

What Readers are Saying on the Web About *The Wild Part*

Amazon

3 reviews

http://www.amazon.com/The-Wild-Part-Craven-Jerry/product-reviews/0988384418/ref=dpx_acr_txt?showViewpoints=1

By Arthur W. Hinson (Austin, Tx, USA) - See all my reviews

This review is from: *The Wild Part* (Paperback)

In the early 1950s the young Rosita and her best friend Don (a North American boy) sneak into the back of a neighbor's truck to hitch a ride to a neighboring Venezuelan village, but the driver heads another direction, and many hours later Don and Rosita find themselves lost in the wild interior of Venezuela. Don narrates the tale, and he is good with observing details even if he doesn't always understand what he reports. They meet gold miners and local villagers bent upon killing each other over property and gold, and when their lives are in danger, Don and Rosita "borrow" a canoe and escape down a river fast swelling from the onset of rainy season. The river runs through a dense jungle, one Don and Rosita find beautiful and far more attractive than the world of adults who are scattered along the river.

Initially they regard the jungle as a profuse garden, and they shed their clothing in complete innocence to stroll through the garden that provides them with an abundance of food and shelter. But of course the garden contains snakes and other dangerous creatures that the children must learn about. Their travel down the river involves the two in the lives of Sylvia, a bruja or witch or native nurse who practices a weird form of medicine using herbs and good "magic"; a murderous missionary from the USA; a comical Texan running a medicine show but selling only colored aspirin, and other strange and outrageous folk.

Rosita and Don encounter people who seem to possess magic, and the two struggle with determining what is real, what is imaginary, and what is magical thinking. Their struggles are emblematic of the difficulties every human faces learning to traverse and survive the wonderful, if at times terrifying, yet ultimately beautiful universe. It is a read well worth delving into for the fast-paced story, for the characters, and—for those interested in ideas—for the themes of innocence versus experience, good versus evil, and even the nature of reality itself.

Clearly written for adults, this novel with its wild adventures, exotic characters, and examination of universal themes should also appeal to young adults. Readers will enter a world presented in clear but rich prose, lush imagery of plants, animals, fragrances, tastes, and colors—a world that will remain in the mind long after closing the book.

5.0 out of 5 stars A wonderful read, March 25, 2014

By Gail Fail - See all my reviews

This review is from: *The Wild Part* (Paperback)

I can't wait for the sequel! This book has danger, suspense, action, beauty, humor, and love. There were times when I laughed out loud.

The characters are based on the author himself and people he knew as a child living in Venezuela. Craven captures the charm of a couple of mostly innocent kids caught up in a dangerous adult world, far from home. They struggle with physical problems (hunger, vampire bats, caiman) while lost in the rainforest. They struggle as well with issues of ethics, faith and God. This is a book that will be enjoyed by people of all ages.

A Novel For Youth and Adults With Many Layers

By Carol Smallwood on June 13, 2014

Format: Paperback Verified Purchase

The point of view is the coming of age boy reminiscent of Tom Sawyer or Huckleberry Finn. His fellow companion, Rosita, a feminist, wisely concludes near the end of the novel, "People are the strangest animals in the jungle." It is a novel that can be read as an adventure story by youth and adults and an allegory exploring questions of faith, civilization/good and evil. The award winning author manages the difficult task of capturing Don's point of view in an exploration journey through the wilderness. Library Services for Multicultural Patrons: Strategies to Encourage Library Use.

Bringing the Arts into the Library

Barnes & Noble

<http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-wild-part-craven-jerry/1115165748?ean=9780988384415>

An adventure novel: the pace of plot does not flag, but even better, we meet some people in the Venezuelan jungle that we will long remember. The narrator is about eleven years old, but this is not a children's book any more than is *Huckleberry Finn*. The narrator's best friend is Rosita, who is maybe

a year older but is much wiser and more experienced in the world.

My favorite character is an outrageous Texan who runs a traveling medicine show in the interior of Venezuela (in the early 1950s), a man who is on first-name terms with God, though what he says to God is mainly accusations and complaints. His curses are clean but colorful vivid tirades against what he sees as divine injustice. Another fun character is one the locals call El Loco, and he might well be a little crazy, though he does seem to know about Lao Tzu and affirms that he lacks freedom of will, doing so very comical ways.

The narrator, Don, and his friend Rosita find the jungle they must travel through a kind of paradise, but only at first. As they have to deal with wild animals and wild people, many bent upon killing them, the two come up with clever ways to survive, which includes stealing a canoe to navigate a wild river, learning to forage for food, and figuring out how to find or build shelter in a hostile environment.

The book includes discussion questions for book groups, and one of the questions asks if the novel is appropriate for young adults. My response is a hearty YES, for the story can be read and enjoyed on a number of levels. Highly recommended.

Alibris

<http://www.alibris.com/community/review/10997176/More-than-an-Adventure-Novel>

5 out of 5

by BruceJ on December 20, 2013

Don Seale from North America tells this story about how he and his best friend Rosita, a Venezuelan girl, become lost in a jungle back when there were genuinely wild jungles in the interior of Venezuela. On one level this is the kind of adventure the wannabe Huck Finns of the world dream of having: wild freedom, bandits, spooky wild animals, a bat cave to explore, a waterfall to crash over, and all of it shared with a very clever buddy (who in this case is a girl). Much in the story is unexpected, such as the woman who sings with such beauty that Don and Rosita think she must have angelic beauty. Then she turns to face them, and she is horribly ugly, and she speaks in mean ways. Many of the scenes are quite comical, as the one where Don sits in a cafe and puts his feet on a pile of laundry that turns out to be a pig, one that is so startled he runs under Don's chair and dumps him on the floor. On deeper levels, the story is about loss of innocence: Don and Rosita wander

nude and innocent through a wild and beautiful garden of a jungle, only to discover there is darkness in the hearts of many they encounter, that some are capable of murder, and that along the river are animals that would catch and eat them. There are many observations on the nature of reality itself and on the nature of or absence of God. But readers need not ponder or even notice such profundities in the novel, for they can read it as a fun adventure story, skimming across the surface of this literary masterpiece and enjoying the ride.