

[PDF] Anil's Ghost

Michael Ondaatje, Alan Cumming - pdf download free book

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Author: Michael Ondaatje, Alan Cummi

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Description:

In his Booker Prize-winning third novel, , Michael Ondaatje explored the nature of love and betrayal in wartime. His fourth, *Anil's Ghost*, is also set during a war, but unlike in World War II, the enemy is difficult to identify in the bloody sectarian upheaval that ripped Sri Lanka apart in the 1980s and '90s. The protagonist, Anil Tissera, a native Sri Lankan, left her homeland at 18 and returns to it 15 years later only as part of an international human rights fact-finding mission. In the intervening years she has become a forensic anthropologist--a career that has landed her in the killing fields of Central America, digging up the victims of Guatemala's dirty war. Now she's come to Sri Lanka on a similar quest. But as she soon learns, there are fundamental differences between her previous assignment and this one: The bodies turn up weekly now. The height of the terror was 'eighty-eight and 'eighty-nine, but of course it was going on long before that. Every side was killing and hiding the evidence. *Every side*. This is an unofficial war, no one wants to alienate the foreign powers. So it's secret gangs and squads. Not like Central America. The government was not the only one doing the

killing. In such a situation, it's difficult to know who to trust. Anil's colleague is one Sarath Diyasena, a Sri Lankan archaeologist whose political affiliations, if any, are murky. Together they uncover evidence of a government-sponsored murder in the shape of a skeleton they nickname Sailor. But as Anil begins her investigation into the events surrounding Sailor's death, she finds herself caught in a web of politics, paranoia, and tragedy.

Like its predecessor, the novel explores that territory where the personal and the political intersect in the fulcrum of war. Its style, though, is more straightforward, less densely poetical. While many of Ondaatje's literary trademarks are present--frequent shifts in time, almost hallucinatory imagery, the gradual interweaving of characters' pasts with the present--the prose here is more accessible. This is not to say that the author has forgotten his poetic roots; subtle, evocative images abound. Consider, for example, this description of Anil at the end of the day, standing in a pool of water, "her toes among the white petals, her arms folded as she undressed the day, removing layers of events and incidents so they would no longer be within her." In *Anil's Ghost* Michael Ondaatje has crafted both a brutal examination of internecine warfare and an enduring meditation on identity, loyalty, and the unbreakable hold the past exerts over the present. --*Alix Wilber* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

From Publishers Weekly While he is generally considered a Canadian writer, Booker Prize-winner Ondaatje was born in Sri Lanka, and he has chosen to set his powerful and resonant new novel in that country during its gruesome civil war in the mid-1980s. Written in his usual cryptic, elliptical style, much of the story is told in flashbacks, with Ondaatje hinting at secrets even as he divulges facts, revealing his characters' motivations through their desperate or passionate behavior and, most of all, conveying the essence of a people, a country and its history via individual stories etched against a background of natural beauty and human brutality. Anil Tessira, a 33-year-old native Sri Lankan who left her country 15 years before, is a forensic pathologist sent by the U.N. human rights commission to investigate reports of mass murders on the island. Atrocities are being committed by three groups: the government, anti-government insurgents, and separatist guerrillas. Working secretly, these warring forces are decimating a population paralyzed by pervasive fear. Taciturn archeologist Sarath Diyasena is assigned by the government to be Anil's partner; at 49, he is emotionally withdrawn from the chaotic contemporary world, reserving his passion for the prehistoric shards of his profession. Together, Anil and Sarath discover that a skeleton interred among ancient bones in a government-protected sanctuary is that of a recently killed young man. Anil defiantly sets out to document this murder by identifying the victim and then making an official report. Throughout their combined forensic and archeological investigation, detailed by Ondaatje with the meticulous accuracy readers will remember from descriptions of the bomb sapper's procedures in *The English Patient*, Sarath remains a mysterious figure to Anil. Her confusion about his motives is reinforced when she meets his brother, Gamini, an emergency room doctor who is as intimately involved in his country's turmoil as Sarath refuses to be. The lives of these characters, and of others in their orbits, emerge circuitously, layer by layer. In the end, Anil's moral indignation--and her innocence--place her in exquisite danger, and Sarath is moved to a life-defining sacrifice. Here the narrative, whose revelations have been building with a quiet ferocity, assumes the tension of a thriller, its chilling insights augmented by the visceral emotional effects that masterful literature can provide. More effective than a documentary, Ondaatje's novel satisfies one of the most exalted purposes of fiction: to illuminate the human condition through pity and terror. It may well be the capstone of his career. 200,000 first printing; Random House audio. (May)
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