



Don Alvaro, or the Force of Fate (1835): A Play by Angel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas

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Don Álvaro, or the Force of Fate by Ángel de Saavedra, Duke of Rivas (1791-1865), premiered in 1835 in Madrid and changed the Spanish stage forever after. It was the benchmark Romantic play of early nineteenth-century Spain. In this English edition designed for either classroom use or performance, Robert Fedorchek presents a readable translation faithful to the tone and spirit of the original. Joyce Tolliver enhances the book with a rich introduction highlighting the work's lasting significance.

The play tells of the torrid love of the mysterious Don Álvaro and the lovely Doña Leonor, and how fate intervenes?by way of Álvaro's role in the "accidental" death of Leonor's father?to bring about the extermination of Leonor's family at the hands of the man who loves her to distraction.

Although chronologically not the first Spanish Romantic drama, Don Álvaro is generally considered the true exponent of the freedom of expression that Romanticism brought to the theater. It does away with all the Neoclassical rules: it exceeds twenty-four hours; the action takes place in two countries; it mixes high and low; prose alternates with verse; and the characters express, melodramatically and passionately, their innermost feelings. It is also generally considered the first play in the best trilogy, along with Antonio García Gutiérrez's *El trovador* (*The troubadour*, 1836) and Juan Eugenio Hartzenbusch's *Los amantes de Teruel* (*The lovers of Teruel*, 1837).

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR:

Robert M. Fedorchek is Professor of Spanish at Fairfield University. He has translated into English numerous works, among them *Stories of Enchantment from Nineteenth-Century Spain*, Juan Valera's *Doña Luz*, and Concha Castroviejo's *The Garden with Seven Gates*. Joyce Tolliver is Associate Professor of Spanish and Women's Studies at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and has published widely on nineteenth-century Spanish literature.

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"This smooth, lively translation is the latest of Fedorchek's excellent renderings into English of 19th century Spanish works of literature. . . . Highly recommended. Lower-/upper-division undergraduates studying literature in translation." ? E.E.Norden, *Choice*

"Fedorchek's translation is superb. It captures the heightened drama of the original while smoothing out the play's more unrealistic passages . . . Still managing to remain faithful to Rivas's spirit and intention."?David T. Gies, University of Virginia

"Fedorchek's excellent new translation brings this important play to life. Unsubtle, bombastic, and intense, Don Álvaro marked the beginning of the romantic explosion that was to change the direction of Spanish literature. Its representation of the effects of an implacable force on a young couple can still move readers willing to enter a world where irony is not a human prerogative, but rather that of a cruel star."?Alan E.

Smith, Boston University

"One of Spanish Romanticism's darkest and wildest characters, Don Álvaro, lives again in this excellent translation. Robert Fedorchek's energized English will delight new readers discovering for the first time the unforgettable envoy from hell."? Noël Valis, Yale University

"In 1835 the duke of Rivas presented his Madrid audience with a tremendous romantic hero; Robert M. Fedorchek has recreated him magnificently for a new set of Anglophone readers today. . . . [T]his play is an enjoyable way to introduce discussions of empire, race, and the political situation of the early nineteenth century. . . . Overall the translation is excellent. Indeed, a number of the lyric passages are breathtakingly beautiful and an homage to the duke of Rivas's style." ? Lisa Surwillo, *The Society for Spanish and Portuguese Historical Studies Bulletin*

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