



Monsoon (Courtney Family Adventures)

By Wilbur Smith

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One man. Three sons. A powerful destiny waiting to unfold.

Monsoon is the sweeping epic that continues the saga begun in Wilbur Smith's bestselling *Birds of Prey*. Once a voracious adventurer, it has been many years since Hal Courtney has dared the high seas. Now he must return with three of his sons - Tom, Dorian, and Guy - to protect the East India Trading Company from looting pirates, in exchange for half of the fortune he recovers.

It will be a death or glory mission in the name of the crown. But Hal must also think about the fates of his sons. Like their father before them, Tom, Dorian, and Guy are drawn inexorably to Africa. When fate decrees that they must all leave England forever, they set sail for the dark, unexplored continent, seduced by the allure and mystery of this new, magnificent, but savage land. All will have a crucial part to play in shaping the Courtneys' destiny, as the family vies for a prize beyond any of their dreams.

In a story of anger and passion, peace and war, Wilbur Smith evinces himself at the height of his storytelling powers. Set at the dawn of eighteenth-century England, with the Courtneys riding wind-tossed seas toward Arabia and Africa, *Monsoon* is an exhilarating adventure pitting brother against brother, man against sea, and good against evil.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

South Africa's master storyteller Wilbur Smith has been writing his exotic historical sagas for so long that he's in danger of being taken for granted and typecast as an author of adventure stories for and about overgrown boys. But there's a lot more to Smith's books than mere blood, thunder, swash, and buckle. He might not be as thoughtful or as philosophical as Patrick O'Brian, but his stories have a wider geographical and chronological range and lots more action.

Monsoon is the latest chronicle in Smith's Courteney series. In it, Hal Courteney is sent by the East India Trading Company to attack Arab pirates who are harassing trade off the East African coast. He takes three of his four sons, but one of them absconds to Bombay and another is taken prisoner by the Arabs. Although the mission is an eventual success, Hal himself is seriously injured and returns to England. His son Tom becomes the real hero of the story, gallantly rescuing his captured brother from the infidel.

Like his heroes, Smith's prose pulls no punches: "Aboli swung the axe in a wide, flashing arc. It took the man full in the side of his neck, severing it cleanly. His head toppled forward and rolled down his chest, while his trunk stood erect before it slumped to the deck. The air escaped from his lungs in a whistling blast of frothy blood from the open windpipe." It may not be pretty, but it certainly grabs your attention. --*Dick Adler*

From Publishers Weekly

Tenth in the swashbuckling saga of the bold and adventuresome Courtneys, this epic sequel to *Birds of Prey* finds Sir Hal Courtney and his sons up to their bloody sword arms in piracy, intrigue, treachery and civil war in late 17th and early 18th century East Africa and Arabia. Once again the veteran author creates a masterful tale of action and suspense set on the high seas, arid deserts and steaming jungles. Wealthy English landowner Sir Hal earned his fortune as a sea captain with the East India Company. To protect his overseas investments, he becomes a privateer to combat Arab pirates attacking company ships from bases in Zanzibar and Madagascar. Accompanied by three of his four sons, Sir Hal embarks on a desperate voyage that will bring either glory and treasure or ruin. Sir Hal is a skilled leader and a good father, but his sons are a mixed lot, bitter rivals in love and war. William, the eldest son, left in charge of the English estate, is a greedy blackguard and a brutal poltroon. Tom is a fearless leader while his twin brother, Guy, is a bitter and vengeful schemer. Young Dorian, captured by the Arabs and raised as a Muslim, is resourceful and cunning. Sir Hal's voyage brings the Courtney family both wealth and catastrophe. One son is murdered, another becomes a fugitive, a third an abusive betrayer and the fourth is abandoned and forlorn. Clever plot twists and lavish historical detail attend the siblings' adventures as they battle pirates, slavers, assassins, their own government and each other. A smooth blend of adventure and romance, the novel is an atmospheric trip through the fierce mysteries of the Dark Continent and the Arabian seas.

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From Library Journal

At the end of *Birds of Prey* (LJ 5/1/97), young Hal Courtney had proved his seafaring mettle as his father's worthy successor. When this sequel opens, Hal has buried three wives, mothers of his four sons. The eldest son, greedy and ruthless William, torments the others, who fear his power as firstborn. Although refusing to acknowledge Billy's cruelty, Hal agrees to take the others on a voyage to Africa to stop piracy against East India Company ships and win booty for his crew. Two sons, Tom and Dorian, prove able seamen. Tom's twin, Guy, not only rejects sailing but grows to hate his brother for his sexual success. Conflicts among the

brothers intensify after Hal's death. By then, Dorian has been captured by Arabs, who spare him because of a prophecy about a red-haired child. After years of training in arms in two different cultures, Tom and Dorian meet in a final confrontation along the African slave route. Smith offers plenty of battles and harrowing escapes for adventure fans. More character development and insights into 18th-century British and Arab culture than the series debut broaden the novel's appeal.

-*Kathy Piehl, Minnesota State Univ., Mankato*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kiley Kaufman:

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Grant Rickard:

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Antonio Ritchie:

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Troy Kemp:

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