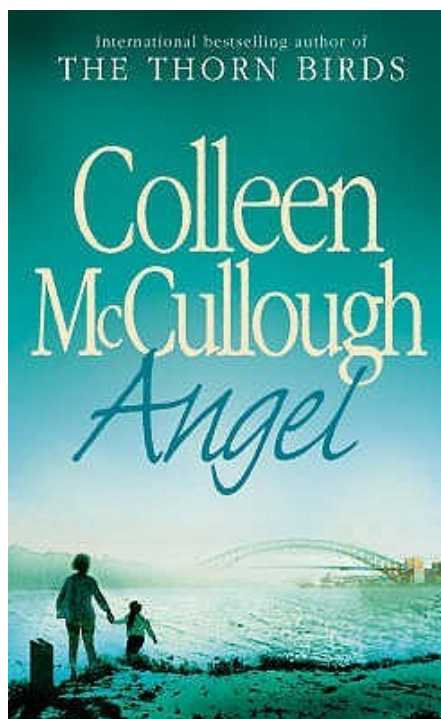




Angel

Colleen McCullough

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The bestselling author of THE THORN BIRDS returns with a novel of laughter, passion and more than a little magic ! 1960, Sydney's Kings Cross. Harriet Purcell leaves her conventional, respectable home and respectable, passionless boyfriend and moves into a rooming house owned by Mrs. Delvecchio Schwartz. There, Harriet finds a life she relishes -- excitement, adventure and passion. Mrs. Delvecchio Schwartz makes a living from telling fortunes, and is mother to 4-year-old Flo. Beautiful little Flo is mute, and Harriet comes to love her as if Flo were her own -- and must protect her at all costs when tragedy strikes! Angel is Colleen McCullough at her vintage best, drawing on her own experiences of living in the Cross in the 1960s and writing of a world that has long gone. Most of all, it is a tale of a woman's love for a child, and what she is prepared to endure to ensure her survival.

Angel Details

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Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Australia, Historical, Historical Fiction

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From Reader Review Angel for online ebook

Marta Ávila says

Great! Loved it, almost as good as Thorn Birds. This book is about the life changing people we meet during the course of our life and it makes a good job of considering that important aspect of our lives. I definitely loved it.

Zoey says

An interesting story based on the diary entries of a young 22 year old girl who moves into a boarding house full of very colourful characters in Sydney's Kings Cross during the early 1960's. Really enjoyed the descriptions of the life & times in 1960's Sydney, especially Kings Cross & all its characters, but thought the ending was a bit weird and got really over the "ooohhh aaahh" & HaHaHas by the end. Maybe listening via audio made that more annoying.

Brenda says

Absolutely loved it...a real 'feel good' book! Loved all the characters, especially Harriot Pursell, Mrs Delvecio Schwartz and of course, Flo! Well worth a read.

Marlene Lewis says

I enjoyed this story. Colleen McCulloch's Angel is an odd mixture of fantasy, the supernatural, coming of age and social history. Set in the 1960s it depicts some of the newly acquired freedoms for women during that era – getting a job that is paid at (near) male rates, moving out of home while still single, relationship choices and being able to choose one's friends. I could say that once unleashed from her conservative family home, Harriet makes some incredibly unrealistic choices but as a child of the 1950s/60s myself, many people did make extraordinary choices. I guess that generation were the pioneers when it came to exploring these new freedoms and as such many weird and not so wonderful choices were made by otherwise 'well brought up' individuals.

Kings Cross in Sydney during the 1960s was a hotbed of vice, corruption, drug and alcohol excesses, crime and deviance in all its forms, which simmered away beneath an outwardly charming cosmopolitan way of life of trendy cafes, delicious delicatessens, alternative entertainments and theatre, artisans and eccentrics. In Angel, McCulloch captures it all right down to the lesbian couples, swankily dressed transvestites, tortured misfits and frustrated artists.

Alice is a fast moving story and one that maintains the reader's interest throughout. It is also notable in terms of cultural history where the broader societal changes of the 1960s are played out within the subculture of Kings Cross.

Alice is an unusual story that I would recommend to anyone who enjoys unique settings and crazy characters.

Emily says

Didn't really like this book; a little crude.

Lucrezia Monti says

L'autrice, per lo più nota per "Uccelli di rovo" che a suo tempo diede scandalo e di cui venne realizzata anche una trasposizione televisiva, indubbiamente sa scrivere: sceglie la forma di diario per meglio calare il lettore nelle vicende degli anni Sessanta, dando una decisa connotazione temporale e ponendo al contempo le basi per un contatto intimo tra lettore e protagonista.

Tratta argomenti di chiaro impatto sociale, dall'omosessualità alla libertà sessuale della donna, e gioca intelligentemente sulla dicotomia tra scienza - la protagonista è radiologa *con uno stipendio da maschi* - e mistero, con tutto il proprio corollario di visioni, tarocchi, sfere di cristallo e ciarlatanerie assortite.

Personaggi vari, particolari e ben costruiti, descritti tanto minuziosamente che se ne potrebbe tratteggiare un ritratto e che accompagnano il lettore fino a quello che, probabilmente, avrebbe voluto essere un finale di grande effetto, ma che ho trovato banale e prevedibile.

Due stelle per la trama, quattro per lo stile narrativo, ben reso anche dalla traduzione: *in medio stat virtus*, sicché tre stelline.

Carolyn says

Set in the 1960s this tells the story of Harriet Purcell and how she moved away from her conventional family and repressive boyfriend and found love and independence in Kings Cross. Set at a time when women were expected to marry and settle down, giving up their jobs if they had one, Harriet trains to become an X-ray technician at a city hospital and earns enough to rent a small apartment in Kings Cross. She discovers new food, new people and new experiences and gets to meet whores, lesbians, policemen and the eclectic mixture of tenants at her boarding house. Her landlady, Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz is indeed a 'character', with her tarot cards and crystal ball and down to Earth wit and wisdom. She is convinced that Harriet is essential to the future of the boarding house.

This is a wonderful story, full of humour, coloured by the sights and atmosphere of the Cross, where the author herself lived in the 1960s.

Emanuela says

Probabilmente il fatto che sia stato scritto sotto forma di diario mi ha coinvolta maggiormente nella storia. Uno spaccato australiano degli anni 60 con temi delicati quali il razzismo, il tabù dell'omosessualità, il soprannaturale, la disparità di genere (in alcuni lavori le donne dovevano licenziarsi quando si sposavano oppure l'esistenza delle cosiddette retribuzioni maschili). Il tutto in un romanzo avvincente e a tratti inquietante, ma che però non è decollato del tutto. Il finale piacevole ma senza colpi di scena.

Kathryn says

I wanted to like this, but it always felt like something just didn't gel in the story.

Harriet Purcell works at a hospital in Sydney as an X-ray technician and is in her early - mid-20s (I think), but from the beginning she seemed much more immature than I would have expected - more like an 18 year old (if not younger) at times. This did improve as the story developed, but then she became tedious - either harping on about the tarot cards that her landlady reads or sex (either her lack of it or how wonderful it is with this, that or the other man).

I was listening to this as an audiobook, so maybe some of the things that annoyed me were heightened as a result of this. The whole story is told from Harriet's perspective as entries in a journal she is writing and one thing that continually annoyed me was the way she'd say "Ooh, aah!!" which really seems a strange thing to write in a journal - I might say this (although not often even then), but I'd never use it if I was writing.

I was still drawn into the story enough to want to keep listening to find out what happened, but the whole thing seemed to become more tiresome toward the end - so much so that I lost track of some things at the end, and I can't even be bothered going back to the last 30 minutes to sort out exactly what happened.

It was a little better than just OK, but I can't really say that it was a good read. A shame, because I thoroughly enjoyed *The Thorn Birds* and *The Independence of Miss Mary Bennet*. 2.5 stars.

Carol Preston says

Not sure how to rate this story of a young woman leaving her home and family to explore living a completely different kind of life than that which she's grown up with and been groomed to repeat. I couldn't recommend it as it explores so many aspects of life that I found distasteful to read about - prostitution, clairvoyance, adultery, homosexuality.

And yet there were also very touching, poignant and loving aspects too. Colleen McCullough has not lost her ability to draw a reader in and create colourful, engaging characters.

Frances says

I read Colleen McCullough's *Angel* as part of a reading challenge, after giving up temporarily on her ponderous *First Man in Rome*. The instant change of pace to a rollicking read meant I finished this book in a few days; work commitments got in the way of it being any quicker. If I were reading a paper version, I'd have to call it a page turner.

The mood was somber in places, laugh out loud funny in others. It was the Aussie slang that made it most fun to read. There's nothing quite like Australian slang. 1960's Australian slang seems even better.

Harriet Purcell moves out of home to a shared house in Kings Cross and takes on new professional responsibilities in Queens hospital X-ray department. In her working life, she has to contend with hospital politics while, in the background, McCullough touches on the cultural friction of 1960's changes in Australia. Social inequality, sexism, the very recent availability of The Pill, gay and lesbian rights, even new 'foreign'

foods. These were the bits I found most interesting.

In Harriet's personal life, she develops an unusual fascination with her landlady's daughter. This part of the book made the least sense to me. Getting the child to talk became a strange obsession, feeding her, almost adopting her it seemed, although her mother was still alive. But it did allow for crazy antics and adventures. So I was happy to go with the flow.

A Place to Call Home has started screening on television, set slightly earlier in post-WWII. Located in a country town rather than inner-city Sydney in these early episodes it feels dry and pompous by comparison. No 'angry frog in a sock' in sight. We don't need more Australian dramas that show watering holes or the beauty of the sunset over the valley's and hills. I'd love to see a series set in the world of McCullough's Angel, it would be infinitely more interesting.

??Jülie ? says

What a wonderful book! I have just turned the last page and am already pining for more.

First published in 2004, this book is cleverly written as a sort of diary...or rather a story fashioned through the entries in a diary beginning on January 1st 1960 and continuing with regular entries until May 1961.

It tells the story of 21 year old Harriett Purcell who, after qualifying as an X-Ray technician and securing a good job position at a Sydney Hospital earning the "coveted" male wage rate...which is decidedly higher than the woman's wage rate at the time and very hard won...has decided to leave her overpopulated and inhibiting family home to share a house in Sydney's Kings Cross with a work colleague and an assortment of various other colorful characters who are the current tenants.

Much to the shock and dismay of her parents, and particularly her father who warns her against all the "types" who reside at Kings Cross and the potential threats therein, Harriett insists on breaking her mould and moves in to the aforementioned establishment owned and presided over by the very prominent Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz...

...And therein begins a wonderful and intriguing story of relationships, hardships, mysteries, secrets, diverse personalities and occupations, in all their intricacies....but most of all about love and the price of love, in all of its myriad forms.

Pay attention to detail and take nothing for granted in this story, as nothing is for nothing! It is all at once amusing, worrying, absurd and poignant.

The story gives a very good insight into what life was like in 1960's Sydney...especially for women and especially for women in the workforce, but more particularly the life and pulse of the people in and the place known (then and now) as Kings Cross.

Being born and bred in Sydney, I can easily imagine a scenario such as this one, playing out at that point in time and in that context, without any poetic license!

This is a wonderful story and very, very well researched, right down to the Astrological chart for Harriet with its correct planetary placements and interpretations, as well as the Tarot Cards and their relevant meanings in placement.

In my humble opinion, Colleen McCullough has done a brilliant job in pulling off this wonderfully "out there" story!

It's probably not for everybody, but certainly for those with an open mind and heart who are tolerant of all types of people and their desire for harmony.

I loved this book, it has earned a place on my favorites shelf as well as a highly recommended 4.5*s.

Holly says

Honestly do not bother. If it weren't too generous to use the word literary in regards to this book, I would say it was the literary version of the 'Hey! Look at us dumbarse Aussies' theme that the film Crocodile Dundee gave us. Painful overuse and over exaggeration of the Australian slang that is so Aussie we don't even use it in our general conversation. Juvenile narrative, lazy character development and extremely boring. Just awful.

Josie says

I don't know what I was expecting to read, but this wasn't it. Don't get me wrong: I LIKED it, I was just surprised. I was expecting something more realistic, more -- grown-up, I suppose. Instead I got a narrator who says "oooooo-aa!" every couple of pages, a psychic/telepathic child, and a completely mad cast of characters. I liked Jim and Bob, I thought it was obvious who Toby fancied right from the start, and Pappy must be riddled with STDs. Chris and Sister Cas hooking up with the Greek New Australians was so cute! ("Just call me cupid.") Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz was, uh, quite a lady. I was simultaneously horrified and amused by her.

I don't like it when heroines in historical fiction are feisty and progressive without any REASON to be. She wants to wear trousers and believes in equality? Okay, but give me a reason WHY. Harriet, the narrator of this book, was progressive, but it was believable. She starts out frustrated that her boyfriend won't even kiss her with his mouth open, and by the end of the book she's behaving in a way that would still be considered loose and shocking by today's standards. (The bad influence of her new flatmates and neighbours!) It's bold of an author to do that. I could have done without Harriet's, um, medical comparisons, but I liked her voice and her strength and her humour. Finally, I thought that there was the right balance of explanation and mystery at the end.

(It's pretty poor for a book to misspell a main character's name four times in the blurb, though.)

Phrynnne says

This was a very disappointing read for me because I expected so much more, both from the ability of the author herself and also from the many good reviews it has had. However it did nothing for me. I found the main character, Harriet, obnoxious, I did not care for the liberal and unnecessary use of swear words and there was too much silly talk about sex. I could not understand how we could possibly be expected to believe that every good looking man who came along fell in love with horrible Harriet on sight. And then carried on loving her when she treated them shockingly. Then the ridiculous ending finished it off for me. Apologies to everyone who loved it! I tried and failed.

Neide Parafitas says

Anos 60. Harriet tem 21 anos e é uma jovem decidida e dona do seu nariz, mas infelizmente não tem a melhor das famílias... A sua família é machista e preconceituosa e a jovem sente que precisa de conviver com outras pessoas, fazer novas coisas, enfim... viver!

Na faculdade Harriet conhece entretanto uma rapariga com a qual faz amizade - Pappy e esta "convida-a" para ir viver consigo para uma casa num dos bairros mal afamados de Sidney, a apelidada "Casa dos Anjos" pelas pessoas que nela habitam. Harriet aceita e é neste contexto que vai conhecer a Mrs. Delvecchio Schwartz, a dona da casa, uma mulher original e com uma personalidade extremamente peculiar que acredita em signos e em cartas do tarot e de quem se irá tornar uma grande amiga.

Harriet conhece também os outros inquilinos, que vão desde um pintor sem quaisquer recursos e um casal de lésbicas, a um homem com uma presença extremamente assustadora. No entanto a melhor recompensa que poderia receber será conhecer Flo, a filha da sra. Schwartz, que é muda (embora a mãe passe a vida a dizer que não é) e que é a coisa mais adorável que já passou pelos olhos e o coração de Harriet!!

Durante um ano, Harriet vai descobrir o amor, o sexo e a liberdade, mas quando uma imensa tragédia se abater sobre a casa, Harriet terá de mostrar de que fibra é feita e fazer o possível (ou o impossível) para salvar o seu "anjinho" (como chama Flo) de um destino por demais doloroso!!

"A Casa dos Anjos" é um livro, na minha opinião extremamente curioso. Adorei as personagens, na sua maioria excêntricas, e sempre com algo peculiar para revelar, mas a que mais amei foi mesmo a Flo. Pela forma como é descrita senti-a como um docinho de criança e o meu coração palpitou de tanta ternura por uma personagem de um livro!

Este é um livro que pela sua excentricidade não aconselho a todas as pessoas, no entanto, penso que por esse mesmo motivo será bem-vindo a pessoas de mente aberta e com um coração sensível pelo drama que inspira!!!

Gostei imenso :)

Sharon says

This story is set in the 1960's in Sydney. Harriet Purcell has started working as an X-ray technician at the Royal Queens Hospital in Sydney.

Although Harriet has been warned by her father about what goes on in the Kings Cross district, Harriet still decides to move into Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz's rooming house. Harriet quickly learns that Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz not only runs a rooming house, but also does other things on the side for more income, such as reading tarot cards and staring into her crystal ball. Whilst renting a room from Mrs Delvecchio Schwartz, Harriet will discover a world that she never knew existed.

A wonderful and intriguing story full of colorful and fascinating characters. Aussie Author Colleen McCullough gives us an insight on what went on during the era of the 1960's in and around the Kings Cross area. An enjoyable tale about love, secrets and relationships. Highly recommended.

Nicole says

Absolutely loved this book. It was quirky and heart-warming, amazingly honest and a wonderful description of a culture and a lifestyle I know next to nothing about.

Found this inspiring and definitely very good, and will be recommending it for sure!

Nora|KnyguDama says

COLLEEN MCCULLOUGH "ANGEL?LIS"

Colleen - viena mano m?gstamiausi? autori?. S?žiningai, kiek jos knyg? skai?iau, tiek visos ir patiko. Nesistengiu kuo grei?iau perskaityti vis? autor?s k?rini? - karts nuo karto pasiimu po vien?, kad vis likt? t? neskaityt? stebukl?. "Angel?lio" tiesiog negal?jau nenusipirkti knyg? išpardavime. 1 euras už Colleen knyg? - tas pats kas nemokamai.

Romanas pasakoja jaunos, maištingos, išsiskirian?ios iš j? supan?ios aplinkos merginos istorij? (kas laaabai b?dinga autor?s k?rybai). 1960 metai, Harieta Persel gyvena drauge su itin konservatyvi? paži?r? šeima, dalijasi kambariu su mo?iute ir neranda išeities kaip ištr?kti iš savo narvelio. Protinga ir gabi mergina ?sidarbina ligonin?j? ir pradeda gauti nuosav? pinig?, kas leidžia jai keltis ? atskirus namus. Darbe susipažinusi su Pepe, rytietė mergina, Harieta be galo susidomi jos gyvenamąja vieta. Tai Kings Krosas, vis? apkalbas ir blogai vertinamas rajonas, kuriame "gyvena tik kvailiai, bohemos žmon?s ir kekš?s". Harieta svajoja pamatyti kitok? gyvenim?, laisvus žmones, tad nieko nelaukdama išsinuomoja kambar? Name. Nam? ir jo savinink? poni? Švarc žino visi. Ir žino ne iš gerosios pus?s. Ponia Švarc - vidutinio amžiaus moteris, b?r?ja, auginanti dukryt? Flo ir savo Name ?kurdinanti visus visuomen?s atstumsiuos: meninkus, lesbie?i? por?, palaido elgesio merginas ir kitus veik?jus. Harieta neilgai trukus susidraugauja su šeiminke ir pamilsta ypating?j? Flo. Gyvenant "tikrame pasaulyje" Harietai atsiveria akys, ji pradeda nauj? nuotyki? ir potyri? kelion?.

Pirmiausia ?sp?siu visus d?l knygos viršelio - jis n? velnio neatitinka knygos dvasios, turinio ir esm?s. Tas melanholiškas angeliukas ant viršelio prieštariauja viskam kas yra Harieta. Veik?ja - aštrialiežuv?, dr?si, kartais nemandagi, bet visuomet tikra ir paprasta. Knyga parašyta jos dienoraš?io forma, o tai j? daro dar ?domesn?. Romanas persmelktas švelnaus juodo humoro ir ironijos. Pavyzdžiui: Harieta mirtinai trokšta prarasti nekaltyb?, mat jai tiesiog smalsu "kas ir kod?l?". Neišsig?skit, knyga nei vulgari nei perša blogas vertybes - tiesiog jos skaitytojas turi tur?ti ger? humoro jausm?. Tikriausiai, tai viena šmaikš?iausi? ir taikliausi? šiomet mano skaityt? knyg?. o Harieta tikrai ?eina ? mano asmenin? "?simintiniausi? knyg? charakteri?" s?raš?.

Ann says

5 stars on pure enjoyment scale. I loved this book and it will be one of those that I totally remember. Written by 'Thornbirds' Australian author, Colleen McCullough, and originally published as 'Angel Puss', I read as relief from serious reading (Sarum, Edward Rutherford). Granted, I seem to have a particularly twisted, nasty sense of humor. The dialogue was totally smart, clever, entertaining, 'wish I could have said that'. Story

involves a 21-22 year old bright female in Australia, finished her education, attempting to emancipate herself from her controlling family and her 'oh so totally correct' 4 year engagement to someone who won't 'kiss with his lips open'. Her objection to her family life is she must share a bedroom with both Granny and Potty, only one of which is human. She inadvertently meets the most interesting, hilarious, likeable group of characters I've come across in a long time. Oh how I wish I had been as sexually experimental, rebellious, and open-minded when I was in my 20's in the early 1960's. A total hoot, but also a much deeper read if you are open to an aspect of life known as 'spiritual' (and I don't mean religious). Recommend for irreverent nasty sense of humor friends.
