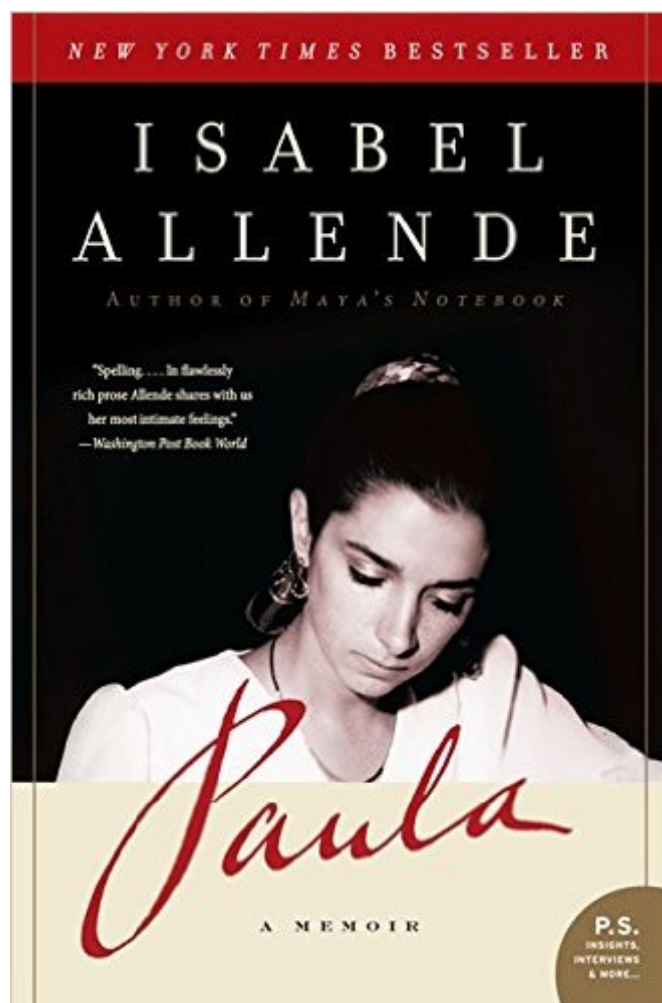


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Paula: A Memoir(front Cover Image Of The Item May Vary)



Synopsis

When Isabel Allende's daughter, Paula, became gravely ill and fell into a coma, the author began to write the story of her family for her unconscious child. In the telling, bizarre ancestors appear before our eyes; we hear both delightful and bitter childhood memories, amazing anecdotes of youthful years, and the most intimate secrets passed along in whispers. With Paula, Allende has written a powerful autobiography whose straightforward acceptance of the magical and spiritual worlds will remind readers of her first book, *The House of the Spirits*. Please note, front cover image of the item may vary.

Book Information

Paperback: 368 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial (May 7, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061564907

ISBN-13: 978-0061564901

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.8 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

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Customer Reviews

I first read Isabel Allende when my friend's mother recommended "The House of the Spirits." Later, I told my friend's mother how much I had enjoyed the novel. On that occasion she handed me her copy of "Paula," saying, "Hear. Read this." I obliged. "Paula" is the author's autobiography, written for her daughter, as she tries to nurse her daughter through a rare illness that has left her comatose. Allende visits the events in her past as she copes with the present. "Paula" moved me on many different levels. Allende's story of her own past is captivating. Her present day struggle to heal her daughter is heartwrenching. Despite the sadnesses of the book, it is a book that affirms life. I read it whenever I feel have wallowed in self-pity for too long. It reminds me that it is I who am in charge of my destiny. After crying the many tears I cry when I read "Paula," I feel cleansed, rejuvenated, and ready to live life again.

Isabel Allende has made her name as a writer in the genre of magic realism, where fantastical events occur, often without warning. When her daughter Paula collapsed into an irreversibly coma due to a rare disease, Allende found herself desperate for a story to tell her dying daughter. This is the book that arose out of a mother's need to understand the past, the future, and the mysterious connection between the two. Allende tells of events before her birth, of Chilean politics and how it affected her famously political family, of falling in love, of becoming a writer, of motherhood, of her journey through Paula's illness - while embracing the spirituality that pervades her fiction.

Surprisingly, the story of Allende's life bears remarkable resemblance, both in fact and in imagery, to her bestselling novel *THE HOUSE OF SPIRITS*. While sadness frames this memoir, the core of it pulses with life and faith. Beautifully written, with moments that will make you pause with admiration, this book is startling and powerful. Every fan of Allende should read this, both for the context it provides for her writing and for the force of her storytelling.

"Paula" is a memoir of the author's life. It began as a letter to her daughter during her battle with the debilitating disease, porphyria. Paula slips into a coma and remains in that state for over a year. In this memoir, Allende reveals the trials of her life in Chile and her travels abroad. She writes of the political unrest in her homeland, her role in assisting political fugitives during that time and her eventual launch into the literary career she enjoys today. The book is filled with love of family, country and an unrelenting passion for life. Allende's connection with the spirits of her ancestors provides a magical and mystical backdrop for a real life experience that could not be replicated by the most imaginative of writers. This memoir allowed Allende to come to terms with her daughter's death and to appreciate her life more fully. Translated in flawless English, this memoir takes the reader on a spiritual and historical journey of discovery. Paula will remain a central figure (spirit) in the life of her family, and this story ensures that she will maintain a place in the memory of readers as well.

This book will make you cry and laugh and everything in between. The first half of the book is a letter to her daughter written in the hope that she will wake from her coma. In fear that Paula will not remember her past Isabel Allende tells her the true story of their family. The second half is a farewell to Paula. It is a story of love and loss in many aspects. Love and loss of family, of country, and of life. It is gripping to read of people who have had to live in exile and find their way without the safety of being able to go "home." It is even more beautiful to find that their home is found wherever

they are. This book should be read by mothers, daughters, immigrants, and anyone descending from people who have lived through persecution, exile, or political turmoil.

Isabel Allende is truly a brave woman as she shares a very personal tragedy. The thing that is so refreshing about the book is that while the imminent death of her daughter hangs over your head, Isabel is masterful at telling not only the story of her daughter but the history of a very confusing, wonderful country. I have never laughed aloud and cried by reading words on a page, but Isabel has made me do that. She is an expert story teller. I don't know how the english version stands up, but as someone who has been to her home country and someone who is very interested in literature from Latin America, this (the spanish version for those who can read it) is a must must must read.

This is such a beautiful book, a beautifully written story of Isabel Allende's life and the life of her family. I was not expecting the book to be what it was in this context - there are a lot of family stories and stories about her life in Chile. The book is fascinating, but is also quite sad as well. Indeed there are many passages about Allende's daughter Paula being in a coma and later in a vegetative state, and these passages, although well written are often times very emotionally difficult to read. My heart goes out to the author - it must have been an incredibly difficult book to write. I found the book easier to read a bit at a time, and as I was reading it in the original Spanish, this was not difficult. It is well worth reading. I waited too long to read this book because I thought that it was going to be nonstop depressing news of Paula in the hospital and for the most part, it really isn't, but it is sad and it probably will make you cry at the end, but go for it anyway - it's good to have feelings to know that you are alive, right?

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