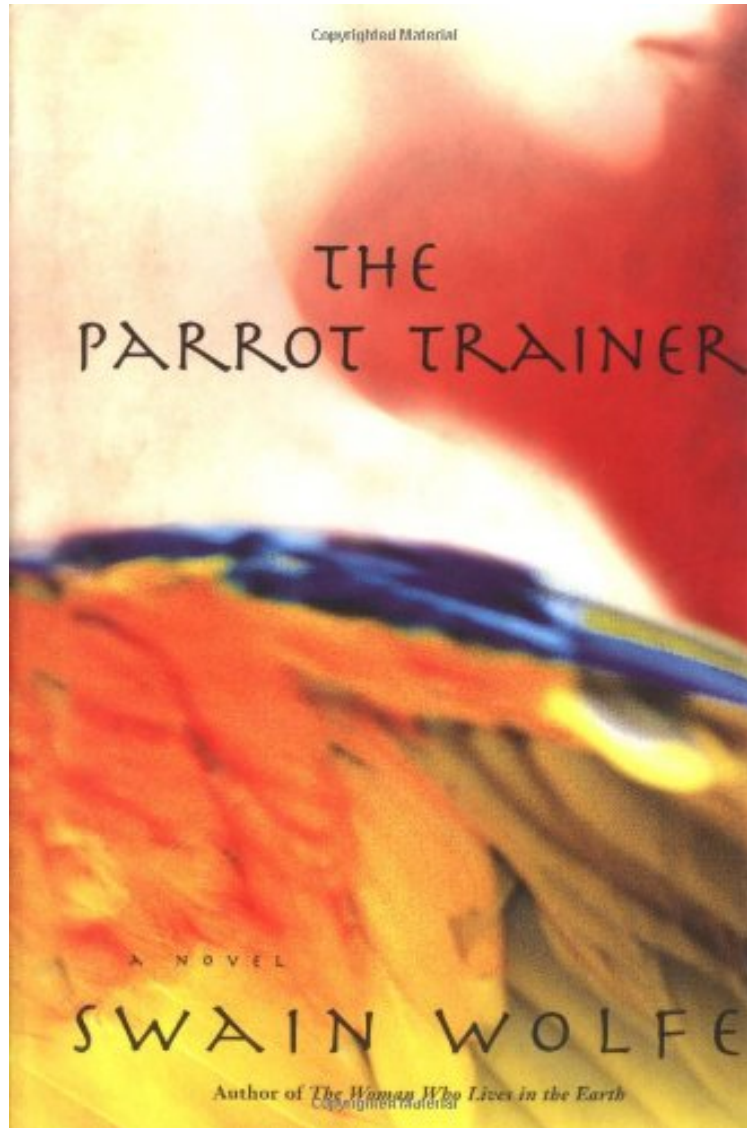


(Download pdf) The Parrot Trainer

The Parrot Trainer

Swain Wolfe

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Swain Wolfe : The Parrot Trainer before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Parrot Trainer:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A terrific readBy HP SeatonI purchased this book finally, after borrowing it from the library at least 3 times. I love the characters, the story, and the ideas that Mr. Wolfe brings to the table. Especially the Parrot Trainer, she is an amazing creation. Great information about archeology, the south west now and long ago, some pomo and even a dash of motorcycle gang and mean, crazy criminals.8 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Great Combination of Humor, Scholarship and StoryBy Paul PerryJack Miller meets

people in the strangest ways. Take the dead man at the beginning of this finely crafted Southwestern novel. The car he's driving flies off the cliff above Miller as the former pot hunter is digging in a place called Lacuna Canyon. Inside the wrecked Ford Taurus is a German anthropologist dead from a probable heart attack. Among his possessions are drawings of a compelling young woman on a Mimbres Indian pot and a map on how to find it. Driven by the compulsion that some people have for ancient artifacts, Miller follows the map and finds an untouched Mimbres site with the bowl in a bed of parrot feathers. Carrying the find to his truck, Miller is bitten by a scorpion whose poison makes him delirious. That's when he meets the second stranger in the form of a sexy Tinker Belle named Willow—an apparition of the girl on the bowl. Her spirit is trapped inside, she tells Miller. Her request: break the bowl so her spirit can go free. This quest and others Miller undertakes explore his conversion from a mercenary pot hunter to man with a genuine desire to unlock cultural mysteries. In the course of his exploration, he encounters such odd characters as Henri Bashe, a French intellectual who deconstructs everything he observes; a film crew right out of *Dukes of Hazzard*; an Indian art forger named Kills the Deer; and Lucy Perelli, the sexy head of a preservation fund. She proves to be an enabler for a sleazy Eastern archaeologist. His goal: lay claim to an archaeological find of Miller's that proves prehistoric migrations took place much earlier than those claimed by Native Americans. With this stew of characters, the plot cooks up into a wild comedy. It is a darkly funny send-up, in which cultures and characters that should not even be in the same county with one another are forced to interact. The result is thoughtful, hilarious, frightening and at times philosophical. I have known Wolfe for three years now, meeting him here in the Valley while he was in the midst of writing *The Parrot Trainer*. We visited the Salado ruins near Globe, where he exhibited an encyclopedic knowledge of the dwellings and artifacts there. But he never revealed the bizarre plot line that he was working on in his book. I'm glad of that, because reading the final product has been a delight. I had never thought of the stodgy world of archaeology as being fodder for such wry stuff. But here we have a diverse cast of characters examining the meaning of culture through lenses warped by their own cultures. These differing and sometimes hilarious points of view make it easy to understand the observation by Bashe that is the central theme of the book: "The waking world is merely illusory. The world of dreams is the true reality." This is one of the few novels I have read that contains a bibliography of scientific references. This provides reassurance that the historical references in this work of fiction are indeed accurate. But I think the fiction in this wonderful little book is accurate, too. The past holds many treasures, and these can bring out the best and worst in us all. - Paul Perry

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Awful -- boring and pretentious

By A Customer "The Parrot Trainer" by Swain Wolfe is just plain awful. I kept reading, hoping it would get better but it didn't. The writing is ham-fisted and the story telling is clunky. The characters are simply a collection of badly written stereotypes and are shallow, predictable and uninteresting. The writer seems inordinately satisfied with the breadth of his own amazing intellect -- there's a know-it-all quality about the information he regurgitates onto the pages without much point and the writing swings wildly from pretentious to unbearably cutesy and cringe-making ... The only thing in this book that rings true is the lecherous/dirty old man way in which the author (not to be confused with the characters) seems to salivate over Willow, a character who spends the book [with few clothes on] and which made me want to wash my hands when I put this book down. ...

At the center of this beguiling novel of the Southwest is an odd romantic triangelan archaeologist, a former pot thief and art dealer, and a sassy spirit. Jack, who had been a prominent art dealer and collector, finds a sketch of a parrot trainer from an ancient, Indian Mimbres bowl along with a map to a cliff dwelling, at the scene of a fatal accident. He is fascinated by the image of a parrot trainer and her haunting gesture. Obsessed, he finds the bowl and is stung by something venomous as he descends the cliff. He manages to drive home in spite of his violent reaction to the venom. There, to his confusion, Willow, the Parrot Trainer, comes alive and begs him to free her spirit from the bowl. Jack is certain she is an hallucination, a product of his own mind. Lucy, an archaeologist from the east, is in New Mexico to give a speech at a convention when she receives a call from Philip, a renowned archaeologist, her mentor and lover. Philip has discovered that a secret DNA test at Berkeley has identified a caucasoidal specimen from a 15,000-year-old body found in a glacier in Alaska and that the sample was sent by a Jack Miller in Silverado. This significant find could revive his waning celebrity. Philip asks Lucy to find Miller and get him to reveal the location of the man in the glacier. After Lucy's speech, she has a run-in with Henri, a pixieish deconstructionist, who is the subject of a documentary by edgy Anita and her wildman/cameraman Billy. When Anita and Billy learn of Lucy's plan to go to Silverado, they offer to take her so they can film the fireworks between Lucy and Henri. The drive from Albuquerque to Silverado turns into an antic and sometimes violent road trip, as they clash with each other and provoke the locals. Tweaking knee-jerk political correctness and academia, Swain Wolfe provides a rich archaeological and anthropological background that deals with some of the fields most controversial issues. Witty, sexy, and packed with local color, this is a novel of ideas with the additional appeal of enchanting magic realism, high adventure, and a tender love story.

From Publishers Weekly Wolfe draws knowledgeably on the culture of a vanished New Mexican tribe in his latest novel of the contemporary West (after *The Lake Dreams the Sky*), but fails to breathe much life into his present-day

protagonists. Jack Miller is a swaggering, play-by-his-own-rules art collector who has made a fortune peddling forged Southwestern antiquities. Now in retirement, he discovers the body of a German tourist who had happened upon a major find: a hidden cache of pottery belonging to the Mimbres, a Southwestern tribe that died out long before Columbus even considered the New World. Jack locates the cache and grabs the prize piece, a bowl depicting a beautiful parrot trainer, but-perhaps due to the effects of an insect sting-the female spirit of the trainer begins to haunt Jack's imagination. There's also a real-life woman to contend with, archeologist Lucy Perelli, whose moral approach to pottery hunting clashes with Jack's more fluid ethic. As Wolfe steers Jack and Lucy toward the expected romance, they are joined by a clownish French theorist named Henri Bash and his film crew, and trailed by two lowlife characters called Rat and Raw Bone. Despite their constant banter, Jack and Lucy don't have much chemistry, and the brief discussion of white exploitation of American Indian culture is too lightweight to salvage a predictable plot. Readers with an interest in the Southwest will enjoy Wolfe's playful take on the culture, but those further afield won't find much to hold their attention. Regional author tour. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. "With repartee worthy of Oscar Wilde, and magical invention reminiscent of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Swain Wolfe's *The Parrot Trainer* is a delightful, insightful comedy of archaeological manners. Wolfe's luminous intelligence will make the reader believe that living spirits inhabit clay and that jocular ghosts can sometimes pull our strings. All of which is the long way of saying that *The Parrot Trainer* is entertainment of the highest order." -Rick DeMarinis, author of *Borrowed Hearts*"*The Parrot Trainer* is a fascinating, splendid novel. Wolfe really has a deep feeling for the Southwest and its people, and he knows how to tell an engrossing tale."-Douglas Preston, author of *Cities of Gold*"Swain Wolfe has created nothing less than a new genre: the surreal Southwestern archaeological thriller. A rousing read that captures the Byzantine competitiveness of archaeologists."-Alex Shoumatoff, author of *Legends of the American Desert: Sojourns in the Greater Southwest*"A witty send-up...a Southwestern comedy of errors...Subtle, sophisticated fun..."-Kirkus s"*Transforms accurate archaeology into a wry fantasy interweaving the present and the ancient past.*"-Steven LeBlanc, archaeologist and author of *The Mimbres People*"An inventive blend of magical realism and picaresque thriller... with big ideas about culture, art, academia, love and corruption."-Seattle Times"A breezy look at the highly competitive business of trafficking in treasures... complete with wisecracks and zany characters."-Denver Post"Wit and wordplay... hope in the redeeming power of love... Wolfe's writing is clear, passionate, almost lyrical."-The New Mexican (Santa Fe)"A surprisingly sweet narrative both real and surreal that places the reader vividly in the Southwest."-Library Journal