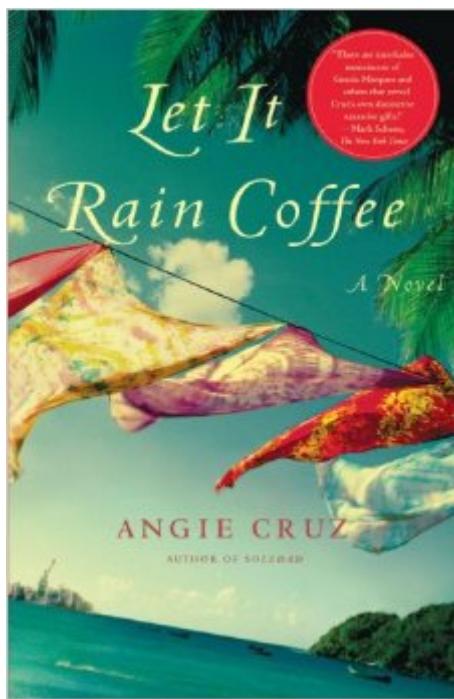


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Let It Rain Coffee: A Novel



Synopsis

Angie Cruz has established herself as a dazzling new voice in Latin American fiction, her writing compared to Gabriel García Márquez's by The Boston Globe. Now, with humor, passion, and intensity, she reveals the proud members of the Colón family and the dreams, love, and heartbreak that bind them to their past and the future. Esperanza risked her life fleeing the Dominican Republic for the glittering dream she saw on television, but years later she is still stuck in a cramped tenement with her husband, Santo, and their two children, Bobby and Dallas. She works as a home aide and, at night, hides unopened bills from the credit card company where Santo won't find them when he returns from driving his livery cab. When Santo's mother dies and his father, Don Chan, comes to Nueva York to live out his twilight years with the Colóns, nothing will ever be the same. Don Chan remembers fighting together with Santo in the revolution against Trujillo's cruel regime, the promise of who his son might have been, had he not fallen under Esperanza's spell. Let It Rain Coffee is a sweeping novel about love, loss, family, and the elusive nature of memory and desire.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Before reading this review, you really must learn something about the history of the Dominican Republic. The majority of the flashbacks concerned the Presidency of Trujillo, but there are other aspects of the country's history that are essential to understanding the story. Also, if your Spanish is as bad as mine, you might not know the exact meaning of about 10% of the dialogue, but you can pick it up within the context. Do not let that scare you off from this amazing book. I just finished it in

a 4 hour reading spurt and really and truly felt as if I had been caught completely within the Colon family.*****Spoiler: Santo, Don Chan's son, dies very early in the book, but his death is pivotal to the story*****The majority of the book revolves around Esperanza and Don Chan, their fractured relationship, and its impact on Bobby and Dallas, Esperanza and Santo's children. Don Chan joins the family in New York shortly after his wife dies in the Dominican Republic. Don Chan and Esperanza have never seen eye-to-eye, as Esperanza remembers the Dominican Republic (the D.R.) as a dirty, foul, poor country to attempt to scratch out a living. She is addicted to the drama "Dallas," and is determined to live the life of the Ewings. To that end, she is is ducking calls from collection agencies about her credit card bills and working double shifts as a home-care nurse in order to make ends meet and provide for the family. To do so, she must leave her children in the care of her father-in-law, Don Chan, who is elderly and beginning to suffer from Alzheimer's. Don Chan, on the other hand, remembers the DR as a country of promise and expectation, especially after the fall of Trujillo. During Trujillo's reign, Don Chan was an "Invisible," working underground against Trujillo and his regime. But when Trujillo is killed and Dona Caridad dies, Don Chan loses his will to fight, preferring to impart his wisdom on the next generation and wonder about what could have been. Left to care for his grandchildren, he laments Santo's death and the fact that Santo chose to follow Esperanza to New York rather than work for change in the DR. As the book progresses, Santo's death creates new meaning for all the members of the Colon family, the realization that they must stop believing that life owes them something (whether it is an 8-bedroom ranch, a leather jacket, or a democratic government) and instead embrace life as an opportunity, a chance to change their situations and embrace the future. This realization is hardest for Esperanza, as she has lived all her life with the goal of being just like the Ewings (off "Dallas") but when she comes face-to-face with J.R. Ewing, she finally begin to see life as it is instead of the way she always assumed it would be handed to her. Her actions and behavior sets the stage for the final, moving pages of the book, were it becomes clear that Santo's death, more than his life, has finally inspired his family to move forward and change their lives. I can't write much more without giving away the entire book, but I can say that for every student of Latin American culture, this book should be required reading. Angie Cruz should be commended for this excellent addition to the fiction bookshelves, not just the Latin American fiction bookshelves.

I received this story as part of my curriculum for an Ethnic Literature class I am taking. I wasn't sure what to expect going in but the further I got into the story the more I realized how much it was resonating with me. Let It Rain Coffee, at it's heart, is about the American dream versus the reality.

The central characters of the story hail from the Dominican Republic and are living in New York City. They have lived in NYC for 10 years and are still in the same small apartment in the same bad neighborhood with no savings in the bank despite their working full time low paying jobs. The narrative shifts between the early 1900's when our protagonist was a child to the 1960's when he faced a crucial stage of his life as a revolutionary to the 1990's as he is living in the present day in NYC with his son and daughter-in-law. It was truly a fascinating read and the shifting perspectives and time periods made it so that I was never bored. It also really opened my eyes to the struggles of immigrants trying to start a new life and build something for their children's futures. It gave me a new perspective on some of my friend's parents who started here as immigrants and have worked very hard to build something for their own children. I would absolutely recommend this book.

I saved this book to read on the sandy beaches of the Dominican Republic - a perfect backdrop to this wonderful book set in the Dominican Republic and New York City. I savored every page and read it in two days while I "baked" in the Caribbean sun. As a reader, I was immediately embraced by the Santo family. El Señor or Chan, Santo, Esperanza, and her children face enormous personal, emotional, and economic challenges as they struggle to make a better life. A great read...a unique perspective of the Dominican-immigrant experience!

As one of the other reviewers I also got this book for my yearly trip to the Dominican Rep. this past Christmas. I began reading it on the plane there and finished it as the plane landed back in NY. This book held my attention, was interesting, made me cry and just feel proud that it was writing not just by a woman but a Dominican woman. Angie is a great writer with a lot of promise. Very different from Soledad but just as thought provoking. I look forward to reading more of her work in the future. Keep on with the good job!

Although it's been a decade since I read it, I remain impressed. I love the honesty in her narrative. Starting with the reference to Juan Luis Guerra's song 'Ojala que llueve café,' for me, resonated with my childhood listening to Guerra. More than the title's sentimental connection, I appreciate where Angie went with the struggle of Dominicans. Her credits to unpacking gendered performances of the struggle are rich and a gift to the reader willing to appreciate. The call to know Dominican history to better understand it is a testament to making sure the reader is held accountable to what shapes and frames the immigration of a people wanting more. I will definitely read again.

I so enjoyed this novel...next I'm ordering Soledad...Granted, the lives of the Domenicans are harsh and poverty stricken but experiencing a totally different existence though a novel like this is an amazing experience. Pick one up...makes you really open your eyes.

I enjoyed both Soledad and Let it Rain Coffee. She is a great writer. I will be looking out for more books from this author.

This was a story that I easily got lost in! Full of culture! Awesome novel. I highly recommend reading Let It Rain Coffee!

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