



The Angels Weep

Wilbur Smith

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In *The Angels Weep* by Wilbur Smith, on a continent of breathtaking beauty and bitter suffering, two vastly different cultures clashed, mingled, and recoiled. Here, amidst mist-shrouded mountains and gold-studded plateaus, ancient tribesmen lived close to the earth, as white men dug fortunes out from beneath them and laid plans for a new civilization.

Out of Southern Africa the enigmatic Cecil Rhodes built an empire in the late 1800s and attracted the brightest and bravest of a generation--including a remarkable far-flung family named Ballantyne. But for the natives, another day was dawning: a day of retribution...

From a courageous woman doctor to a fierce, one-eyed slave trader turned soldier, the whites of Africa were buffeted by two horrific waves of war. And just when a bloody peace seemed possible, the seeds of future turmoil were sown ...

The Angels Weep Details

Date : Published November 28th 2006 by St. Martin's Paperbacks (first published 1982)

ISBN : 9780312940737

Author : Wilbur Smith

Format : Paperback 672 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Adventure, Fiction, Cultural, Africa, Thriller

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From Reader Review The Angels Weep for online ebook

Dave Fellows says

5/5 stars. Let me say that the much-longer-than-average 5 weeks it took for me to read this book doesn't reflect the quality of the story contained within. This was one of the best Wilbur Smith novels I've read so far, and a great conclusion to the Ballantyne's African adventures. I knew beforehand that Parts 1 and 2 were set more than 80 years apart, and therefore knew that the vast majority of the characters I've learned to love during this brilliant trilogy would be dead by then. Therefore, I was nervous about continuing to read the same story but with totally different characters. As it turns out, I shouldn't have worried. After the late 19th Century Ballantynes reach the natural end of their tale (with things not turning out too badly for them, on balance), the 20th Century story follows a watered-down Ballantyne, Craig Mellow. I was happy of this fact from very early on, because the hardness of the Ballantynes had started to grate on me a little. Morally, I do prefer Wilbur Smith's Courtneys over the sometimes cruel, ruthless Ballantynes...and Criag Mellow (Ralph's great-gandson) is more like the Courtneys in many ways. Although much shorter than the epic that preceded Craig's story, Part 2 is still a great read that I thoroughly enjoyed. The only downside is that the story now feels utterly complete...and this leaves me wondering whether or not I really want to read 'The Leopard Hunts in Darknes', the sequel. I don't want it to ruin the happy ending that I felt Craig truly deserved at the end of 'The Angels Weep'. We all know what Wilbur Smith is like for putting his most likeable characters through some pretty tough times!

Rita says

I enjoyed learning so much of the history of colonial Africa; it has always been a continent of spellbinding majesty marred by greed motivated misery. Smith described the cultural differences with keen discernment and thereby nearly evoked a **** rating. I could have even persisted in this direction despite the excessive violence. But then I realized, with a slap to my forehead, the author considered it necessary to repeatedly portray misogyny too well! Bye, bye, Wilbur!

Ragnar says

Leí esta novela en 1989. No se me olvidó jamás, porque no era mi tipo de lectura habitual en aquellas épocas, generalmente más técnica, incluso cuando eran novelas... fue entonces que unas manos mágicas deslizaron hasta las mías este pedazo de historia, con la intención de mostrarme que había mucho más... supongo, o algo así... Wilbur Smith es un maestro, indudablemente.

Y ahí quedé entonces, prendado de la familia Ballantyne con el correr de las páginas.

La primera parte de la novela arranca en 1895, la segunda... en 1977.

Ese recurso, en aquel momento, me pareció lo más fantástico del mundo, y amé a Wilbur Smith.

Werehare says

Avrei voluto dare una stella e mezza, ma dovendo decidere tra una o due ho deciso di arrotondare per difetto. Un romanzo che si sente molto affascinante, quando invece un po' di autoironia non gli avrebbe fatto male. La concezione delle donne è degradante dalla prima all'ultima pagina, il che è in parte coerente con l'ambientazione ma comunque non è piacevole da leggere per qualche centinaio di pagine di seguito: tutte le donne sono o vittime da vendicare o streghe tentatrici. Tutti gli eroi sono bellissimi, giovani, intraprendenti, coraggiosi e soprattutto "uomini", e anche quelli che sono presentati in modo diverso alla fine si riveleranno tali.

Naomi says

The life of the Ballantyne family continues in the land of Rhodesia which later becomes Zimbabwe. This is an exciting tale of the land they consider their own while becoming more associated with Cecil Rhodes and his dream of building an empire on the diamond mines. They become more entangled with his ambitions as they attempt to amass their own fortunes. Another great story of Africa and its native people are intertwined in these efforts as they attempt to reclaim the land in which they have lived since time began.

Bettie? says

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Ballantyne Angels Weep
Finished 8/5/2012

3.5*

Dropped star value when Part One stopped at the death of ~~that bastard~~ Rhodes, and Part Two started out 1977, introducing us to events surrounding the fall of Rhodesia and the Ballantyne Grandchildren's shenanigans.

Read By: Jon Cartwright

Duration: 22:15

Description: *An exciting story of action, adventure and romance. Set in Rhodesia the novel's characters, both black and white, play out their parts in a turmoil of action during which the seeds of hatred and future tragedy are sown.*

BALLANTYNE:

4* A Falcon Flies (1980)

4* Men of Men

CR The Angels Weep

The Leopard Hunts in Darkness

The Triumph of the Sun (Ballantyne #5 = Courtney #12)

ANCIENT EGYPT

- 4* - River God (1993)
- 4* - The Seventh Scroll (1995)
- 4* - Warlock (2001)
- 3* - The Quest (2007)

STAND ALONES:

- 3* - The Diamond Hunters (1971)
- 4* - The Sunbird (1972)
- 3* - Golden Fox (1990)
- 3* - Birds of Prey (1997)
- 3* - Blue Horizon (2003)
- 1* - Those in Peril (2011)

Mark Edlund says

History series

I am still not sure if Smith is a racist troglodyte, a sexist pig or a man who just loves Africa so much that he glosses over the continent's warts. A great adventure and the third following the Ballantyne family. I did not like how he bounced from 1885 to 1977 and reviewed all his great characters' lives in four or five pages. Gruesome violence in a gruesome time for South Africa and Rhodesia's history. One Canadian reference - Cecil Rhodes talks about setting up his Rhodes scholarships and mentions Canada as one country in the Commonwealth.

Sittonbull says

Well... You might say I'm hooked on Wilbur Smith. In his historically accurate style, Smith chronicles the transformation of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. He rips your heart out one minute and makes it soars the next. Having a friend, "Spook" displaced from his land when MuGabe came in power and previously knowing something of his story made this book hard to put down... and even more sad for his loss.

Nerissa says

It takes a while to get into this book, but it's worth persisting. When the story unravels its great.

G. Wanjohi says

What can I say, Wilbur Smith doesn't at all. Well researched, vivid illustration don't get me started on the imagination.

Great work of fiction.

Graham says

What a way to end the year! This is an absolutely blistering read and, I would say, the best Wilbur Smith novel I've read yet, and I've already encountered plenty of exceptional books from this author. THE ANGELS WEEP is the third in the Ballantyne series, following on from A FALCON FLIES and MEN OF MEN, and it truly is a fascinating experience.

The story picks up right from where we left off in MEN OF MEN as the various characters of the Ballantyne family (and friends) continue their colonisation and expansion of modern-day Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, formerly Matabeleland, under the pioneering Cecil Rhodes. Before long the ugly face of war appears in the form of an uprising by the oppressed Matabele, and it makes for an exceptionally tight and exciting read. I can't think of a better way to build suspense than with knowledge of an impending massacre.

Smith's writing style is exhilarating here and this is an epic in the true sense of the word, really bringing to life the situation in Rhodesia at the tail-end of the 19th century. As with all epics, it's a multi-genre novel, featuring suspense, war, thrills, political machinations, romance and family drama. The characters are larger than life and the many twists and turns are constantly surprising. I haven't been caught up and immersed in a novel like this in a long time.

The only detraction is that the story finishes, and then abruptly cuts to 1977, featuring a whole new cast of characters with their own problems. Nothing wrong with the new section, but it feels tacked-on and at a mere 200 pages it's more like a taster of the last novel in the series, THE LEOPARD HUNTS IN DARKNESS. Smith should have just ended this book in the 19th century and left the modern-day stuff till the next volume. Saying that, it is equally as gripping as the previous writing, and the depictions of savage violence in the face of war are truly revolting and upsetting. I guess the motto of this book is that war makes savages of us all.

Lisa says

Not his best story. I was able to put this one down several times and even read another "can't put it down" Wilbur Smith novel before finishing this one. This one took over a year to finish.

The writing seemed choppy at times and jumped often. An example sentence would end with a character leaving for work. The next sentence they were returning from work at the end of a day. The first part seemed to end abruptly leaving to me wonder what happened Some of it was revealed in the 2nd part (future generation)

I will pass this series up. Mr. Smith can do better.

Rishi Prakash says

Exhilarating is the word which comes to my mind after reading this book..Wilbur Smith takes the Ballantyne series further with this third book. In his historically accurate style, Smith chronicles the transformation of Rhodesia into Zimbabwe. This book definitely makes you understand why Zimbabwe got into severe problem 4 years back when the locals started taking everything in their own hand by force...Smith rips your heart out one minute and makes it soar the next. A must read for someone who wants to know more about the the colonial history of Africa.

Michael says

Not WS's best. Though I learned a lot about the colonial history of Africa from this book. Especially the rise of Cecil Rhodes. No wonder that place is such a mess. The book is centered in Rhodesia, which is now Zimbabwe... This one made almost no sense as a story. Among the many confusing turns was a sudden skip 70 years into the future. I know WS is from there. I looked at the front and figured out that he wrote this a few years after the Africans took over again. So I suppose this might be a stream of consciousness book from a man who saw his version of the world destroyed and himself run out of the country.

Matt says

In the third Ballantyne novel, Smith continues with his theme of cultural and racial clashes. As Zouga continues to play a role in the development of Rhodesia and the colonisation of Africa, his son, Ralph, follows in the family tradition, keen on expanding British control of the region and exploitation of its resources. Acting in the Queen's honour, the Ballantyne men work with Cecil Rhodes to tap into the natural resources of the land, this time in the form of gold and coal deposits. However, the Matabele tribe have finally had enough of this and move to strike out against Rhodes and his men, slaughtering many in light of the expansion of railways and telegraph lines. When the Matabele strike within the Ballantyne family, repercussions are significant as the tribesmen are pushed back and killed. It is only when a loose treaty is signed that things become more peaceful for all involved, but this is only a temporary fix. In the novel's second part, Smith pushes the story ahead to 1977, utilising the subsequent generations to depict that the clashes of the late 19th century can and do resurrect themselves. With the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) gaining strength in the region, white politicians begin to realise that their stronghold in the region is quickly disappearing. Smith also introduces the reader to Craig Mellow, caught in the crossfire and injured. He is a white man of some importance, great-grandson to Ralph Ballantyne, who must make sacrifices to save himself while his homeland is torn apart by racial wars brewing for over one hundred years. Using some of the handwritten journals left by Ralph and Jonathan Ballantyne, Craig has a better understanding of the goings-on and promises to publish a realistic account of their struggles. While somewhat disjointed, the latter portion of the book continues to sow the seeds of resentment in the region that Smith has painted for the entire series to date. An interesting continuation of the series with that same underlying theme that the reader must, by now, know all too well.

Smith does not shy away from the theme of colonial clashes and the racial unrest in the region. While the argument is solid, the use of the two time periods has both positive and negative outcomes. It does show that

these clashes between British-backed men like Cecil Rhodes and the Matabele are not a single historical event, but a larger and more complicated issue that played a key role in future issues between the races. However, that the issue remains unresolved does not add any new flavour to the story and the major jump in time leaves the reader feeling somewhat jilted as they try to organise the larger picture of who fits where and with whom. I suppose, since Smith seeks only to use four novels to depict the entire Ballantyne story, he must take freer liberties and therefore cannot use the time to slowly develop the generations, but it is worth noting as he does create new and interesting characters to take the series into its last novel.

Kudos, Mr. Smith for another interesting perspective. I can only hope that the final novel brings the theme home and highlights the political clashes, with traditional Africans finally making their way to positions of power within the governing party.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

Kimberley says

Awesome!! Definitely one of my favourites.

Nahuel says

El libro consta de dos partes, muy distintas una de otra.

La primer parte sigue la saga, no muy lejos de donde culminó el anterior libro, y los protagonistas son los mismos. La historia narra de forma muy descriptiva y atrapante la guerra entre los matabele y los ingleses, y las peleas por el poder de Ralph con Rhodes. Los sucesos se encuentran excelemente interconectados, donde todo vale. En un lugar, donde las leyes parecen no aplicar, y, en especial, en la guerra, donde los civiles no existen.

Luego la segunda parte presenta a Jon-Jon (el hijo de Ralph) y a Craig Mellow, el principal protagonista de esta segunda parte. Craig comienza a interesarse por la historia de sus antepasados, mediante Jon-Jon y los diarios escritos en los libros anteriores, se conecta con la primera parte de la saga. Craig aparece como la sombra de su primo Ballantyne al comienzo de esta parte del libro, y luego del resultado de la guerra esta situacion cambia. En esta parte se muestra una guerra moderna en africa, siendo este el nudo de la historia; teniendo tambien al bisnieto de Bazo como pieza fundamental de la guerrilla matabele. Esta historia resulta menos shockeante para el lector, y con menos profundidad que la primer parte del libro.

Sin lugar a dudas la primer historia resulta de mayor interes, y mas apasionante que la segunda.

Lisa says

Loved this book. The sweeping saga of the Ballantyne family continued with agility and rich story telling, evoking a time and place with dramatic aplomb. The only thing I wasn't so keen on was the sudden and very unexpected change from 1896 to 1977 which made me feel like the rug had been pulled from under my feet.

For me that dragged the rating down by one star. It was very unsettling to suddenly loose the characters one had come to enjoy over the course of 3 books and have to learn a whole new set of people and dynamics at that late stage. Looking forward to the next book all the same!

Tracey says

found this a very boring read.

Elaine says

A history of Rhodesia to Zimbabwe. Brutal, violent and bloody.

Rinderpest--An acute, highly contagious viral disease of ruminant animals, primarily cattle, that was once common in Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and the Middle East. In 1895 the Cape Buffalo herds were nearly wiped out by this disease in Africa.

Blackwater fever--One of the less common yet most dangerous complications of malaria, characterized by the passage of bloody, dark red or black urine.

Cecil Rhodes- (5 July 1853 – 26 March 1902) This story suggests he was a homosexual, arrogant and not at all likable. Wealthy with no heir, he set up Rhodes scholarships for students all over the world.
