



This Real Night

Rebecca West

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

This Real Night

Rebecca West

This Real Night Rebecca West

The exquisitely written sequel to Rebecca West's classic *The Fountain Overflows*.

In the second novel of Rebecca West's *Cousin Rosamund* trilogy, Rose Aubrey gives us an intimate, unforgettable picture of the Aubrey family, who now lead an idyllic, almost carefree, life in England in the years before World War I. The family has acquired some money. Rose and Mary, the twins, exist for their music. Their brother, Richard Quin, appears destined for literary greatness at Oxford. Brilliant conversation, their forte, is at a premium. The Aubreys do not perceive the dark foreshadowings contained in their father's rumored death, Cordelia's rejection of music for marriage, and their quiet cousin Rosamund's increasingly important role in the family. As the "Real Night" of World War I descends, painful changes await the Aubrey family and all of England.

This Real Night Details

Date : Published March 4th 1986 by Penguin Books (first published 1984)

ISBN : 9780140086843

Author : Rebecca West

Format : Paperback 266 pages

Genre : Fiction, Classics, European Literature, British Literature, Historical, Historical Fiction

 [Download This Real Night ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online This Real Night ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online This Real Night Rebecca West

From Reader Review This Real Night for online ebook

Lucie Novak says

I got into it, and preferred it to the part 1 of the trilogy.

The next generation of the adults in the book were all interesting, slightly eccentric in various ways. It makes me want to read part 3- not a bad recommendation.

Laura says

This book is the sequel of "The Fountain Overflows", being the second book of the Aubrey trilogy.

The plot follows the lives of the main characters which were described in the first volume of this series.

The author takes the reader 5 year later on, after their father disappearance and showing how the children have grew up and starting a new period of their lives - their adulthood.

Then World War I begins and their destinies will take a new turnover.

Its sequel is Cousin Rosamund.

Aubrey Trilogy:

5* The Fountain Overflows

3* This Real Night

TR Cousin Rosamund

3* The Return of the Soldier

TR The Thinking Reed

TR Harriet Hume

TR Sunflower

TR Black Lamb and Grey Falcon

TR The Birds Fall Down

Cecily says

Having enjoyed The Return of the Soldier, I picked this up in a charity shop, without realising it was the second of a trilogy until after I started reading it. Fortunately, it still works as a standalone book.

This is a coming of age novel, set in in the run up to WW1: "I wanted to make friends... to be part of the general web, to be linked with boys and girls and men and women who were not yet what they would be in the end."

PLOT

Clare Aubrey, a retired concert pianist, has been abandoned by her gambling husband and is raising their teenage children: Cordelia (the oldest and least warm), twins Rose (the narrator) and Mary (both destined to

follow in their mother's musical footsteps), and Richard Quinn (charming, bright, wise and still at school). Cousin Rosamund and her mother, Constance, live with them, too. They are upper-middle class, and by selling some paintings, on the advice of Mr Morpurgo, family finances are now reasonably secure.

As the family rebuild their lives, they relish small victories such as being able to afford flowers to plant in the garden, "We were able to do the things that other people could do". But as they progress, the shadow of war looms, and "we saw a fungoid bloom of ruin slowly creep across the familiar objects among which we had been reared".

At times, it's a little florid, mannered and self-consciously erudite - like a diluted version of Ivy Compton-Burnett. There is not much plot (though there is a murder), but there is some sharp wit, especially at the expense of the dreadful Mrs Morpurgo.

CLASS

The Aubreys are a little adrift: they have the background, tastes and education of the elite, but not quite the income. The mother has become (or maybe always was) oblivious to many social cues, and their friendships cross boundaries in a way that may have shocked some: Mr Morpurgo is a wealthy and generous Jewish art dealer, but they also regularly stay in a pub on the Thames, where they're related by marriage to the landlord.

This can cause awkwardness: "Like all people brought up in households destitute of manservants, we regarded them as implacable enemies... who could implement their ill-will by means of supernatural powers which enabled them to see through a guest's pretensions."

Appropriate clothing is a potential pitfall, but also a source of wry observation. For a prison visit, a man wore "clothes which suggested he had not made up his mind whether he was going to a funeral or to Ascot."

RADICAL FOR HER TIME

West was a member of the Bloomsbury set, that also included Virginia Woolf, John Maynard Keynes and E M Forster. They were known for their progressive attitudes to women and relationships amongst other things, and although this is not a radical novel, there are glimpses of this aspect of West's thinking.

She portrays strong, independent women, and although she doesn't suggest all men are feckless or dangerous, the twins do have such fears, which is one reason why they are determined not to marry.

But there are admirable men in the story, with Richard Quin held up as the ideal man - even before he's a man. (view spoiler) Cousin Rosamund says of Richard Quin "I love him... but it's a shame he has to be a man... what will happen to him in a world where men are so awful?"

Uncle Len is also a reliable chap: a lower middle class publican who is a quirky and admirable auto-didact, something the Aubreys encourage. It sometimes has amusing consequences, such as when he assumes Darwinism is a new and controversial topic for the doctor and the rector: "he was not making the mistakes of a stupid man, he was guessing like an explorer". For all his good qualities, he's still a bit old-school, wanting to keep the women away from any trouble, though Rose asserts "There was no difference in courage between men and women, if what happened wasn't fit for me it wasn't fit for men to see either".

There is also a lengthy and educational look at perceptions of gypsies.

A child is not a different species, as Victorians sometimes thought, but "an adult temporarily enduring conditions which exclude the possibility of happiness".

The mixed feelings of adolescence are probably not as anti-feminist as they first seem, but rather reflect

typical mix of fear and excitement, coupled with the limitations women of the time faced. For example, on becoming aware of the attention of men, "We liked this, and did not like it. We wished we were growing up into something other than women."

On the other hand, Clare's advice to a shy, pretty daughter is a little off: "people like young girls who are pretty... when you go to any new place and you feel nervous, just stand there and let people look at you"!

IDENTITY

It's not just in class terms and in the travails of reaching adulthood that characters have identity issues.

Is Clare, married, abandoned, or widowed?

When they leave music college, one of the twins has to change her surname to avoid confusion.

Loss of identity is one of Rose's reasons for fearing marriage.

Uncle Len tries to hide his gypsy background.

One can't help wondering if Mr Morpurgo's collecting of Christian art is, at least in part, a turning aside from his Jewish heritage.

MUSIC

Music is integral to the lives of the main characters, and there is no shying away from the hardships of training: "That was why I had had not childhood and why I had seen so much sunlight through windowpanes". There's always a higher target, but perfection is always just out of reach. They are torn between the desire to succeed and the difficulty of doing so.

When Cordelia gives up professional musicianship, the twins feel they "had so little in common with her that she seemed almost abstract: an inorganic burden like a knapsack."

QUOTES

* "One cannot live slowly as one can play music slowly."

* "Kate wore her wooden look of consequence."

* A butler "spoke with gloating discretion" about an extra guest.

* "Mrs Morpurgo had no secrets, She controlled her words well enough... but as she spoke the truth was blared aloud by the intonation of her commanding voice, the expressions which passed over her face, legible as the words on a poster, and her vigorous movements."

* "She had meant to be nearly, but not quite, intolerable."

* "She had not been abandoned to grief... she had been recovering her faculty for insolent surprise."

* "Her hands clasped before her dark flowing skirts, and a thread in every line of pent up emotion about to burst its dam."

* "There was a faint, sharp sweetness about her, like the taste of raspberries. She wore fussy and frilly clothes and jingling bracelets with an air of surprised distaste, as if she had been put to sleep by a witch and had awoken to find herself in these trappings."

* "It had been furnished by Maples in the Japanese style, not that the family had any oriental connection, but simply because the backwash of the aesthetic movement had by then reached the suburbs."

* "A Victorian mansion... and within its walls Asia had taken its revenge against colonialism... the drawing room, which really did not look so bad now they had taken out the enormous ivory model of the Taj Mahal."

* Two sisters (not Aubreys) who had been "barmaids, not at the height of their profession. They had wandered in a defeated continent of the vulgar world, where vulgarity had lost its power and its pride... Listening to Aunt Lily's conversation was like having emptied at one's feet a dustbin full of comic songs and jokes from pantomimes."

* "The river, the grey-green mystery, the mirror which reflects solid objects so steadily but is not solid, the fugitive which remains."

* A mob in a pub: "Their faces were clay-coloured and featureless, yet not stupid; they might have been

shrewd turnips."

* "Constance was like a statue, not a very good statue, imperfectly Pygmalionised."

* "The plane trees were casting their last crumpled maroon and silver leaves on the pewter pavements, the lights of the passing traffic paid out yellow ribbons of reflection on the shining roadway."

* "She looked as if she were about to burst into tears, but she was wonderful at catching the ball of her own mood in mid-air."

* "I was overcome by an abstract sense of grief, something like the moan of shingle dragging back to sea between breakers."

* "Waltzes and one-steps and tangoes were exhaled from the porticoes wearing striped awnings like masks, and in the gardens dancers walked on the moon-frosted lawns, the moonlight shining with phantom coldness from the young women's bare shoulders."

* "The silence that had been silting up in the rooms... now filled it as an invisible solid. (view spoiler)"

Serisop (Cioccolatoelibri) says

Le vicende raccontate in "Nel cuore della notte" si svolgono qualche anno dopo quelle che ho conosciuto in "La famiglia Aubrey", ma le protagoniste sono sempre le stesse ragazze, con la loro intelligenza, i loro caratteri fuori dal comune e la loro passione per la musica.

Le Aubrey crescono, Cordelia intraprende la vita da moglie e Richard Quin è costretto a partire per la guerra. Le loro vite diventano sempre più interessanti e piene di intrighi, tanto da tenermi davvero incollata alle pagine. Non so cos'ha di particolare lo stile di Rebecca West, ma mi ha totalmente conquistata sin dal primo volume di questa serie.

I personaggi sono diversi dal solito e quando dico "solito" mi riferisco ai classici protagonisti che troviamo in libri scritti nel novecento e che di solito mi annoiano.

La guerra ha un impatto incredibile sulla famiglia Aubrey e anche sui lettori. Quasi in un attimo la loro esistenza viene totalmente sconvolta. Mi è piaciuto molto come è stato trattato questo aspetto.

Non vedo l'ora di leggere il terzo libro!

Ali says

This Real Night is the second book in Rebecca West's Aubrey family trilogy; A Saga of the Century (there are editions which publish all three books together). The trilogy begins with The Fountain Overflows . I read that wonderful book back at the end of February while I was on holiday with friends in Iceland, I hadn't meant to leave it quite so long before catching up with these characters again. This Real Night and Cousin Rosamond were published in the 1980s following Rebecca West's death, from the manuscripts that she left behind. The third book I know is unfinished – and while part of me does still want to read it – I can't get excited about an unfinished novel.

This Real Night starts a few years after the events of The Fountain Overflows, we find ourselves in the 1900s, in those days before the First World War so changed the world for a generation of young people. Cornelia, Mary and our narrator Rose are now grown up, they discover a freedom to being grown up, happy to throw off the bonds of childhood.

“A child is an adult temporarily enduring conditions which exclude the possibility of happiness. When one is

quite little one labours under just such physical and mental disabilities as might be inflicted by some dreadful accident or disease; but while the maimed and paralysed are pitied because they cannot walk and have to be carried about and cannot explain their needs or think clearly, nobody is sorry for babies, though they are always crying aloud their frustration and hurt pride.”

Full review: <https://heavenali.wordpress.com/2017/...>

Siti says

Secondo capitolo della trilogia dedicata alla famiglia Aubrey, naturale proseguimento in termini puramente narrativi di una vicenda già ben delineata nel primo volume, eppure accessibile anche ad una lettura isolata visto il buon raccordo offerto all’inizio. La voce narrante, Rose, ripercorre infatti la vita della sua famiglia per poi seguire, sul filo della memoria, i successivi sviluppi. Lei e le sue sorelle affrontano l’ingresso nella vita adulta: è il momento di inquadrare il proprio destino, consapevoli dei sacrifici necessari per perseguire la carriera da pianiste professioniste o per accettare la propria identità e percorrere nuove strade. È il doloroso momento della crescita ad essere rappresentato qui, quello che porta alla definizione più chiara della propria identità e che al contempo misura, irrimediabilmente, la distanza dal nucleo familiare: sorelle e fratelli diventano universi distinti ai quali non è poi così spontaneo o opportuno accostarsi come in passato e gli stessi genitori assumono una nuova identità, filtrata stavolta dalla maturata consapevolezza degli occhi di chi li vede e della mente e del cuore che li decodificano. La famiglia Aubrey, dunque, quell’universo atipico e compatto rappresentato nel primo volume non c’è più, qui ci sono i brandelli, i superstiti, eppure ancora capaci di aggregare a sé persone, affetti, amicizie vere. Il tempo scorre sempre lento, la lettura fiocca, una placidità ristoratrice accompagna il lettore e lo sorprende con le difficoltà della vita mentre irrompe la prima guerra mondiale a generare fratture insanabili e a modificare delicati equilibri. È la notte, il cuore della notte, il suo momento topico, il più buio, consegnato ad un epilogo commovente, delicato e struggente al tempo stesso, degno di una narrazione pacata, impalpabile dallo stile inconfondibile, una prosa limpida e chiara, avvolgente e rasserenante. Buona lettura.

Carmen says

Sono in lacrime come una disperata... West, perché mi fai questo?

Elizabeth says

This Real Night, the second book of the Cousin Rosamund trilogy, was definitely less focused than The Fountain Overflows. But I am so enamored of these characters that it didn't matter a bit.

Jane says

‘This Real Night’ was to be the second volume of a trilogy that would tell the story of a century, but the trilogy was never completed. The first book, ‘The Fountain Overflows’ was published in 1956 but this book wasn’t published until 1984, a year after the author’s death, and the final, incomplete book was published not long after, with notes suggesting what might have followed.

I loved 'The Fountain Overflows' and I was delighted to find that this book picked up the threads of that story not too much further into the future. I was pulled right back ...

The Aubrey children have lost their father, who left one day and never came back, but their world is stable, and their mother had been able to sell paintings that she knew were real but had led him to believe were copies for significant sums of money.

The musical daughters, Mary and Rose, were moving towards careers as concert pianists, have were studying in musical academies in London. They suffered some setbacks as they stepped out into the world, but there was nothing that really hindered their progress.

Though that's not to say that they were entirely confident.

"Every time we left our pianos the age gave us such assurances that there was to be a new and final establishment of pleasure upon earth. True that when we were at our pianos we knew that this was not true. There is something in the great music that we played which told us that promise will not be kept."

They were determined to be independent, and unimpressed by the only alternative that might be open to them:

"Indeed marriage was to us a descent into a crypt where, by the tremulous light of smoking torches, there was celebrated a glorious rite of a sacrificial nature. Of course it was beautiful, we saw that. But we meant to stay in the sunlight, and we knew of no end which we could serve by offering ourselves up as a sacrifice."

Their elder sister, Cordelia, saw the world rather differently. She had been heartbroken when she had been forced to face the fact that she lacked the emotional understanding of music needed to make it a career. She had picked it up and re-set her course in life, hoping for a secure future as the wife of a successful man, and fearing that her unconventional home and her inexplicably absent father would harm her prospects.

I was sorry that her sisters, her mother and her author completely failed to understand Cordelia, that they had no time or sympathy for her. She could be trying, but she really deserved better.

They had much more time for their cousin Rosamund; maybe because shared their desire for independence and was working towards a career as a nurse, and maybe because they understood that she had talents quite unlike their own. She had played chess with their father, she and her mother continued to sew to support themselves

The family was completed by their young brother, Richard Quinn, who seemed almost too lovely, bright and charming to be true.

The picture of family life was captivating and rich with detail. Rebecca West wrote beautifully and her writing is full of sentences and expressions to cherish.

Familiar family friends re-appeared; the family's social circle was small but it cut right across social classes. They often saw Mr Morpurgo, who was both wealthy and generous, and they also regularly visited a riverside pub, where the landlord was an old family friend.

Those friendships allowed Rebecca West to say a great deal about social issues, by means of extended scenes portraying two very different visits.

This book stands alone, but you really should read 'The Fountain Overflows' first.

I think that first book is stronger than this one; they are both idiosyncratic and oddly structured, but the first book was more polished, it had a stronger narrative, and I found the characters rather more engaging when they were younger. I can quite believe that Rebecca West hadn't quite finished with her manuscript when she died.

The ending is perfectly done and heart-breaking. The passing of time has consequences, and the Great War casts a shadow.

This is a story that draws on the authors own life, without being entirely autobiographical; and it does feel authentic. That's why I feel so attached to this family, why I can love this book for its strengths and forgive it for its weaknesses; and why I want to read the next, unfinished book to find out the future holds for the surviving members of the Aubrey family.

Azzurra Sichera says

“Nel cuore della notte” di Rebecca West (Fazi) è secondo volume di una trilogia familiare iniziata con “La famiglia Aubrey”.

Inizio subito col dirvi che “Nel cuore della notte” non è un libro che potrebbe conquistare tutti: il ritmo molto lento, come ho già scritto nella recensione de “La famiglia Aubrey”, non è amato da alcuni lettori ed è giusto che vi dica che anche questo secondo volume segue l'andamento del primo.

A me, invece, piace perdersi in una dimensione totalmente diversa da quella alla quale siamo abituati e trovo la scrittura della West particolarmente interessante, specie la sua capacità descrittiva. Ho avuto modo, durante la lettura, di cogliere delle differenze tra la descrizione dei luoghi e quella dei personaggi: entrambe sono altamente evocative, ma la prima ha un impianto molto classico, realista; mentre la seconda ha sempre un richiamo inaspettato, un particolare originale che molto spesso mi ha strappato un sorriso.

Zia Milly era una donna minuscola e misurata, con un muso da gattina sotto una montagna di capelli prematuramente ingrigiti, raccolti in cima alla testa in una foggia settecentesca; aveva l'abitudine di allacciare le mani all'altezza della vita, sollevare il mento e abbassare gli occhi verso il nasino all'insù come se fosse in attesa che la vita mettesse le proprie carte in tavola. Zia Lily non aveva più l'aspetto di una bambola fatta cadere troppe volte dalla carrozzina.

Durante la narrazione c'è molta attenzione ai dettagli, ai cambiamenti – seppur minimi – di umore dei personaggi, e un invito a pranzo può durare anche una cinquantina di pagine! È la stessa Rose, ancora una volta voce narrante della storia della sua famiglia, a dirci perché: “Scrivo tutto ciò con la piena consapevolezza che ora potrebbe sembrare irrilevante, dal momento che è proprio uno di quei tratti che differenziano il passato dal presente. Allora, ogni cosa aveva importanza. Ogni cosa dalla quale traevamo godimento aveva il medesimo valore”.

“Ogni cosa aveva importanza” e davvero “ogni cosa” viene riportata all'interno della narrazione di un determinato momento, di un ricordo.

In “Nel cuore della notte” le protagoniste non sono più bambine, ma giovani donne che si affacciano al mondo con tutta la loro sensibilità e le loro idee ben marcate. Si segue l'evolversi dei rapporti tra i personaggi e senza aver letto il libro precedente sarebbe impossibile capire certe cose, come ad esempio il rapporto di odio nei confronti di Cordelia; il richiamo continuo al padre, che nonostante in queste pagine sia assente continua a essere nei ricordi di tutti; il rapporto tra Rosamund e Richard Queen.

Proprio lui, Richard Queen, rimane uno dei miei preferiti: probabilmente l'autrice avrebbe potuto scrivere un libro solo con le sue avventure (quella delle aragoste vinte a freccette valeva un capitolo!), raccontando il suo modo così carismatico e insieme noncurante di stare in mezzo agli altri. Mi ha letteralmente affascinata ma non saprei dire con certezza se è successo perché a raccontarmi di lui è stata Rose, del tutto imparziale quando si tratta del fratello, oppure se anche io sono rimasta colpita dai suoi modi di fare...

L'ultima parte del romanzo assume toni più gravi con lo scoppio della Prima guerra mondiale, che porterà conseguenze terribili per la famiglia Aubrey. Una famiglia che dovrà fare i conti con un nuovo assetto e che presto dovrà capire in che direzione muoversi.

Riusciranno, ad esempio, Rose e Mary a trovare un marito? "Tutti dicevano che eravamo straordinarie, ma poi ci tenevano a distanza", raccontano, convinte che non riceveranno mai alcuna proposta di matrimonio come è successo a Cordelia. A questo punto sono davvero curiosa di leggere l'ultimo capitolo di questa trilogia.

Alessandra Gennaro says

Sarebbero 4, le stelle, perché rispetto al volume precedente ci sono stati dei momenti di noia e di ridondanza. Forse, però, erano propedeutici al finale, quello che è scritto nel titolo ma che arriva alle spalle e cambia tutto quanto: dal ritmo della narrazione ai contenuti della storia che si conclude con la drammaticità di un atto teatrale. E se prima di iniziare la storia di questa famiglia si immaginavano colpi di scena, è solo quando si è immersi nel racconto che ci si emoziona e ci si addolora, a conferma della bravura di Rebecca West, capace come pochi di creare legami forti fra noi lettori e i personaggi di questa straordinaria famiglia. E se già questa seconda parte ha scalato la pila dei libri in attesa sul comodino, mi immagino cosa succederà con il prossimo....

Hilary says

Having enjoyed 'The Fountain Overflows' so much I thought this might not live up to my expectations. So glad I was wrong, it was lovely, the characters are wonderful to be with and when I had finished the book it felt like some friends had moved away. I loved the characters of Mary and Rose and felt sympathy with them over Cordelia. I liked the scene at the Morpurgo's, Mrs Morpurgo being rude was described by Rose noticing 'she did not suddenly start being disagreeable this afternoon, she was so good at it, she had evidently practised whatever are the scales and arpeggios of rudeness every day of her life ' Funny and sad, the book meanders through their lives and with the outbreak of war towards inevitable sadness.

Luann Ritsema says

The last section just about did me in.

Added to the shelf "Books That Made Me Cry In A Starbucks."

Maggie says

I read this book on vacation in Croatia and enjoyed the continuing saga of West's autobiographical novels, the second in a series of three, the first being *The Fountain Overflows* about the narrator Rose's childhood and the third, *Cousin Rosamund*.

wutheringheights_ says

Il secondo libro degli Aubrey è una sinfonia dedicata all'amore delle piccole cose.

Con una prosa come quella di Rebecca West è facile che tutto, anche la descrizione delle porcellane, diventi meraviglioso raffinato e indimenticabile.

Le prime centocinquanta pagine del romanzo sono abbastanza lente, ci sono alcune ripetizioni per ricordare eventi del capitolo precedente, ma se la parte centrale è bella quella finale è un capolavoro.

La competenza di Rebecca West nel raccontare le emozioni umane - tutto lo spettro delle emozioni umane - è qualcosa di perfetto almeno per quanto riguarda i miei gusti.

Così come un musicista di talento deve provare un pezzo, svelandone ogni significato, andando affondo finché la vera bellezza della musica non gli si rivela, anche Rebecca West con la sua scrittura riesce a far rivelare una bellezza pura e dalle proporzioni magnifiche.

La bellezza viene rivelata nella sua totalità, quando c'è, ma anche il dolore.

Per leggere un libro del genere bisogna essere pronti ad assaporare bellezza e dolore con coraggio; un po' come guardare il sole al pieno del suo splendore e sentire male agli occhi.

(Presto recensione accurata sul blog!)
