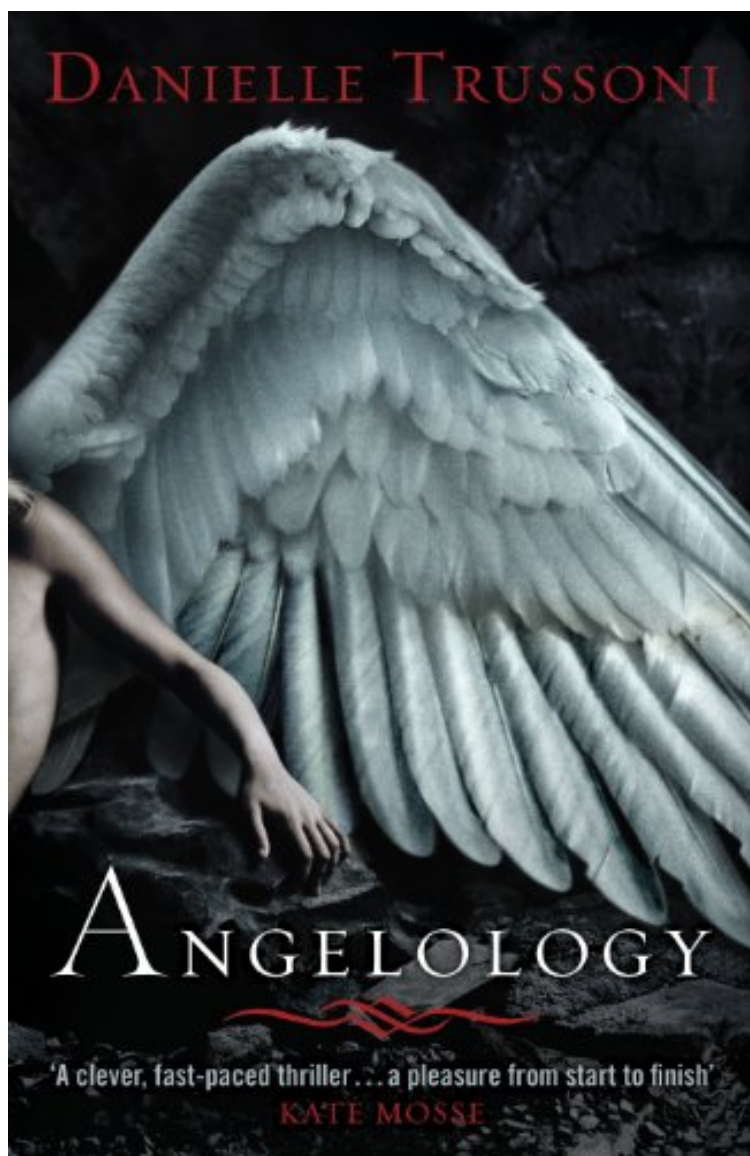


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Angelology



Par Danielle Trussoni
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Nephilim were on the earth in those daysGenesis 6:4When Sister Evangeline finds mysterious correspondence between Mother Innocenta of the Saint Rose Convent and legendary philanthropist Abigail Rockefeller, it confirms Angels walked among us - and their descendants, the cruel Nephilim, still do.Indeed, the Nephilim are hunting for artefacts concealed by Abigail Rockefeller during the Second World War - objects that will ultimately allow them to enslave mankind - and have so far been prevented from reaching their apocalyptic goal by one, clandestine organisation: The Angelology Society.And if the Angelologists are to stand any chance of winning this new battle in the ages-old war, they must find the artefacts first. But their fate rests in the hands of innocent Sister Evangeline, who holds the key

to unlocking Abigail Rockefeller's hiding places ... and whose own destiny may yet find her prey to the terrifying Nephilim army, with horrifying consequences for humanity. Extrait St. Rose Convent, Hudson River Valley, Milton, New York December 23, 1999, 4:45

Evangeline woke before the sun came up, when the fourth floor was silent and dark. Quiet, so as not to wake the sisters who had prayed through the night, she gathered her shoes, stockings, and skirt in her arms and walked barefoot to the communal lavatory. She dressed quickly, half asleep, without looking in the mirror. From a sliver of bathroom window, she surveyed the convent grounds, covered in a predawn haze. A vast snowy courtyard stretched to the water's edge, where a scrim of barren trees limned the Hudson. St. Rose Convent perched precariously close to the river, so close that in daylight there seemed to be two convents one on land and one wavering lightly upon the water, the first folding out into the next, an illusion broken in summer by barges and in winter by teeth of ice. Evangeline watched the river flow by, a wide strip of black against the pure white snow. Soon morning would gild the water with sunlight. Bending before the porcelain sink, Evangeline splashed cold water over her face, dispelling the remnants of a dream. She could not recall the dream, only the impression it made upon her a wash of foreboding that left a pall over her thoughts, a sensation of loneliness and confusion she could not explain. Half asleep, she peeled away her heavy flannel night shift and, feeling the chill of the bathroom, shivered. Standing in her white cotton briefs and cotton undershirt (standard garments ordered in bulk and distributed biyearly to all the sisters at St. Rose), she looked at herself with an appraising, analytic eye - the thin arms and legs, the flat stomach, the tousled brown hair, the golden pendant resting upon her breastbone. The reflection floating on the glass before her was that of a sleepy young woman. Evangeline shivered again from the cool air and turned to her clothing. She owned five identical knee-length black skirts, seven black turtlenecks for the winter months, seven black short-sleeved cotton button-up shirts for the summer, one black wool sweater, fifteen pairs of white cotton underwear, and innumerable black nylon stockings: nothing more and nothing less than what was necessary. She pulled on a turtleneck and fitted a bandeau over her hair, pressing it firmly against her forehead before clipping on a black veil. She stepped into a pair of nylons and a wool skirt, buttoning, zipping, and straightening the wrinkles in one quick, unconscious gesture. In a matter of seconds, her private self disappeared and she became Sister Evangeline, Franciscan Sister of Perpetual Adoration. With her rosary in hand, the metamorphosis was complete. She placed her nightgown in the bin at the far end of the lavatory and prepared to face the day. Sister Evangeline had observed the 5:00 a.m. prayer hour each morning for the past half decade, since completing her formation and taking vows at eighteen years of age. She had lived at St. Rose Convent since her twelfth year, however, and knew the convent as intimately as one knows the temperament of a beloved friend. She had her morning route through the compound down to a science. As she rounded each floor, her fingers traced the wooden balustrades, her shoes skimming the landings. The convent was always empty at that hour, blue-shadowed and sepulchral, but after sunrise St. Rose would swarm with life, a beehive of work and devotion, each room glistening with sacred activity and prayer. The silence would soon abate - the staircases, the community rooms, the library, the communal cafeteria, and the dozens of closet-size bedchambers would soon be alive with sisters. Down three flights of stairs she ran. She could get to the chapel with her eyes closed. Reaching the first floor, Sister Evangeline walked into the imposing central hallway, the spine of St. Rose Convent. Along the walls hung framed portraits of long-dead abbesses, distinguished sisters, and the various incarnations of the convent building itself. Hundreds of women stared from the frames, reminding every sister who passed by on her way to prayer that she was part of an ancient and noble matriarchy where all women - both the living and the dead - were woven together in a single common mission. Although she knew she risked being late, Sister Evangeline paused at the center of the hallway. Here, the image of Rose of Viterbo, the saint after whom the convent had been named, hung in a gilt frame, her tiny hands folded in prayer, an evanescent nimbus of light glowing about her head. St. Rose's life had been short. Just after her third birthday, angels began to whisper to her, urging her to speak their message to all who would listen. Rose complied, earning her sainthood as a young woman, when, after preaching the goodness of God and His angels to a heathen village, she was condemned to die a witch. The townspeople bound her to a stake and lit a fire. To the great consternation of the crowd, Rose did not burn but stood in skeins of flame for three hours, conversing with angels as the fire licked her body. Some believed that angels wrapped themselves about the girl, covering her in a clear, protective armor. Eventually she died in the flames, but the miraculous intervention left her body inviolable. St. Rose's incorrupt corpse was paraded through the streets of Viterbo hundreds of years after her death, not the slightest mark of her ordeal evident upon the adolescent body. Remembering the hour, Sister Evangeline turned from the portrait. She walked to the end of the

hallway, where a great wooden portal carved with scenes of the Annunciation separated the convent from the church. On one side of the boundary, Sister Evangeline stood in the simplicity of the convent; on the other rose the majestic church. She heard the sound of her footsteps sharpen as she left carpeting for a pale roseate marble veined with green. The movement across the threshold took just one step, but the difference was immense. The air grew heavy with incense; the light saturated blue from the stained glass. White plaster walls gave way to great sheets of stone. The ceiling soared. The eye adjusted to the golden abundance of Neo-Rococo. As she left the convent, Evangeline's earthly commitments of community and charity fell away and she entered the sphere of the divine: God, Mary, and the angels. In the beginning years of her time at St. Rose, the number of angelic images in Maria Angelorum Church struck Evangeline as excessive. As a girl she'd found them overwhelming, too ever-present and overwrought. The creatures filled every crook and crevice of the church, leaving little room for much else. Seraphim ringed the central dome; marble archangels held the corners of the altar. The columns were inlaid with golden halos, trumpets, harps, and tiny wings; carved visages of putti stared from the pew ends, hypnotizing and compact as fruit bats. Although she understood that the opulence was meant as an offering to the Lord, a symbol of their devotion, Evangeline secretly preferred the plain functionality of the convent. During her formation she felt critical of the founding sisters, wondering why they had not used such wealth for better purposes. But, like so much else, her objections and preferences had shifted after she took the habit, as if the clothing ceremony itself caused her to melt ever so slightly and take a new, more uniform shape. After five years as a professed sister, the girl she had been had nearly faded away. Pausing to dip her index finger into a fount of holy water, Sister Evangeline blessed herself (forehead, heart, left shoulder, right shoulder) and stepped through the narrow Romanesque basilica, past the fourteen Stations of the Cross, the straight-backed red oak pews, and the marble columns. As the light was dim at that hour, Evangeline followed the wide central aisle through the nave to the sacristy, where chalices and bells and vestments were locked in cupboards, awaiting Mass. At the far end of the sacristy, she came to a door. Taking a deep breath, Evangeline closed her eyes, as if preparing them for a greater brightness. She placed her hand on the cold brass knob and, heart pounding, pushed. The Adoration Chapel opened around her, bursting upon her vision. Its walls glittered golden, as if she had stepped into the center of an enameled Fabergé egg. The private chapel of the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration had a high central dome and huge stained-glass panels that filled each wall. The central masterpiece of the Adoration Chapel was a set of Bavarian windows hung high above the altar depicting the three angelic spheres: the First Sphere of Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones; the Second Sphere of Dominions, Virtues, and Powers; and the Third Sphere of Principalities, Archangels, and Angels. Together the spheres formed the heavenly choir, the collective voice of heaven. Each morning Sister Evangeline would stare at the angels floating in an expanse of glittering glass and try to imagine their native brilliance, the pure radiant light that rose from them like heat. Sister Evangeline spied Sisters Bernice and Boniface - scheduled for adoration each morning from four to five - kneeling before the altar. Together the sisters ran their fingers over the carved wooden beads of their seven-decade rosaries, as if intent to whisper the very last syllable of prayer with as much mindfulness as they had whispered the first. One could find two sisters in full habit kneeling side by side in the chapel at all times of the day and night, their lips moving in synchronized patterns of prayer, conjoined in purpose before the white marble altar. The object of the sisters' adoration was encased in a golden starburst monstrance placed high upon the altar, a white host suspended in an explosion of gold. The Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration had prayed every minute of every hour of every day since Mother Francesca, their founding abbess, had initiated adoration in the early nineteenth century. Nearly two hundred years later, the prayer persisted, form... *Revue de presse* "Angelology finds an almost hallucinatory power.... fusing the debased, the psychological, and the theological, into a single rich, strange tableau that transmits a shock of truth." *Time Magazine* "Breathtakingly imaginative.... Once you've entered Angelology's enthralling world...you'll be thinking, 'Vampires? Who cares about vampires?'" *People Magazine* "Angelology is everything a reader wants . . . a clever, fast-paced thriller with a strong sense of place and beguiling, emotionally engaging characters [and] a skillful, satisfying history. . . . A pleasure from start to finish . . . A wonderful achievement." Kate Mosse, author of *Labyrinth* "Angelology by Danielle Trussoni is a thrilling, gorgeous read. Atmospheric, beguiling, and if you'll pardon the pun-diabolically good." Raymond Khoury, author of *The Last Templar and Sanctuary* "Angelology lets loose the ancient fallen angels to the modern world with devastating results. Trussoni has written a holy thriller that will arrest your attention from the opening pages and not let go till its mysteries take wing." Keith Donohue, author of *The Stolen Child and Angels of Destruction* "Danielle Trussoni creates a gorgeous gothic world for the

reader, where the people who surround us are not what they seem, and stories are unveiled as more truth than fable. This is a book that resonates as both haunting and holy. A must read." Brunonia Barry, author of *The Lace Reader*"An elegantly ambitious archival thriller . . . richly allusive and vividly staged, with widescreen-ready visuals, a dewy but adaptable heroine and a dashingy cruel villain. . . . Sensual and intellectual, *Angelology* is a terrifically clever thriller." *The New York Times Book* "A thrill ride best described as *The Da Vinci Code* meets *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. . . . Readers will feel the irresistible pull of *Angelology*. As thrillers go, it's heavenly." *USA Today*