



QM Library Newsletter

Issue 3, February 2022 (edited by Sam, Year 12)

IN DEPTH

AN AREA OF DARKNESS

by Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul

V.S. Naipaul, born in Trinidad in 1932, wrote three books about India. *An Area of Darkness* is the earliest in the trilogy and, through pictures of the subcontinent in the 1960s (by turns tragic and comic), Naipaul gives a semi-autobiographical account of his first experience of the country that his grandfather left as an indentured labourer in the 1880s.

Naipaul's honesty, not only about his response to a land which had hitherto only existed in the religious pictures and knickknacks that he could recall filling up his grandparents' house but also about his own personal failings, is the most valuable aspect of the book. Whether he documents a disappointing pilgrimage to the Cave of Amarnath, a bizarre 'hotel' on Dal Lake or conversations with the educated middle-class men of Mumbai, Naipaul's frankness produces an account of estrangement and displacement which fascinates even at the same time as it can repulse with its acid judgements. Looking through western eyes at an east to which he is connected in spite of its foreignness, Naipaul at times sounds – in, for example, his descriptions of caste – like a colonial observer who sees in 60s India something more than difference: the irrational antithesis of European ways of thinking.

This tension holds the book together. Like much of Naipaul's work, it suggests that the most enduring legacy of empire in India is found not so much in the use of English, economic depression, railways, common law or any of the things that are so often cited in books which are more or less flattering to either India's or Britain's idea of itself, as it is in the lives of people. The prose is beautiful, the author's pain obvious and the read captivating.

PRD (English Department)

QUICK REVIEWS

THINK LIKE A FREAK

by S.J. Dubner and S. Levitt

This is a book which you must read, maybe to think like the freak we all know we truly are deep inside or just to read the amusing and alien stories bound beneath the absurd looking cover – sure to confuse any passing student or teacher. It explores economics, the nature of the self and teaches you valuable skills through the amusing anecdotes. Whatever your tastes may be, this book (written from the bizarre viewpoints of two rogue economists) is definitely one worth reading!

Pranav (Year 11)

DANNY CHUNG DOES NOT DO MATHS

by Masie Chen

A great book with comedy, realism and relatability all in one. I would call it 'The Perfect Book' (honestly the author deserves an award). But more than all the friendships, grandmas, lychees, and bingo balls, we can learn that some people are not what they seem. Some are sour apples, smooth on the outside but sour inside, and others are Chinese but don't follow the 'Chinese Way.'

Aahil (Year 8)

EUCLID'S ELEMENTS

by Euclid

If I had to describe the book as a food, I would call it beef jerky. The comparison may seem strange at first but hear me out. Euclid's elements seem to be, and are, dry at first, and difficult to get your teeth into. But if you persist, and continue reading, you will slowly begin to understand and (possibly) enjoy the content and flavours(?) of the book. So overall, if you like maths, and want to read all of Euclid's many points, postulates, and propositions, this is the book for you!

UJ (Year 11)

AN ABSOLUTELY REMARKABLE THING

by Hank Green

An Absolutely Remarkable Thing is a must-read for any fans of science fiction and mystery. When alien structures suddenly appear across the globe, April May, the protagonist, must solve a series of puzzles, which are played in lucid dreams, to discover their intentions, all the while battling with her vast newfound fame and the aggressive nature of humanity. As with in his other work, Hank Green uses this book to tackle a profound question – how the Earth would react to alien life in the present – in an accessible and humorous way.

William (Year 10)

WHAT'S ON?

There are book clubs for the following years:

Year 7: Thursday, 13:30, Q3

Year 8: Monday, 13:30, M3

Year 9: Wednesday, 13:30, Q3

Script-reading groups are running:

KS3: Monday, 13:00, M1

KS4/5: Friday, 13:30, Q3

New – students in Years 10 to 12 who want to solve problems from the Linguistic Olympiad meet each Monday, at 13:15, in M2.

PEARLS OF WISDOM

from **DUNE**

by Frank Herbert

Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me... Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.

chosen by **the librarians**

February 2022