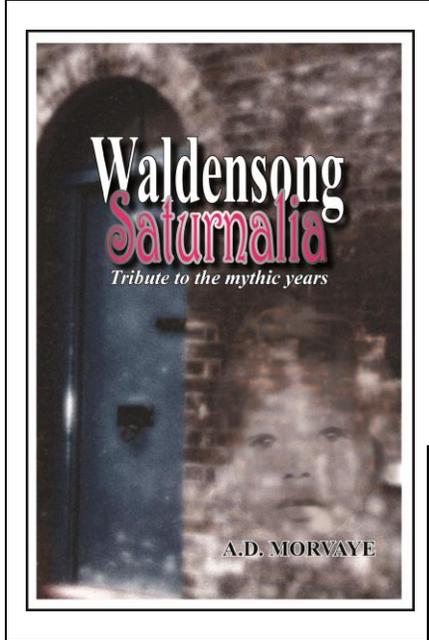


# WALDENSONG SATURNALIA

A Novel by A. D. Morvaye



486 pages, 6" by 9" paperback

ISBN: 978-1-894967-33-4

List Price: \$25.00 Canadian

Published by **Prince Chameleon Press** 

 An excerpt from WALDENSONG SATURNALIA was short-listed for the Eastside Stories Competition, London, U.K.

**PRELUDE:** The woods around Mile End were once walden and Walden all woods; and waldensong the delirious murmur of wood pigeons guarding the gravestones, the mediaeval black trunks of elms, St. Dunstan's square tower glazed onto the sky...

Shifting between Old Europe, the Orient and the New World, and spanning almost a century, this fictive journey traces the fortunes of the Hermans and the Morvayes, united and divided by love and hatred, betrayal and revenge, war and peace, Time and history. Honouring their memories in light and in shadow, Waldensong Saturnalia restores the scattered shard fragments of their lives. Gospel-legend recreated by latter-day evangelist, A.D. Morvaye.

## REVIEWS

 *I was impressed by the sophistication of the language, the sense of place, IAIN SINCLAIR, British Novelist, London, U.K.*

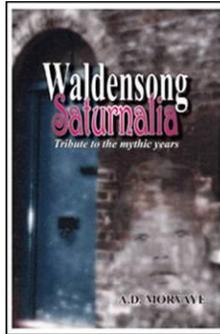
 *Lyrical, fairly sings off the page, a masterful job, KATHY GREEN, Magazine Editor, New York, U.S.A.*

Order the novel, WALDENSONG SATURNALIA

Online via the Web Site: [WWW.PRINCECHAMELEON.COM](http://WWW.PRINCECHAMELEON.COM)

Online via Invisible Cities Network: [WWW.INVISIBLECITIESNETWORK.ORG](http://WWW.INVISIBLECITIESNETWORK.ORG)

**WALDENSONG SATURNALIA**, a novel by A.D. Morvaye: ISBN: 978-1-894967-33-4  
Published by Prince Chameleon Press  
[www.princechameleon.com](http://www.princechameleon.com)



The novel **Waldensong Saturnalia** begins in bleak November as the Saturnalian season approaches. The stolid Christian Mission building has supplanted the memory of the Jewish burial-ground of centuries past. A hull-shaped corner house with its high porthole window evokes the ‘eye of God’ gazing darkly onto the street. Here in London East, the war may be over but the gaping bomb-site remains.

Once a mediaeval pastoral woodland alive with birdsong, Walden Street is now a huddled commune of brick terraces; a shell-shocked survivor of the Blitz. It's a real landscape and also a mythical landscape existing in real time.

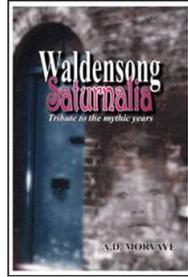
Emerging from this landscape, Angie—as self-appointed evangelist—is the voice linking the shards of the story together in language that is dense, poetic, impressionistic and lyrical. And this personal gospel is an exaltation of human events—whether mundane, dramatic, humorous or tragic—into legend.

As romancer—and also necromancer—she revisits the mythic years of her childhood. From here, she resurrects a story that would otherwise fade into oblivion: **WALDENSONG**, ‘Song of the woods.’ **SATURNALIA**, ‘Defiant celebration of life in the midst of darkness.’

And so as such, it's an archeological dig. A will to reclaim what has been lost and restore what is passing: a fusion of memory and imagination, since memory is fallible and incomplete, as in any recorded gospel.

We encounter classical, pagan and religious motifs that are full of symbolic irony: the mock Christ-figure represented by the reluctant Patriarch, Taddeusz; the heroic procession of Madonnas, Libertines and Aunt Goddesses that populate the theatre of Angie's childhood: all of them jostling and clamouring to achieve a ‘Second Coming,’ their renaissance into legend.

**REVIEWS AND PRAISE**  
WALDENSONG SATURNALIA by A.D. Morvaye  
ISBN: 978-1-894967-33-4



**Short-listed for the Eastside Stories Competition, London, U.K.**

Published by Prince Chameleon Press: [www.princechameleon.com](http://www.princechameleon.com)

1. *I was impressed by the sophistication of the language, the sense of place,* Iain Sinclair, British Novelist and Author, U.K.
2. *Fairly sings off the page, it is that lyrical. A masterful job,* Kathy Green, Magazine Editor, New York, U.S.A.
3. *A novel that spans a century and three continents to delve into the shadows of memory and the imagination,* Howard Bokser, Editor, Concordia University Magazine, Montreal, Quebec, Spring 2010.
4. *A masterful writer; every word counts,* Trevor Lockwood, Chairman, Radio Host, Felixstowe Community Radio, U.K.
5. *It's a fictional world that I was reluctant to leave,* Mary Fitzpatrick, Artist, Digital Illustrator, Montreal, Quebec.
6. *I enjoyed it very much...well written and dark,* Cecile Ghosh, Cataloguing and Reference Librarian, Roxboro and Beaconsfield Libraries, Quebec.
7. *It covered about 100 years of history; it went all over the world... [with] people having every kind of human emotion you can imagine,* Leslie Lutsky, Radio interviewer, Jewish Digest, Radio Centreville, Montreal, Quebec.
8. *Waldensong Saturnalia has gripped me—There is so much, so much to absorb. I don't think I've ever read a family "saga" like this. What a profound effort,* Len Richman, Teacher, author, scholar, Lachine, Quebec.

9. *The writing is gorgeous-; lyrical, polished and rife with symbolism. The two characters Greta and Lily are painfully real and alive...this seems like an extraordinary book. What a triumph!* Angela Leuck, Haiku poet, Montreal, Quebec.
10. *You really do write so beautifully,* Kay Turner, Retired school librarian, Montreal, Quebec.
11. *Waldensong Saturnalia is really a fine achievement. When I'd finished it, I felt as if I'd been on a long journey through time as well as geographically [...] great powers of description: I can see the characters and places very clearly,* Joan Plunkett, Actress/Educator, London, U.K.
12. *Such rich language; I loved it,* Ingrid Style, Artist, Ste-Hilaire, Quebec.
13. *I am reading WALDENSONG SATURNALIA now and absolutely loving it. The writing is often breath-taking. Amazing gift for description, and for setting a scene. Steamy flats in East End London during and after the war. Dark, brooding central European landscapes and characters. There's some gothic mystery at the core of this novel. I find myself struggling to grasp the proliferation of characters and their genealogies as they migrate from place to place, not always chronologically. A truly gifted writer. Beautiful writing... I'm 60 pages into it and find it brilliant; "Dickensian" - amazing, it's the best thing I've seen in a long time.*  
Ann Diamond, Author of *My Cold War*.
14. *I have recently finished Waldensong Saturnalia and it is very impressive. I am now back in London and traveled this morning through the East End where I felt the presence of many of the characters... I think you have achieved something very interesting in Waldensong as it has altered my perception of the East End. You deserve all the plaudits... You have produced a really significant piece of work,* Timothy Moon, Writer, London, U.K.

Article based on RADIO INTERVIEW with host Leslie Lutsky and guest Angie Morvaye. RADIO CENTREVILLE MONTREAL, Jewish Digest, 102.3FM. Broadcast Saturday, April 17, 2010

The novel, *Waldensong Saturnalia*, by A.D. Morvaye, is a family drama spanning about 100 years in time. It traces the fortunes of two families, the Morvayes and the Hermans, who become joined by marriage during the early years of World War II. As the author of the novel, I take on the role of the narrator, Angie.

The story begins with true life recollections of post-war East London, but it's also a mystical, impressionistic landscape. 'Waldensong' refers to the name of the street where the novel begins. 'Walden' resembles the German word, 'der Wald,' meaning a forest of trees (symbolically, also family trees). 'Saturnalia' evokes a defiant celebration of life in the midst of darkness.

I believe that Morvaye was our family name during the War years before another name was taken, probably for pragmatic reasons, perhaps for concerns of safety. I am a descendant of the Morvaye family, who were Hungarian Jewish, and I'm reclaiming the name that was lost, as well as reclaiming as much of the story as I can. I wanted to restore what was passing. I wanted to preserve it, really. But I always saw it as a fiction and, of course, it is a fiction, and like all fiction it uses whatever there is, whatever memories and impressions remain.

So I began with stories, family legends. These legends are always prone to someone's faulty memory; they're prone to invention and exaggeration. I took what was logical, what was plausible, and I re-created the rest into a whole. While I was in Germany, I dug up as many of these stories as I could. Then I made my way to England and I did the same. I went on the hunt for as much as I could. But still, I came to discover that it's a very arduous process because more is missing than is actually present to reshape and re-create.

My hunt took me to Dortmund in the Westphalia region of Germany where my ancestors have lived. I interviewed or had conversations with whatever German relatives I could locate. It was a fascinating journey. I also did research in Dortmund about the World War II era. I went to museums and special Holocaust exhibits. I read histories of partisan movements, which we don't hear much about these days. There definitely were German partisan movements against the Hitler regime and they were very cruelly put down. I also spent time re-learning the German language of my childhood.

However, it took about 35 years from the time I wrote the first word to the time I actually published the book. There were many periods when I just couldn't go further with it. I got blocked. Other things—well, my own life overtook me. But, in the end, it was very important for me to finish the novel. Much of it was written in the latter years, because I felt the urgency of finishing it. Otherwise, things can just fade into nothingness if we don't bring them to a conclusion.

A central character in the novel is Angie's father, Taddeusz. His name contains the word 'God' and he certainly was a mock God figure, an ironic Christ figure. He was a charismatic personality. He had a lot of followers. For many years he was absent from the family and so he became a kind of legend; Angie, as narrator and modern-day evangelist, attempts to give shape to that legend.

Yet the mystery behind the legend continues: for example, Taddeusz's clandestine War-time activities. The details are sketchy and unverifiable, but it seems that he was recruited for a secret program of psychological warfare that British Intelligence conducted during the War. This was based on the notion that Hitler's decisions on military tactics and strategy might potentially be influenced by advice from his own personal astrologer. Given Britain's desperate situation at the time, any approach was justified: stealth, subterfuge, propaganda, misinformation, whatever. And so, apparently, Taddeusz did study astrology. He was given crash courses along with a group of people known as the 'Black Team', as they called it. They tried to anticipate and suggest specific tactics that Hitler might pursue in his campaign against the Allies, so as to counteract or perhaps even to pre-empt them. But who knows if it was truly of any use in the end? The whole clandestine enterprise may or may not have been significant or effectual, but certainly the fictional Taddeusz refers to it with pride in his own memoirs of the War.

The novel, *Waldensong Saturnalia*, is published by Prince Chameleon Press in Montreal. More details can be found at: [www.InvisibleCitiesNetwork.org](http://www.InvisibleCitiesNetwork.org) and [www.princechameleon.com](http://www.princechameleon.com)

Edited transcript of RADIO INTERVIEW with host Leslie Lutsky and guest Angie Morvaye. RADIO CENTREVILLE MONTREAL, Jewish Digest, 102.3FM. Broadcast Saturday, April 17, 2010.

**Intro by Interviewer:** I am your host, Leslie Lutsky. And on today's show my guest is Montreal author, Angie Morvaye, to discuss her book, Waldensong Saturnalia.

**Interviewer:** Angie, you've written a book called 'Waldensong Saturnalia.' Could you give the listeners a little synopsis about the book?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Yes, the book is a family drama. It traces the fortunes of two families, and it spans about 100 years in time.

**Interviewer:** Who are the two families?

**A.D. Morvaye:** They are the families of the Morvayes and the Hermans, who became joined by marriage at the start of World War II.

**Interviewer:** And you're one of the characters in the book. Is this a true story? Is it imagined?

**A.D. Morvaye:** As the author of the novel, I take on the role of the narrator, Angie Morvaye. The story begins with true life recollections of post-War East London. But at the same time it's also a mystical, impressionistic landscape.

**Interviewer:** What does the name 'Waldensong Saturnalia' mean? What does it refer to?

**A.D. Morvaye:** It refers to the name of the street where the novel begins. 'Walden' resembles the German word, 'der Wald,' meaning a forest of trees (symbolically, also family trees). 'Saturnalia' evokes a defiant celebration of life in the midst of darkness.

**Interviewer:** I'd like to know more about the family background. I believe at least one of the family, the Morvayes, has a Jewish background or is Jewish?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Morvaye is a Hungarian name, although it's not clear whether it is also Jewish. Apparently, it was our family name during the War years before another name was taken, probably for pragmatic reasons, perhaps for concerns of safety.

**Interviewer:** So are you a descendant, then, of the Morvaye family?

**A.D. Morvaye:** I am, and I'm reclaiming the name that was lost, as well as reclaiming as much of the story as I can.

**Interviewer:** So how do you find out the details? How do you trace your family history?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Therein lies the problem. I began with stories, family legends. These legends are always prone to someone's faulty memory; they're prone to invention and exaggeration. I took what was logical, what was plausible, and I re-created the rest into a whole. While I was in Germany, I dug up as many of these stories as I could. Then I made my way to England and I did the same. I went on the hunt for as much as I could. But still, I came to discover that it's a very arduous process because more is missing than is actually present to reshape and re-create.

**Interviewer:** You speak about the hunt. What do you mean? Were you interviewing family members? Were you doing research in libraries? What direction did your hunt take?

**A.D. Morvaye:** My hunt took me to Dortmund in the Westphalia region of Germany where my ancestors have lived and certainly I interviewed or had conversations with whatever German relatives I could locate. I found it a fascinating journey. I also did research in Dortmund about the World War II era. I went to museums and special Holocaust exhibits. I read histories of partisan movements, which we don't hear much about these days. There definitely were German partisan movements against the Hitler regime and they were very cruelly put down. I also spent time re-learning the German language of my childhood.

**Interviewer:** Is all of this something that you were wondering or curious about when you were younger or was this a more recent thing?

**A.D. Morvaye:** I was always intrigued by what I didn't know, and when I was older I took the opportunity to follow those legendary traces. Had I not done it then, I probably would never have had the opportunity again, so I'm very grateful for that.

**Interviewer:** The book is a very long book; it took me quite a while to read it. It covered about 100 years of history, it went all over the world as I imagine your ancestors did and it covered every kind of human emotion you can imagine. How long were you actually writing the book?

**A.D. Morvaye:** It took about 35 years from the time I wrote the first word to the time I actually published the book. There were many periods when I just couldn't go further with it. I got blocked. Other things—well, my own life overtook me. But it was very important for me to finish the book. And so most of it got written toward the end, in my mature years, because I felt the urgency of finishing it. Otherwise, things can just fade into nothingness if we don't bring them to a conclusion.

**Interviewer:** When you began 35 years ago were you actually planning on writing a book, or was it more for personal reasons?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Well, I did always see it as a novel, as fiction. It seemed to me that there were so many interesting, important, colourful things, events, you know, conversations, characters that I wanted to bring back to life. I wanted to restore what was passing. I wanted to preserve it, really. So I always saw it as a fiction and, of course, it is a fiction, and like all fiction it uses whatever there is, whatever memories and impressions remain.

**Interviewer:** One of the very strong characters in the book was Taddeusz. Could you talk about him?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Yes, Taddeusz. His name contains the word 'God' and he certainly was a mock God figure, an ironic Christ figure, as I see him. He was a charismatic personality. He had a lot of followers. He was Angie's father, but for many years he was absent and so he became a legend to her. This is Angie's attempt to give shape to that legend.

**Interviewer:** As Angie's father in the book he was also your father in real life then?

**A.D. Morvaye:** Let's say that part of him was, but there are many parts that we don't know about a person. People have many roles. They may be parents, but they're also individuals in their own right. In the end, Taddeusz became a fictional character that Angie wanted to portray and to preserve along with all the other characters in the story. Meanwhile, the mystery behind the legend continues, the mystery always continues.

**Interviewer:** So did the writing and research of the book, did it make the mystery less mysterious or is there more mystery upon mystery?

**A.D. Morvay:** Probably the latter. From whatever fragments, bits and pieces that remained, I re-created my own version of the whole. That's why it's a fiction, it cannot ever be a biography and it doesn't try to be. It deliberately does not try to be.

**Interviewer:** So when you were writing the book were you maybe concealing certain things that might be too autobiographical or too revealing?

**A.D. Morvay:** Well, you get the chance to re-script things as you choose. You're in control; at least you think you are. You rearrange things as you please and as you must; actually, you do the best you can with what you have.

**Interviewer:** So how did the process work, would you write late at night, how did the actual physical writing work?

**A.D. Morvay:** Well, it varies really. It mostly came to me when I was, well, let's say inspired or moved to keep on with the story. Over the years, some of it felt rather prosaic, but other parts did feel inspirational.

**Interviewer:** You give an acknowledgment to the Saidye Bronfman Centre for helping you translate Yiddish. Which of the characters was speaking Yiddish?

**A.D. Morvay:** Well, here's another part of my creations. I don't really know for sure whether Taddeusz's grandmother spoke Yiddish. I simply assumed that she did and I gave her some Yiddish conversation. Possibly she didn't speak Yiddish, but in my scenario she did, and therefore I gave her some choice Yiddish phrases. The staff at the Saidye Bronfman Centre in Montreal were kind enough to provide the spellings for the sentences I needed, you know, to complete the picture.

**Interviewer:** One thing I remember in the book was that Taddeusz was working for British Intelligence, kind of interpreting astrological charts of Hitler's military generals to somehow help the British during the War years. Did that actually happen or is that imagined?

**A.D. Morvay:** As far as I know, it happened. The details are sketchy and unverifiable, but all I can say is that I believe Taddeusz was recruited to take part in secret psychological warfare activities that British Intelligence conducted during the War. It was an extremely desperate situation at the time. England was in great peril and I can understand that any approach was justified: subterfuge, propaganda, misinformation, whatever. The notion that Hitler's decisions on military tactics and strategy might be influenced by advice from his personal astrologer was a logical possibility, and I suppose British Intelligence had to try anything they could in their attempt to combat the danger. And so, apparently, Taddeusz did study astrology. He was given crash courses along with a group of people known as the 'Black Team', as they called it. They tried to anticipate and suggest specific tactics that Hitler might pursue in his campaign against the Allies, so as to counteract or perhaps even to pre-empt them. But who knows if it was truly of any use in the end? The whole clandestine enterprise may or may not have been significant or effectual, but certainly the fictional Taddeusz refers to it with pride in his own memoirs of the War.

**Interviewer:** How can people find out more about the novel, Waldensong Saturnalia?

**A.D. Morvay:** There are two web links: [www.InvisibleCitiesNetwork.org](http://www.InvisibleCitiesNetwork.org) and Prince Chameleon Press: [www.princechameleon.com](http://www.princechameleon.com)

## WALDENSONG SATURNALIA INFORMATION SHEET

**Author:** A.D. Morvaye

**Title:** Waldensong Saturnalia

**Name of Publisher:** Christina Manolescu, Prince Chameleon Press

**Publisher contact:** [christina@princechameleon.com](mailto:christina@princechameleon.com)

**Price:** \$25.00 Canadian

**Number of pages:** 486 pages

**ISBN:** 978-1-894967-33-4

**Illustrations:** 4 full-colour images within the text of the book

**Index:** NONE

**Bibliography:** NONE

**Brief description of the book:** Literary Fiction

***Tribute to the mythic years:*** Abandoned by her vast chaotic family, a young girl recreates them into legend. The novel is a fusion of memory and imagination, humorous, lyrical and dramatic. Played out against the shifting background of Old Europe versus the New World, it features the idiom of London's impoverished East End, blending into the language of poetry and myth.

**Awards:** An excerpt from the novel 'Waldensong Saturnalia' was short-listed for the Eastside Stories Competition, London, U.K., 1995. It received special commendation at the Awards ceremony by the competition judge, respected British novelist and author, Iain Sinclair.

**Intended audience:** General readership.

**Book Distribution:** Through the publisher's web site: <http://www.princechameleon.com>