



## **Dust Devils**

*Roger Smith*

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## **Dust Devils** Roger Smith

TO AVENGE WHAT HE LOVES, HE BECOMES WHAT HE HATES

Framed for murdering his family, South African journalist Robert Dell's only ally is his oldest enemy: his father, an ex-CIA hitman with one last shot at redemption. Hunting the real killer, father and son take a bloody road trip into the heart of darkness, uncovering a conspiracy reaching to the highest levels of the state.

Praise for Dust Devils

"A bloody, hair-raising revenge tale." *The Times*

"A tour de force of a chase and pursuit thriller. I would put Roger Smith in the same class as Elmore Leonard, he's that good." *Shotsmag*

"Truly powerful writing." *Florida Times-Union*

"Terrific." *Star-Telegram*

"A brilliant work." *The Drowning Machine*

"Smith is the master of the coolly-described nightmare." *Der Spiegel*

"A crime ride that is dark, riveting and original." *Cape Times*

"A fast-paced, frenetic tale. Dark and bloodsoaked." *Business Day*

"So painfully precise, lucid and compelling, you can't help but read on." *Frankfurter Rundschau*

"One of the best noir thrillers of 2011. A must read!" Keith Rawson - editor of *Crimefactory*

"A great thriller." *Die Welt*

"Topping my list of favorite crime thrillers of all time. Absolutely breathtaking." Dave Zeltserman - *The Caretaker of Lorne Field and Small Crimes*

"An amped-up, page turning noir, sure to leave the reader blistered and bruised with satisfaction." Frank Bill - *Crimes in Southern Indiana*

"Shocking, unsparing and very satisfying." *Mack Captures Crime*

"Noir at its most brutal and honest." A.N. Smith - *Yellow Medicine*

## Dust Devils Details

Date : Published 2011

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Author : Roger Smith

Format : Kindle Edition 308 pages

Genre : Mystery, Thriller, Fiction, Crime, Noir, Cultural, Africa

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## From Reader Review *Dust Devils* for online ebook

### Marvin says

The violence piles up quickly in Roger Smith's action packed yet depressingly realistic thriller *Dust Devils*. Set in South Africa, it tells a story full of deception, corruption, murder, revenge and pretty much everything else you might find in a thriller. The author's strength is not just that he can handle all of this and keep you on the edge of your seat but that he can also transport you into the South African culture in a way that makes you feel you are there. At the end you may be glad you are not there.

South African journalist and pacifist Robert Dell is framed for the murder of his wife and son. At the same time, a powerful ex-warlord who is entrenched in the upper echelons of the Zulu nation is preparing for his marriage to his fourth wife, a young girl whose mother he killed. Dell is broken out of jail by his ex-CIA father who is the total opposite of everything Roger stands for. All of this comes together in a tale of revenge but one that is also a story of political corruption and cultural conflict.

Roger Smith has a talent for creating real life characters. They are not good or bad but just real. The Zulu villain is the only one that comes out as basically evil. The rest seems more like people caught up in a complex and corrupt environment. They have done terrible things but are trying to atone for them in their very imperfect way. The story barrels through on all six cylinders and even when you think you know what is to happen, the author throws a little reality your way. Due to its foreign setting, it is hard for me to compare it to any other novel. Yet I feel there is some similarity to fellow thriller writer Jim Thompson's ability make the lurid and unthinkable believable. They also are similar in having a taut, frankly brutal style that manages to have its own poetic and literary charm. This is one of the most powerful thrillers I have read in a long time. Roger Smith is a writer who is deserving of a wider audience.

Four and a half stars.

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### Don Bradshaw says

Set in the corrupt days after apartheid in South Africa, this is a story vividly spiced with native culture, modern thinking and the space between the two. The abject forced poverty and the utter disregard for human life made this story a tough one to read. The writing was flawless and kept the story moving well. The characters and their customs especially the Zulu, were well developed and three dimensional whether you liked them or not. I highly recommend this thriller.

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### Jason Bradley says

(New Pulp Press offered me a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review)

In this story, the author takes you on a twisting, turning jaunt that not only introduces you to some of the most interesting, fully fleshed-out characters I have ever read, but also keeps your heart racing for the entire read. This is one read you will never forget.

Amazing!

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### **Las says**

I never write reviews, someone has always said what I want to say. This book won't be for everyone. It's violent, shocking, raw and confronting. A gripping story, but there's no happy ending. A reflection of African politics, culture and issues of that era. It won't be the last book I read from Roger Smith, but at least I'm prepared.

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### **Rafa says**

Apropiada para leer con un cubo de palomitas.

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### **Ed says**

For my money, the top echelon of literary crime noir creates separate narrative threads of the main characters and then, somehow, weaves them together into one volatile, propulsive story. Roger Smith does just that and with seamless ease. I enjoyed reading his Mixed Blood earlier this year, and I consider Dust Devils even a notch better. The antihero, Robert Dell, South African journalist, finds his family killed, and reacts with fiery red in his eyes. His seeking revenge and justice feels right and fair. The hardboiled prose, relentless drive, and gritty details of the South African culture, both white and black, are what stand out for me here. This is an entertaining read throughout.

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### **Julie says**

Dust Devils by Roger Smith is a 2011 publication.

It's bad enough that Robert Dell, a white journalist in South Africa, has lost his family, but now he is being blamed for it. In order to hunt down the real killer, Robert must team up with his father. The thing is, he hates his father. The two have a few differences when it comes to politics. But, Robert is out of options by this time and has no choice but to join forces with his father.

The person behind Robert's frame up is set to marry his fourth wife, a young woman who saw him kill her family. That isn't the worst of it though, and Sunday is desperate to get out of the marriage.

All these events take place against the backdrop of South Africa where it is like two different worlds. The book is very political in nature and not just a thriller. There is a lot going on and I recommend the reader take the story nice and slow so you can digest all the the author is trying to tell you. This is harsh, highly violent novel but has a pulp fiction or noir slant that I hadn't expected. Actually, nothing about this book was as I expected. If you like thrillers but like the book to be about more than just murder and action you will like this one. There is a really smart edgy plot with all the weapons and shooting and testosterone you could possibly ask for, but there is a lot here for those who like a thinking man's thriller.

Overall I will give this one an A.

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## Miquel Codony says

Aquella era una tierra de conflictos shakespearianos. Clanes del mismo estrecho valle que vivían enfrentados y peleados a muerte por motivos olvidados en el tiempo.

Ya hace un tiempo que vengo leyendo cosas buenas sobre la novela negra que se está escribiendo desde Sudáfrica, por lo que cuando la gente de **Es Pop Ediciones** me dio la oportunidad de participar, junto a otros blogueros, en la lectura conjunta de **Diablos de Polvo**, el libro de **Roger Smith** con el que inauguran su *Colección Pulpo Negro*, no dudé ni un segundo. Tres días después cerraba el libro y dos minutos después de cerrarlo encargaba otra novela del autor. Cuando algo me gusta quiero más.

Un **Diablo de Polvo** es un torbellino más o menos intenso que se produce cuando entran en contacto el aire caliente cercano al suelo y un bolsillo de aire frío, provocando una corriente ascendente intensa que arrastra el polvo y lo esparce al bajar de nuevo su temperatura. La imagen tiene connotaciones de choque, brusquedad y desorden, así que se ajusta como un guante al espíritu de esta violenta novela. Ambientada en la Sudáfrica post-apartheid de nuestros días, la historia combina los puntos de vista de cuatro personajes conectados por la tragedia lanzados sin frenos hacia un encuentro que no promete nada bueno. Se me antoja, sin saber si se ajusta a la intención del autor, que con cada encuentro se produce uno de los diablos de polvo que dan título al libro, dando lugar a una explosión de caos que cambia el terreno juego y a los personajes. La gran violencia del libro está descrita con una asepsia perturbadora, desprovista de énfasis y sin regodeo, que parece sugerir que escandalizarse está fuera de lugar, que esa violencia es tan natural como que salga el sol por la mañana. **Smith** sabe esparcir a lo largo del texto observaciones e imágenes que aumentan su capacidad de evocación y lo convierten en algo más que un mero entretenimiento con exceso de testosterona. En su prosa se aprecia un esfuerzo de depuración que parece responder menos al intento de ser facilón que al de maximizar su impacto manteniendo el realismo y acercándose en ocasiones al lirismo. Sus virtudes como narrador se encuentran tanto en su capacidad, casi fotográfica y desprovista de sentido del humor, de retratar diferentes escalas de violencia como en su habilidad para dar una voz memorable a los personajes e insertarlos en el contexto de un país tan singular, con una historia tan convulsa, como Sudáfrica (será injusto, pero se me han quitado todas las ganas de visitarlo). El libro, en mi opinión, sin pretender romper fronteras ni deslumbrar a base de estilo, no está desprovisto de ambición literaria y supone un éxito a muchos niveles. Poco a poco, frase a frase y con escritura atenta, la prosa de **Smith** va dibujando un país desolador, miserable y cubierto por una pátina de mugre que va más allá de lo puramente estético y apunta a una podredumbre del espíritu del que nadie escapa si no es por defunción. Fijaos que no me refiero, porque no me importa mucho, a que la visión de Sudáfrica que da el libro sea realista, sino a la capacidad (estrictamente literaria) del autor de generar una atmósfera verosímil en la que incrustar su historia. Puede discutirse si la novela es más cercana al *noir* o al *thriller*, pero en el atrevimiento de mi ignorancia este tipo de escenario es una de las características principales que le atribuyo a la novela negra. La otra es la imperfección de la naturaleza de sus personajes, también presente en **Diablos de Polvo** con la excepción de un único personaje que consigue mantenerse incorrupto. Por otro lado, y aunque cuando escribo siempre intento mantener las formas, no puedo dejar de mencionar que en **Diablos de Polvo** reside uno de los mayores HIJOS DE PUTA que ha parido pluma de escritor. El infame **Inja Mazibuko**, señor de la guerra capaz de suscitar mis peores cualidades y mi deseo ardiente de desearle todo mal y para quien cualquier sufrimiento es poco. Me reservo la opinión de si la novela da o no satisfacción a dicho deseo. En el otro extremo del espectro se encuentra **Sunday**, una chica zulú de dieciséis años que se resiste al destino injusto que las circunstancias tratan de imponerle. Entre ambos transitan por rutas más o menos

paralelas **Robert Dell** (antiguo activista antiapartheid cuyo pacifismo será puesto a prueba por las circunstancias), **su padre** (ex-agente de la CIA) y **Disaster Zondi** (zulú procedente del pueblo de **Inja** que ha escapado de la pobreza y ha alcanzado el éxito social y económico en **Ciudad del Cabo** haciéndose cargo de una unidad anti-corrupción). Todos ellos son personajes bien caracterizados, aunque confieso que **Disaster Zondi** (y la parte de la trama vinculada a él) me convence menos que el resto, tanto por su falta de rumbo como por su construcción un poco deslavazada. Entre todos dan pie a una coreografía trágica perversamente hipnótica que se refleja en la estructura de la novela.

**Roger Smith** es un buen narrador. La historia tiene un ritmo trepidante, lo que le da más mérito a su capacidad para dotar de tridimensionalidad el contexto y la situación del país. Solo en su tramo final, tal vez por desensibilización del lector, pierde algo de energía. Como tantas historias más o menos enraizadas en un género concreto la necesidad de encauzar las desventuras de los protagonistas hacia una situación final previsible, en su naturaleza sino en su desenlace definitivo (que los personajes se encontrarán está fuera de toda duda. Qué sucederá entonces es otro cantar), lastra un poco el realismo que caracteriza al conjunto del libro. A pesar de ello, **Roger Smith** es un buen malabarista de escenas y es difícil resistirse al atractivo de su novela. Nada es gratuito pero la apariencia de espontaneidad se mantiene, o al menos la capacidad de sorpresa, por lo que la lectura siempre es un goce.

Me ha parecido una muy buena novela, llena de virtudes y con pocos problemas. No tengo ninguna duda de que los aficionados a la novela negra y al thriller se enamorarán inmediatamente de ella, pero es recomendable para cualquier buen lector a quién no le moleste la inclusión de la violencia en las historias que lee. Su retrato, no se si exagerado o tristemente realista, de la situación en Sudáfrica es descorazonador pero le da una personalidad propia que aumenta su interés. Es una novela de lectura sencilla pero oculta joyas para aquellos que disfrutan cavando en los textos. Recomiendo leerla prestando atención al detalle. Le caen **5 de las 5 estrellas posibles de Goodreads**.

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### **Offuscatio says**

Una novela con mucha garra, que primero te engancha, luego te tira a un agujero infernal, y después, poco a poco, empieza a perder su fiereza inicial y permite que te escapes más o menos ileso. En cualquier caso, es un texto que deja huella y que seguramente te perseguirá si algún día decides viajar a Sudáfrica.

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### **Jordi Via says**

A pesar de la extrema violencia que recorre cada capítulo de *Diablos de Polvo*, a pesar de que se hace imposible coger cariño a los personajes, a pesar de que uno no comprende la frialdad e indolencia de todos los que aparecen en esta novela al enfrentarse a la muerte: la de sus vecinos, familiares... la de sus propios hijos... Pues, a pesar de los pesares, esta novela tiene algo que engancha, es adictiva; algo que no sé decir qué es pero que te lleva a leerla en apenas unas horas.

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### **Kemper says**

(I received a free copy of this book from New Pulp Press for this review.)

This book starts out with infidelity, murder, more murder and political/police corruption.

Then things really get dark.

Robert Dell is a white South African journalist who protested apartheid. He's a liberal, a committed pacifist and married to a black woman. His father, Bobby Goodbread, proves that sometimes the apple falls a long way from the tree. Goodbread is an American who got up to all kinds of evil deeds as part of his job as a CIA agent fighting communism in various hot spots. He worked with the right-wing whites in South Africa to keep apartheid in place and liked to brag that it was his information that led to the capture of Nelson Mandela. As you would expect, the two have little to talk about.

Dell is framed for a horrible crime by Inja Mazibuko, a brutal enforcer for a high ranking government official. As he's about to be transferred to a prison where he'll almost certainly be killed Dell is rescued by his estranged father. With no other options, Dell reluctantly joins Goodbread on a mission of revenge.

Mazibuko has returned to a remote region that he runs like a warlord so that he can marry his fourth wife. Sunday is a young girl who has essentially been sold to Mazibuko, and the prospect is terrifying since she witnessed him murdering her family when she was a child. Her desperate attempt to seek help in the form of a fax to an old phone number lands on the desk of Disaster Zondi, a police officer who just saw his department gutted by corruption. Zondi is from the area and used to be part of the same crew as Mazibuko before changing his ways. He also knew Sunday's mother, and he returns to his old stomping grounds for reasons he doesn't fully understand.

The opening chapters of this made me think that this was going to be a fast-paced violent thrill ride, and while the pace is brisk and there's no shortage of carnage, there's a lot more going on in this book than just a story about people trying to kill each other in the wilds of Africa. The poverty stricken area here is a mix of Zulu tribal rituals and superstitions mixed with bits of the modern world like BMWs, cell phones and AK-47s.

The major characters are all extremely well developed, and Smith makes you completely understand them all from the liberal and educated Dell to the teenaged Sunday who has never used a modern bathroom. Zondi's return to the place he grew up stirs mixed emotions about the boy he used to be and the man he became once he left. Goodbread is fascinating as an aging Cold Warrior who thought he was doing the right thing at the time. Particularly disturbing is Mazibuko whose is almost a force of nature in his ruthlessness, and he makes for one spectacularly evil villain.

Just when you think you know where the story is going, there'll be a surprising but logical twist and nothing goes as expected. It's not a happy read, but it's an intriguing one.

Also posted at Kemper's Book Blog.

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## **Julie says**

Ich hatte am Anfang ein paar Schwierigkeiten, mir die verschiedenen Figuren zu merken und zuzuordnen. Vielleicht lag das an meiner in letzter Zeit schwächenden Konzentrationsfähigkeit. Aber nach und nach bin ich gut in die Erzählung reingekommen und ich wurde bis zum Schluss von dem Tempo gepackt, vor allem in der zweiten Hälfte des Buches.

Dieser Roman ist brutal, unverblümt, teilweise sehr blutrünstig. Er schildert aber gut die sozialen



Unterschiede, die Welt der Mächtigen und der Korruption und die AIDS-Problematik mit der in den ungebildeten Gegenden Afrikas üblichen Volksglaube über diese Krankheit und deren Heilung. Was ich vermisst habe, sind mehr Details über die Zulu Kultur.

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### **Yossi says**

Entretenida pero falla en la cohesión de hechos y es a veces muy forzada y evidente.

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### **Benoit Lelièvre says**

You have to understand two things to fully enjoy this novel. First, it's a very angry political novel, so the purpose is bigger than the story and you have to stop sometimes to let the horror seep in. Two, while Roger Smith is a decent writer, where he truly leaves everybody behind is as a storyteller. He will constantly mess with your expectations, but will articulate a story of a spectacular scope without ever betraying your trust. *Dust Devils* is a noir novel as fine as anything ever written in the genre.

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### **Adribarefoot says**

Flipante. Es un libro que deja huella. No se te va de la mente imágenes que has leído y vienen para atormentarnos. Cruelmente real y por ello doblemente cruel. Una historia fabulosa bien creada y creible. Todo en este libro es extremo, de un modo triste y brutal.

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