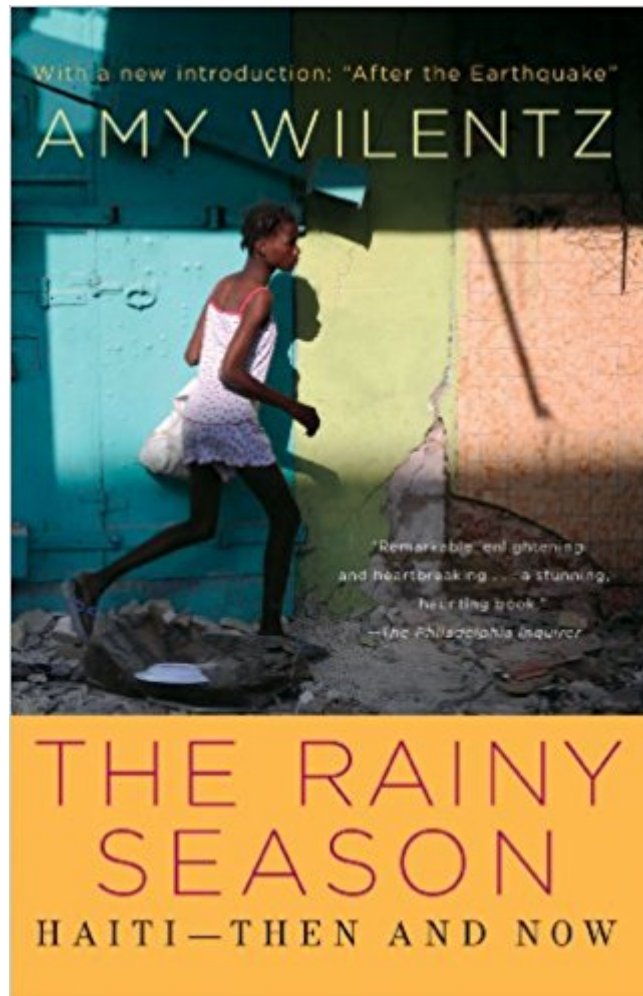




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Rainy Season: Haiti-Then And Now



Synopsis

Considered the best book ever written about Haiti, now updated with a New Introduction, *After the Earthquake* features first hand-reporting from Haiti weeks after the 2010 earthquake. Through a series of personal journeys, each interwoven with scenes from Haiti's extraordinary past, Amy Wilentz brings to life this turbulent and fascinating country. Opening with her arrival just days before the fall of Haiti's President-for-Life, Jean-Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier, Wilentz captures a country electric with the expectation of change: markets that bustle by day explode with gunfire at night; outlaws control country roads; farmers struggle to survive in a barren land; and belief in voodoo and the spirits of the ancestors remains as strong as ever. *The Rainy Season* demystifies Haiti "a country and a people in cruel and capricious times. From the rebel priest Father Aristide and the street boys under his protection to the military strongmen who pass through the revolving door of power into the gleaming white presidential palace" and the buzzing international press corps members who jet in for a coup and leave the minute it's over "Wilentz's Haiti haunts the imagination.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Amy Wilentz is the author of *The Rainy Season*, *Martyrs' Crossing*, and *I Feel Earthquakes More Often Than They Happen*. She has won the Whiting Writers Award, the PEN/Martha Albrand Non-Fiction Award, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Rosenthal Award. She writes for *The New Yorker* and *The Nation* and teaches in the Literary Journalism program at UC Irvine.

This has been a page turner for me, although I have been to Haiti twice so I have at least some connection. It is a great journalistic view of the myriad issues affecting Haiti's socio-economic / political situation. This is a history book that reads as a series of adventures. She takes a critical view of most everyone and everything in the book, although Aristide is treated fairly well through most of the book during his rise to power. This book looks at economics, history, politics, religion, and even agronomy. Great read!

The Rainy Season asks more questions than it answers, but anyone who seeks to try to understand Haiti (and good luck with that) needs to ask these questions nonetheless. Despite all of our aid, Haiti remains in the grip of extreme poverty. Why? What forces are at work that prevent any change? Why after 100 years of direct American involvement and billions of dollars in aid is Haiti still suffering from the highest maternal mortality rate and infant starvation in the western hemisphere? Why? This is an important read for anyone heading to Haiti to "help".

I also highly recommend Wilentz' more recent book on Haiti, Farewell, Fred Voodoo. She is not only extremely knowledgeable about her subject, but an excellent and deeply thoughtful writer.

After seeing problems in Haiti and asking the usual Why questions I started reading Wilentz's work. This book helped me understand issues in Haiti very clearly.

I read this before a service trip to Haiti. The scenes evoke a powerful portrait of Haiti. I did go to several of the locations both from then and now. Especially poignant is the scene on the porch of the big hotel waiting for Baby Doc to leave the country. We went up there, and it was just as the book described. Amy captures in many senses the special flavor of the country. I highly recommend it.

dramatic for sure but authentic

This is a very readable and mostly enjoyable book about relatively recent events in Haiti's tumultuous history. It offers an exciting, yet at times disjointed, view of Aristide's political birth in the aftermath of Duvalier's fall. The attack on Christian missions was unwelcomed, vitriolic and unnecessary. The diatribe cast a shadow for me over the text to follow. The author clearly is

enamored by Voudou and a rather coarse vignette at the tail end of the book seems to demonstrate her fascination. She frequently rants against the disinformation campaign seemingly attempting to discredit Aristide. She seems to think she is "the keeper of the truth," yet also admits to the dizzying confusion that is Haitian politics. Her conviction that Aristide is the savior of Haiti takes a historical hit when he reveals his avaricious, vindictive and murderous true character in later years. Who was fed "disinformation?!!" All that being said, this is largely quite readable and draws from some very important literary sources in Haiti's history. I would recommend preceding or following it with Philippe Girard's "Paradise Lost" to provide for balance.

I read "The Rainy Season" in September, 2010, just before my first visit to Haiti. Amy Wilentz has extensive experience as a journalist, travel writer and analyst and is ideally qualified to provide a thorough insight into Haitian culture, politics and religion. Using her own experience living in Haiti during the years of profound change (the fall of Baby Doc Duvalier, the rise, and subsequent fall) of Jean Bertrand Aristide, Wilentz provides her readers with a context for understanding the curious history of Haiti. Although written more than a decade ago (the new edition has a post-earthquake forward), a reading of "The Rainy Season" will allow a contemporary student of, or traveler to, Haiti to understand how and why so many governments have failed to provide Haitians with even a basic infrastructure. Readers will also gain an insight into the racial and ethnic divides in Haitian society, the role of Voudou and Christian religions in Haitian society and the genesis of Haiti's current post-earthquake situation. You will come to admire, and, like Ms. Wilentz, even love the Haitian people for what they have survived and how they have survived. You will even get a bit of a Kreyol lesson! An excellent volume, must reading for anyone seeking to put current events in Haiti in context.

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