



Anthill: A Novel

By Edward O. Wilson

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The two-time Pulitzer Prize–winning biologist delivers “an astonishing literary achievement” (Anthony Gottlieb, *The Economist*).

Winner of the 2010 Heartland Prize, *Anthill* follows the thrilling adventures of a modern-day Huck Finn, enthralled with the “strange, beautiful, and elegant” world of his native Nokobee County. But as developers begin to threaten the endangered marshlands around which he lives, the book’s hero decides to take decisive action. Edward O. Wilson—the world’s greatest living biologist—elegantly balances glimpses of science with the gripping saga of a boy determined to save the world from its most savage ecological predator: man himself.

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Anthill: A Novel By Edward O. Wilson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. A Pulitzer Prize-winning nonfiction author and Harvard entomology professor, Wilson (*The Ants*) channels Huck Finn in his creative coming-of-age debut novel. Split into three parallel worlds—ants, humans, and the biosphere—the story follows young Raff Cody, who escapes the humid summers in Clayville, Ala., by exploring the remote Nokobee wilderness with his cousin, Junior. In one adventure, sneaking onto the property of a reputed multiple murderer to peek at his rumored 1,000-pound pet alligator, 15-year-old Raff faces down the barrel of a rifle. Raff's aversion to game hunting, ant fascination, Boy Scout achievements, and Harvard education all support his core need to remain a naturalist explorer. A remarkable center section meticulously details the life and death of an ant colony. Nearing 30, Raff's desire to preserve the Nokobee reserve from greedy real estate developers galvanizes an effort to protect the sacred land and a surprise violent ending brings everything full circle. Lush with organic details, Wilson's keen eye for the natural world and his acumen for environmental science is on brilliant display in this multifaceted story about human life and its connection to nature.

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

While critics unanimously praised Wilson's pioneering scientific work, they had mixed reactions to his debut novel. Wilson captures the carefree bliss of boyhood, and his vivid descriptions of the forest's flora and fauna will transport readers to the wilds of Alabama. The 70 pages comprising "The Anthill Chronicles" feature some of the novel's most eloquent and mesmerizing prose. (A portion of "The Anthill Chronicles" was published in the *New Yorker* as "Trailhead" and is available at newyorker.com). However, some critics complained that the prominent biologist neglects key elements of fiction, such as characterization and dialogue, and strays too often from his plot. Despite these concerns, Wilson's foray into creative writing allows him to explore the spirituality of nature, and readers open to its ecological message will find *Anthill* an intriguing and inspiring book.

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Raphael Semmes Cody of Clayville, Alabama, nicknamed Raff, wants to please his mismatched parents, but he isn't comfortable with his working-class father's rules for manliness or the ambitions of his mother's wealthy family. He instead finds meaning, beauty, and a calling in a tract of old-growth longleaf pine forest surrounding Lake Nokobee, a rare and vulnerable swath of wilderness Wilson describes with bewitching precision and profound appreciation. A foremost authority on ants, an eloquent environmentalist, and the winner of two Pulitzer Prizes for his exceptional nonfiction, Wilson has written a debut novel of astonishing dimension, acuity, and spirit. As Raff evolves from an ardent boy naturalist to a zealous student enthralled by a mound-building ant species to a Harvard-trained lawyer, Wilson dramatizes conflicts of great complexity and consequence within "parallel worlds," becoming the veritable Homer of "Antdom" as he brings ant colonies in peace and at war to startlingly vivid life. As gentlemanly Raff walks a fine line in his heroic efforts to save the precious, pristine Nokobee Woods, violence, a force Wilson perceives as intrinsic to "this pitiless world," percolates. With lyrical exactitude, empathy for all life, and a shocking conclusion, Wilson's wise, provocative novel of the interaction between humankind and the rest of nature expresses a resonant earth ethic. --Donna Seaman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Harley Fabry:

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Stacey Thompson:

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