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If I was cool about the last two, allow me to blow very hot about this novel. As hot as the post on the high Spanish sierra where Bora finds himself in 1937. In theory he is there as a Foreign Legion lieutenant on the side of Franco: in truth as an Abwehr agent. The representatives of the Internationalists are on the other side of the mountain. They frequent the same towns and share the same women. We find ourselves in the middle of a classic phony war. What is also shared by Bora and Philip "Felipe" Watson, a war-weary American who is his opposite number on the Internationalist side is a love of the poetry of Federico Garcia Lorca. Lorca was probably the most famous Spanish poet of the 20th century. He disappeared during the war and his remains never been discovered.

It is clear that this love of Lorca's work is shared by Pastor (real name Maria Verbena Volpi). She has taken the mystery as the plot for the novel, and the man's work as a leitmotif. She has done much more. Seventy years ago, Hemingway produced some of his best work in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, his taut, spare prose evoking the people and landscape of Spain, and some of the horrors of a civil war. Pastor has built on that legacy, with some of the finest representation of that time and place I have ever read. If I find her plots slightly implausible, I'm prepared to forgive her this time. Watson and his motley crew of Internationalists are thoroughly credible: we learn more of Bora's back story: and we meet flame-haired Remedios the bruja (witch). Now may Ms Volpi forgive me if I misinterpret an influence, but I can never forget Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude* in which Remedios the Beauty, after an eventful life, was hauled up to heaven by her long red tresses. Perhaps the two ladies were related in some way. Certainly, the sexual spew-wifery here adds some spice to the book and intensifies the rivalry between the two main protagonists.