

# Heaven on Earth The Gardens of the Alhambra

By Maira Kalman



This is not the Bronx.  
We are in Granada, Andalusia, Spain.  
I have wanted to go there forever.  
A need to imagine life as it was then.

Once upon a time.  
Arabian nights. Celestial love.  
Seraglios. Alcazaba.  
Oh yes, it is all here. (with a million  
tourists, of course, but such is life.)

His name is  
SULTAN Yusuf  
the First.

Handsome,  
fierce  
and  
POWERFUL.

He Built a  
vision of an  
Earthly  
PARADISE  
in the  
14<sup>th</sup>  
century.



Walls covered  
with ARABESQUES  
and CALLIGRAPHY.

With HAMMAMS,  
HAREMS, PATIOS  
and COURTYARDS  
with  
gurgling  
FOUNTAINS.

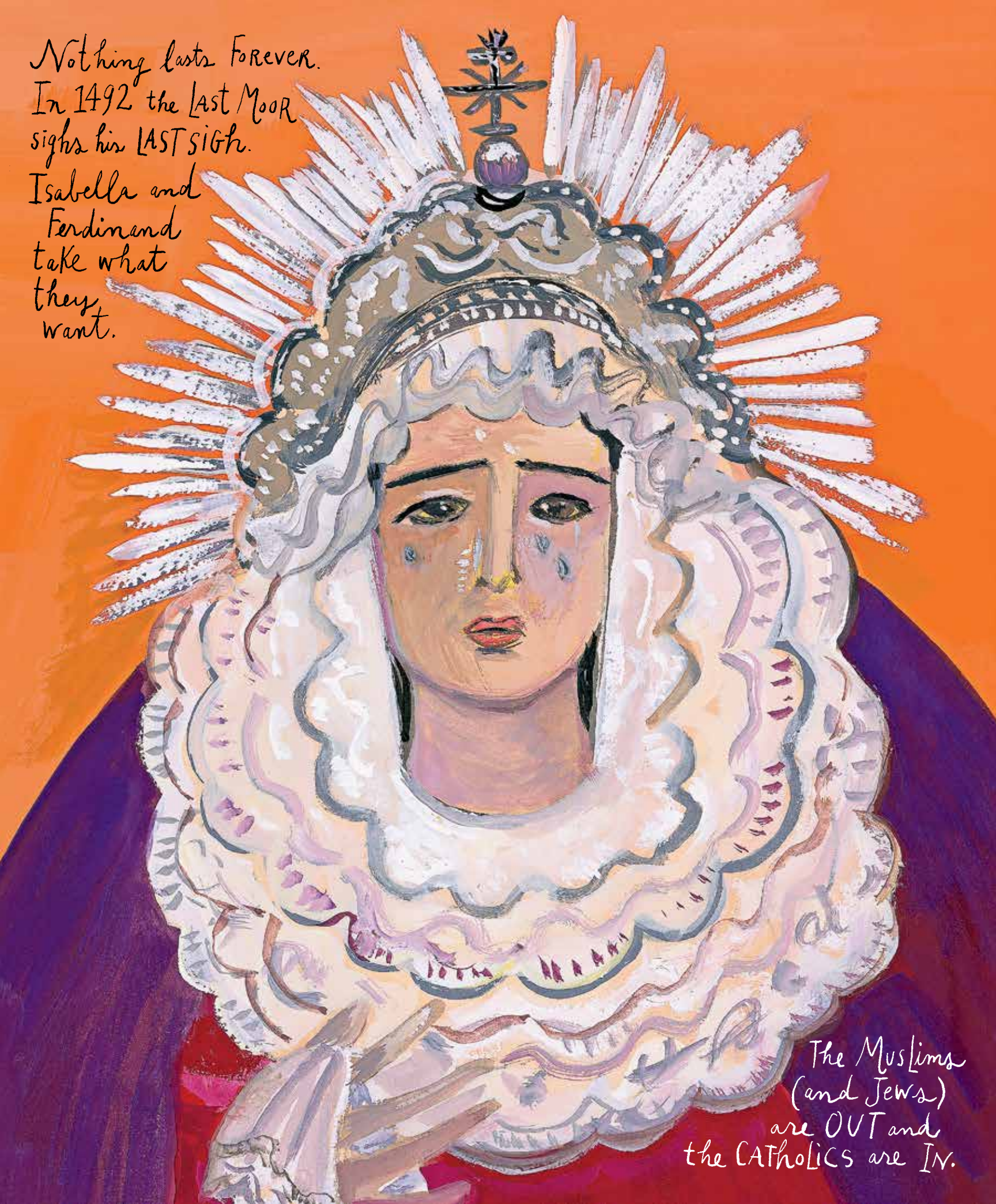
The Bougainvillea tumbles lushly over the wall.

The scent of JASMINE  
perfumes the air.

Fig and POMEGRANATE  
trees are heavy with  
fruit. Life is  
FULL of  
BEAUTY  
and  
Pleasure.



Nothing lasts Forever.  
In 1492 the Last Moor  
sighs his LAST SIGH.  
Isabella and  
Ferdinand  
take what  
they  
want.



The Muslims  
(and Jews)  
are OUT and  
the CATHOLICS are IN.



But they KNOW a Good Thing  
when they SEE IT. The GARDENS  
Remain for a Few Hundred Years  
MORE. THEN are NEGLECTED for MANY  
YEARS. THEN Rediscovered (by, among others,  
Washington Irving, who wrote "Tales of the Alhambra" in 1832).

The fountains.  
The LIGHT.  
The LAVENDER.  
The OLIVES.  
The almonds.  
The water.  
The SKY.  
The cypress.  
The myrtle.  
The Birds.  
No more than This  
is ever needed.



"The waters speak and weep,  
under the WHITE Oleanders  
under the PINK Oleanders  
the waters weep and sing,  
for the myrtle in bloom  
over the opaque waters"

"Forgetting of Granada"  
- Juan Ramón Jiménez

