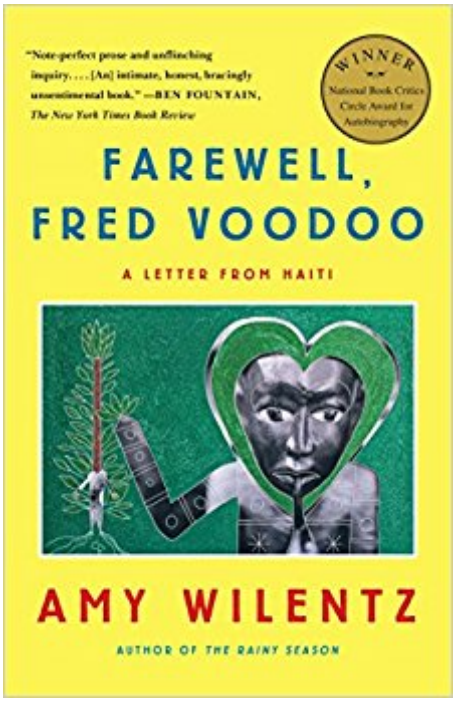
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Farewell, Fred Voodoo: A Letter From Haiti



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Synopsis

Winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Autobiography, this is a brilliant writerÃ¢â ¬â„¢s account of a long, painful, ecstaticÃ¢â ¬â •and unreciprocatedÃ¢â ¬â •affair with a country that has long fascinated the world.A foreign correspondent on a simple story becomes, over time and in the pages of this book, a lover of Haiti, pursuing the heart of this beautiful and confounding land into its darkest corners and brightest clearings. Farewell, Fred Voodoo is a journey into the depths of the human soul as well as a vivid portrayal of the nationÃ¢â ¬â„¢s extraordinary people and their uncanny resilience. Haiti has found in Amy Wilentz an author of astonishing wit, sympathy, and eloquence.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Zestfully candid, award-winning journalist Wilentz began her love affair with Haiti in 1986, and she has been exploring the country and its unique culture, history, and torrid relationship with the U.S. ever since. The catalyst for this ripping inquiry is what Wilentz observed during her sojourns in the wake of the horrific 2010 earthquake. Attuned to all the irony of her white outsider status even as she draws on her deep knowledge of HaitiÃ¢â ¬â„¢s strength and struggles, she picks her way through the heartbreaking ruins and wretchedly inadequate camps, listening to post-quake hip-hop in the midst of chaos, blood, and misery and taking stern measure of international do-gooders. Wilentz is fierce in her criticism of missions of self-aggrandizement rather than aid and the pornographic aspects of media coverage. Writing with brandishing intensity, wit, skepticism, and indignation, Wilentz exposes systemic corruption, attends a voodoo ceremony, considers zombies

and dictators, and marvels over everyday survival. She profiles two seriously committed and effective American heroes, physician Megan Coffee and Sean Penn, while her portraits of Haitians instruct and humble us. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ã¢â ¬Å“Farewell, Fred Voodoo showcases all [WilentzÃ¢â ¬â„¢s] formidable gifts as a reporter: her love of, and intimate familiarity with, Haiti; her sense of historical perspective; and her eye for the revealing detail. Like Joan Didion and V. S. Naipaul, she has an ability not only to provide a visceral, physical feel for a place, but also to communicate an existential sense of what itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s like to be there as a journalist with a very specific and sometimes highly subjective relationship with her subject.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Michiko Kakutani The New York Times)Ã¢â ¬Å“Excellent and illuminatingÃ¢â ¬Â¦a love letter toÃ¢â ¬â •and a lament forÃ¢â ¬â •Haiti, a country with an already strange and tortured history that became even more tragic, interesting and convoluted in the months after the earthquakeÃ¢â ¬Â¦ [Wilentz] brings to Haiti empathy and her great skills as a narratorÃ¢â ¬Â¦it's Wilentz's honesty about her own role in Haiti and that of so many other American visitors to that country that ultimately distinguishes her book most from other works that cover similar terrain.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Los Angeles Times)"A veteran journalist captures the functioning chaos of Haiti. ... An extraordinarily frank cultural study/memoir that eschews platitudes of both tragedy and hope." (Kirkus Reviews, starred review)Ã¢â ¬Å“Farewell, Fred Voodoo is engrossing and gorgeous and funny, a meticulously reported story of love for a maddening place. WilentzÃ¢â ¬â„¢s writing is so lyrical itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s like hearing a song Ã¢â ¬â œ in this case, the magical, confounding, sad song of Haiti.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Susan Orlean, author of The Orchid Thief and Rin Tin Tin)Ã¢â ¬Å“Farewell, Fred Voodoo is written with authority and great affection for Haiti and Haitians and for those who are trying to help them. An informative and wonderful piece of writing, it is a work of considerable artistry, immensely evocative. I read it with pleasure and with mounting gratitude.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Tracy Kidder, author of Mountains Beyond Mountains)Ã¢â ¬Å“Amy Wilentz is a brilliant writer, an ace journalist and, perhaps most important, she is not an outsider. She's the perfect guide through the heartbreak and beauty of post-earthquake Haiti. I was gripped by her respectful and first-hand reporting on Voodoo, and impressed by her enormous sensitivity to the crushing deprivation most Haitians endure.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Barbara Ehrenreich, author of Nickel and Dimed)Ã¢â ¬Å“Amy Wilentz knows Haiti deeply: its language, its tragic history, the foibles of her fellow Americans who often miss the story there. This makes her a wise, wry, indispensable guide to a country whose fate has long been so interwoven with our own.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Adam Hochschild, author

of King LeopoldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s Ghost)Ã¢â ¬Å“I can’t imagine there’s a better book about HaitiÃ¢â ¬â •a smarter, more thoughtful, tough-minded, romantic, plainspoken, intimate, well-reported book. Amy Wilentz has paid exceptionally close attention to this dreamy, nightmarish place for a quarter century, and with Farewell, Fred Voodoo she turns all that careful watching and thinking into a riveting work of nonfiction literature.Ã¢â ¬Â• (Kurt Andersen, author of Heyday and True Believers)

I read this in the midst of my 3rd visit to Haiti, as part of "my" 3rd medical mission with a team of 15 volunteers. Ms Willentz writes with wit and crisp narrative to describe the ironies of global assistance to Haiti. I’m back from my 5th trip to Haiti - and recommend this as valuable perspective on what may or may not get accomplished in a ’challenging’ country like Haiti - or specifically to prepare for the non-linear world of working in Haiti.We were at the Guest House of Hopital St Croix in Leogane, epicenter of the earthquake, which is run by dedicated volunteer managers who host teams like ours doing mobile medical clinics out in the villages - or school projects etc. Then - manager, notre ami Robin of TX noted me reading the book, expressed interest because she’d heard of it - so I was glad to present it to her when I finished its gripping pages. Valuable perspective - bravo!

Like most of the Western World there is a mentality of ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã Ëœout of sight out of mind.ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â„¢ Wilentz makes Haiti very much insight, in mind. It shares the personal accounts of Haitian culture, missionary workers, Doctors without Boarders, and the reporter who brings it all to us. It made Haiti hit home by pulling on the heartstrings of the innocent Haitian children victims to their surroundings. It merged the gap with the fables we tell kids to teach them a lesson and keep them safe; only instead of Snow White they had werewolves and voodoo. It made me respect those that give their life for a cause with solutions so far out of reachÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â •yet they jump in. Great read with a blend of culture and humanity.

Accessible and engaging as both narrative of post earthquake Haiti and a summation of the author’s 20 year history of traveling and writing on the country. The main crux of the book is that aid is not working as its delivered via NGO’s and large development entities such as , IOM and USAID as it is inefficiently rendered and does not take include the Haitian people in the decision process. We meet a variety of characters both Haitian and "blan", foreign in Haiti and Haitian and there is a positive example of aid done right in the person of Dr. Megan Coffee who runs a TB word in Port au Prince.

The section where she debunks the myth of the "planting the magical tree" that will save Haiti is funny but also succinctly captures the problem of outsiders coming to Haiti and offering solutions without considering the need, wants, or culture of the people they want to help. The book is a bit scattershot, and occasionally over the top but has some great information and insights and is both entertaining and emotional. My favorite leitmotif is about Haitian history and politics in relations to the use of voodoo.

This is an extraordinarily well-informed book. For all of us who try to understand how to be helpful in Haiti, too often we forget a fundamental necessity to understand why we’re motivated to do so. Enormous damage is done by acting out of ignorance of the "other" and, maybe more important, ignorance of ourselves.Read this book. Never again will you dare to think that you have the answers to someone else’s problem.

Very well written, based on personal experience, knowledgeable author. This book contrasts with her prior one which was much more optimistic. One of the necessary reads to begin to understand Haiti.

In this compelling narrative, Amy Wilentz explores her own complicated relationship with Haiti, where she has worked as a journalist for decades. It is an honest, thoughtful reflection on what it means to be a journalist or an aid worker in Haiti, any third world country, or the site of a natural disaster.

This book starts in a helicopter flight over a huge fortress that propelled Haiti out of a slave colony. I learned about Haiti’s history along with the somewhat unhealthy relationships between the Haitians and the post earthquake aid organizations. Amy Wilentz gives the reader a fascinating look at our neighbor to the South.

This was recommended by a friend who has just published her first book. She said this book is one of her favorites and she displayed it when shewas at a local book store. The author spent a lot of time in Haiti and the book reflects both her connection with the people she has met in Haiti and her concern for them.

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