have mercy, all the saints and Mary protect us.' This interjection gave the doctor pause; he reflected that if the pea was very hard, there was a good chance that the barb would not penetrate, but would drive the pea deeper into its recess. The drum might even be broken. He straightened up and twirled his white moustache reflectively with one forefinger. 'Change of plan,' he announced. 'I have decided upon further thought that it would be better to fill his ear up with water and mollify the supererogatory occlusion. Kyria, you must keep this ear filled with warm water until I return this evening. Do not allow the patient to move, keep him lying on his side with his ear full. Is that understood?' Dr Iannis returned at six o'clock and hooked the softened pea successfully without the aid of a hammer, small or otherwise. He worked it out deftly enough, and presented it to the couple for their inspection. Encrusted with thick dark wax, rank and malodorous, it was recognisable to neither of them as anything leguminous. 'It's very papilionaceous, is it not?' enquired the doctor. The old woman nodded with every semblance of having understood, which she had

not, but with an expression of wonder alight in her eyes. Stamatis clapped his hand to the side of his head and exclaimed, 'It's cold in there. My God, it's loud. I mean everything is loud. My own voice is loud.' 'Your deafness is cured,' announced Dr Iannis. 'A very satisfactory operation, I think.' 'I've had an operation,' said Stamatis complacently. 'I'm the only person I know who's had an operation. And now I can hear. It's a miracle, that's what it is. My head feels empty, it feels hollow, it feels as though my whole head has filled up with spring water, all cold and clear.' 'Well, is it empty, or is it full?' demanded the old lady. 'Talk some sense when the doctor has been kind enough to cure you.' She took Iannis' hand in both of her own and kissed it, and shortly afterwards he found himself walking home with a fat pullet under each arm, a shiny dark aubergine stuffed into each pocket of his jacket, and an ancient pea wrapped up in his handkerchief, to be added to his private medical museum. It had been a good day for payments; he had also earned two very large and fine crayfish, a pot of whitebait, a basil plant, and an offer of sexual intercourse (to be redeemed at his convenience). He had resolved that he would not be taking up that particular offer, even if the Salvarsan were effective. He was left with a whole evening in which to write his history of Cephallonia, as long as Pelagia had remembered to purchase some more oil for the lamps. 'The New History of Cephallonia' was proving to be a problem; it seemed to be impossible to write it without the intrusion of his own feelings and prejudices. Objectivity seemed to be quite unattainable, and he felt that his false starts must have wasted more paper than was normally used on the island in the space of a year. The voice that emerged in his account was intractably his own; it was never historical. It lacked grandeur and impartiality. It was not Olympian. He sat down and wrote: 'Cephallonia is a factory that breeds babies for export. There are more Cephallonians abroad or at sea than there are at home. There is no indigenous industry that keeps families together, there is not enough arable land, there is an insufficiency of fish in the ocean. Our men go abroad and return here to die, and so we are an island of children, spinsters, priests, and the very old. The only good thing about it is that only the beautiful women find husbands amongst those men that are left, and so the pressure of natural selection has ensured that we have the most beautiful women in all of Greece, and perhaps in the whole region of the Mediterranean. The unhappy thing about this is that we have beautiful and spirited women married to the most grotesque and inappropriate husbands, who are good for nothing and never could be, and we have some sad and ugly women that nobody wants, who are born to be widows without ever having had a husband.' The doctor refilled his pipe and read this through. He listened to Pelagia clattering outdoors in the yard, preparing to boil the crayfish. He read what he had written about beautiful women, and remembered his wife, as lovely as her daughter had become, and dead from tuberculosis despite everything he had been able to do. 'This island betrays its own people in the mere act of existing,' he wrote, and then he crumpled the sheet of paper and flung it into the corner of the room. This would never do; why could he not write like a writer of histories? Why could he not write without passion? Without anger? Without the sense of betrayal and oppression? He picked up the sheet, already bent at the corners, that he had written first. It was the title page: 'The New History of Cephallonia'. He crossed out the first two words and substituted 'A Personal'. Now he could forget about leaving out the loaded adjectives and the ancient historical grudges, now he could be vitriolic about the Romans, the Normans, the Venetians, the Turks, the British, and even the islanders themselves. He wrote: 'The half-forgotten island of Cephallonia rises improvidently and inadvisedly from the Ionian Sea; it is an island so immense in antiquity that the very rocks themselves exhale nostalgia and the red earth lies stupefied not only by the sun, but by the impossible weight of memory. The ships of Odysseus were built of Cephallonian pi...Revue de presse"Brims with all the grand topics of literature--love and death, heroism and skull-duggery, humor and pathos, not to mention art and religion. . . . A good old-fashioned novel." --Washington Post Book World"An exuberant mixture of history and romance, written with a wit that is incandescent"--Los Angeles Times Book "Stunning. . . . A high-spirited historical romance. . . . Remarkable." --The New York Times Book From the Trade Paperback edition.