



Nadine. “But my mother had no other living, and finally in the 90s she couldn’t even pay the bills. In 1991, 13million Angélique books were sold in Russia alone and yet my mother got nothing. The films on TV paid her nothing either.”

The details of the following 12 years of court cases and legal wrangling are convoluted and depressing, but like her heroine, in the end Anne Golon triumphed.

She regained all rights over her work. “In the end she got her copyrights back but not the lost income. She fought back, not for herself, but to show that authors could fight back, and that it was not legal to treat authors like that.”

She paid a heavy price, however. The books were dropped. Angélique went out of print and without an agent the foreign editions also languished. Anne Golon did not care. She simply went on writing. In 2010, the French ministry of Culture awarded Anne Golon the *Officier des Arts et des Lettres* medal in recognition of her contribution to literature.

“The Angélique series is a living work, a current one. It’s about a woman struggling against all forms of fanaticism, dogma, religious extremism – both Protestant and Catholic, and now we are right in the middle of it all over again, so it’s a very subversive work. Angélique always earns her own living, ploughs her own furrow. The male heroes are not brutes, they are scientists, thinkers, poets.

“People wrote to her from all over the world, saying Angélique had saved their lives, had given them the courage to tread their own path, to be free, and to live in their own way, unshackled by convention, family wishes, and religion.

“But my mother lived in Angélique’s world. When she got the rights back, she

rewrote the first six books, restoring details and developing themes and plots in light of future books and to make all the books coherent with the planned final book which would wind all the stories up.”

She also made extensive notes for the last book, but sadly never finished either the rewrites or the last book in the series before she died in July 2017.

Nadine, who with her siblings inherited all the rights to the series, originally wanted to find someone to publish at least the last three books in English, but with her own experience of publishing limited to watching her mother’s struggles she is understandably hesitant.

In France, there has been a tendency to regard the Angélique books as erotic pulp fiction, although their rightful place is alongside classic adventures like the *Scarlet Pimpernel* books by Baroness Emma Orczy, the *Sharpe* books by Bernard Cornwell, *Forever Amber* by Kathleen Winsor, and almost anything by Alexandre Dumas.

For the time being, Angélique languishes in limbo and although Anne Golon did confide the end of the story to a tiny number of her truest and most loyal fans, for the rest of us it remains unknown.

A new TV series is on the cards, however, and as next year is the centenary of Anne Golon’s birth, various events are being planned.

**Above: Angélique author Anne Golon with her popular series of books, which are still available in French, but are out of print in English**



## Dedicated followers of Golon sought her here...

An Angélique fan talks about meeting her literary idol in Paris, and her devastation at the untimely end of the series

Anna Ludlow is arguably one of Anne Golon’s biggest fans. “I loved all the plot twists and turns,” she says, “and longed to get to the end. I also loved the insights into French history; so many of the characters in the books were real historical people.”

When the books stopped coming, leaving Angélique’s story unfinished, she was devastated.

“Sometimes there was a gap between books coming out, so fans were used to waiting, but in the end when nothing came from France, most of them gave up, but then a French friend mentioned that *Angélique in Quebec* had been published in French, I tracked a copy down and decided to read the books in French if the English versions weren’t available.”

Despite reading the next three books in French, Angélique’s story still wasn’t finished and finding out the ending still seemed like an impossible task – until a decade later she stumbled over a website called *World of Angélique* run by an American Marine called Harvey.

“He was a major fan. It was kind of his guilty pleasure. He worked in Italy and had a view of Mount Vesuvius from his window. So, from him, I found out that five films had been made (I only knew about two) and gradually found other fans online.”

She says there was a chap from Australia, a few women from the US, and slowly but surely the circle grew and they realised that a lot of people wanted to know why the books suddenly stopped. “Then the books came out in Polish so I re-read them all over again, although I had to buy them one by one from an auction site.”

Originally, in the mid-90s, the group used a Yahoo group called *Friends of Angélique*, which has now become a Facebook page called *Anne Golon - a celebration of her life and legacy*.

“We took ‘Angélique’ out of the title because at one time the books were marketed as ‘erotica’ which is strange seeing as they don’t really contain any sex. But the name seems to attract some strange people, so we left it out.”

The group eventually travelled to France. “Meeting Anne Golon was a

major thrill, although the family were not initially very trusting of this group of English fans.

“The internet was a revelation to my mother,” said the author’s daughter Nadine. “Suddenly people were contacting her from all over the world, and my mother was amazed.

“She had no idea she had so many fans, especially English and American ones.”

Harvey the American Marine officer, Steve from Australia and Anna were the three contact points for the first fan group. “I first met her in 1999,” said Anna, “and after that I went to Paris regularly, but Anne’s financial situation was terrible.

“The court cases were costing her a fortune, and the publishers had told her that no-one was interested in her books, that no-one cared. We assured her that Angélique has fans worldwide.”

The Angélique series is still in print in French, but even second-hand copies of the books are becoming increasingly hard to track down in English. The five films made during the 1960s were called *Angélique, Marquise des Anges* (1964), *Merveilleuse Angélique* (1965), *Angélique et le Roy* (1966), *Indomptable Angélique* (1967), and *Angélique et le Sultan* (1968).

The films were box office smashes in France, Italy, Germany, Spain and Russia, and remain cult viewing today (the DVDs are still available from Fnac, Amazon etc.) A more recent film was made in 2013, simply called *Angélique* and this is also available.

