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Posted on 19 February 2017 By Bessie Head

(Read Pdf) Î The Cardinals (African Writers Series) ó eBook or Kindle ePUB

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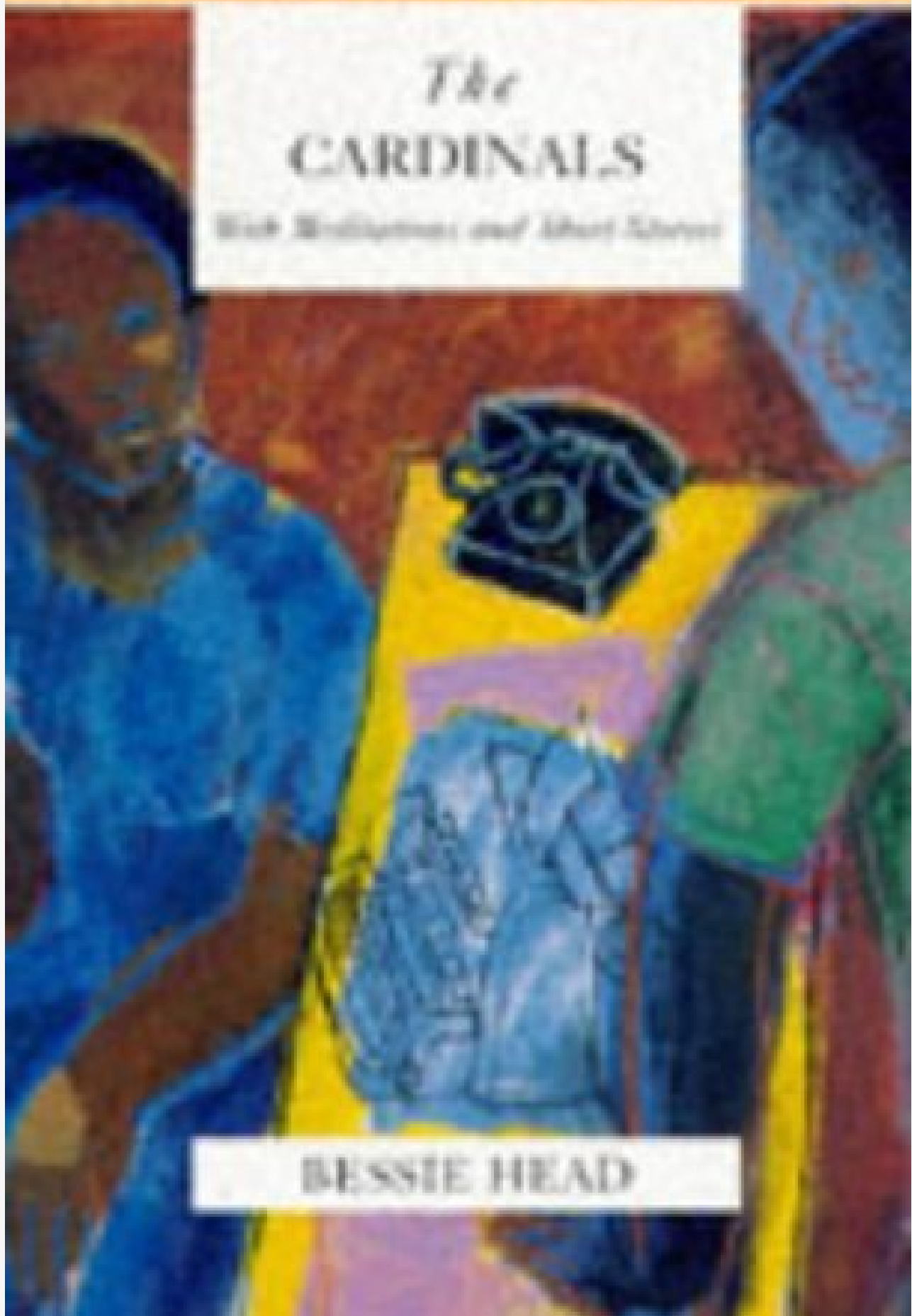
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Running To Be Pope After Pope Benedict XVI Became The First Pope In Hundreds Of
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Recent History An African Pope Africa Pope Appoints Three African Cardinals Pope Francis
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Catholic Church In Africa Wikipedia There Are AlsoCardinals From Africa, Out Of , And ,
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Conservative, A Major Four Day Conference On African Christian Theology Is Taking Place
March Hosted By The University Of Dame, And Held At The University S Global Gateway
Center In Rome One OfList Of Living Cardinals Wikipedia As OfSeptember , There
Arecardinals,of Whom Are Cardinal Electors The Most Recent Consistory For The Creation
Of Cardinals Was Held OnJune , When Pope Francis Created Fourteen Cardinals,
Including Eleven Cardinal Electors

AFRICAN WRITERS SERIES

The
CARDINALS

With Illustrations and Short Stories

BESSIE HEAD



The whole principle of living and learning is dependent on what is going on in the mind. The mind is like a huge, living tapestry. Everything we see, hear, learn and experience gets fixed into this tapestry for good and, each day, impressions are being imprinted on it.

Bessie Head, *The Cardinals*

Bessie Head's writing really resonates with me. Since I learned a bit about Head's own sad but inspiring life, it's been almost impossible for me to read any of her work without thinking of how her own experiences informed her writing by changing how she viewed the world. As painful as it was for her to be an outsider, it also gave her freedom as she was often able to see what others couldn't, and she could afford to be honest, after all, what did she have to lose if she didn't pledge allegiance to any group?

Born during apartheid of an illegal union between a white woman and a black man, much of Head's life was clearly about coming to terms with unbelonging, and one of the ways she did this was by ridiculing the system that deemed her an illegal person.

Along with Mariama Ba, Nawal El Saadawi, and Buchi Emecheta, Head is one of the African woman writers who I feel did a lot to look closely at and critique the systems they were a part of.

Like the other women mentioned, she was a keen observer of her society, and was able to point out the hypocrisies and highlight the stories that others ignore or gloss over.

This is a book of short stories, the titular one, *The Cardinals*, being a novella of 120 pages. It's the one that impressed me the most, although the shorter stories at the end of the book were also really good.

The Cardinals is about Miriam, later nicknamed Mouse, a young woman of uncertain paternity who is described by Johnny, the male protagonist, as having been born in a dung heap. The story calls to mind the many people who are born in environments that don't nurture them, but somehow are able to make some sort of life for themselves and utilize their gifts.

Mouse escapes from a shanty town near Cape Town and starts working for a trashy South African tabloid. Head uses her work as a reporter to illustrate the absurdities of the Immorality Rule wherein the races were not allowed to mix and have sexual relations.

The relationship that develops between Mouse and Johnny is quite unnerving. There's a connection between them that others can't explain, because Mouse is only a woman and a rather dull, drab and colourless one at that. No man in his right mind would look twice at her.

With Johnny being considerably older and definitely worldly, there's also a power dynamic and plenty of antagonism. We see Johnny as a mentor to Mouse's writing and Head uses him to share some of her own succinct views of life, love, and writing.

You come from the same environment that I do and there are things that happened that marked me for life. I just cannot obliterate the scars.

In writing, as in every other aspect of my life, I observe no rules or style. Just the thought of having to follow a set of rules or wedging myself into a style is enough to make my hair stand on end. Style must conform to me, my every mood, whim or fantasy.

The funny thing about writing is that it makes you start thinking. Once you've started the process, you just can't stop. It makes you articulate too. If you write and write every day you begin to feel that your brain is like a well preserved machine churning out things that will eventually prove to be of use to someone, somewhere.

Definitely a 5 star read. Gradually Bessie Head is becoming my most read author It all started after the Writers Project of Ghana held its twitter discussion on her book A Question of Power I had earlier read the book and two others A Woman Alone and Maru , even before it was chosen and had had it reviewed on this blog However, the discussion got me thinking about that woman, her beautiful spirit, her audacious writings, and her sense of humour even in the midst of dire adversity Thus, I picked three of her books, including Tales of Tenderness and Power and When Rain Clouds Gather. The Cardinals with Meditations and Short Stories 1993 141 contains a novella and seven short stories and meditations It is a story about the effects of racial discrimination and how it breaks down families and flings their members about to the ways of the storms of life In The Cardinals, set in South Africa, not only are the lives of the natives battered by poverty and destroyed by lack, politics, and racial discrimination and abuse, but even within the blacks there is a class system continue from here A moving story set in apartheid South Africa Mouse, a young shy woman who never knew her real parents and does not know how to love and be loved is pursued by her colleague journalist, Johnny Johnny has had several amorous affairs but falls in love with Mouse and proceeds to teach her to love him through brutal methods With several references to South Africa s laws against interracial relationships, these two, though both black, are committing a bigger taboo though they ll never know. The Cardinals was published posthumously It s my fourth Bessie Head book but the first time I ve read her work before her exile in Botswana Her writing is powerful Her narration, brilliant She writes biting political critique and social commentary And through her character Johnny she subverts the system and its rules through words and deed One is left to wonder how far Bessie would ve gone with her writing against apartheid if she had stayed in South Africa The book also includes a few short stories Altogether, I think this is now my favourite Bessie book.

New Post

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Graceling
The Summer I Turned Pretty
Twilight
Last Sacrifice
Beautiful Disaster
Angel
Shadow Kiss

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The Host
Evermore
Crescendo
Mockingjay
The Fault in Our Stars
Anna and the French Kiss
Marked
Wicked Lovely
Vampire Academy
Pride and Prejudice
Obsidian
Beautiful Creatures

Clockwork Prince
Along for the Ride
Night World, No. 1

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