

The Mystic Masseur

To the residents of Miguel Street, a derelict corner of Trinidad's capital, their neighbourhood is a complete world, where everybody is quite different from everybody else. There's Popo the carpenter, who neglects his livelihood to build "the thing without a name;" Man-man, who goes from running for public office to staging his own crucifixion; Big Foot, the dreaded bully with glass tear ducts; and the lovely Mrs. Hereira, in thrall to her monstrous husband. Their lives (and the legends their neighbours construct around them) are rendered by V. S. Naipaul with Dickensian verve and Chekhovian compassion in this tender, funny novel.

A sober novel about a tempestuous and tormented soul carrying the burdens of postcolonialism in London. Winner of the W. H. Smith Literary Award.

This is the first major biography of V.S. Naipaul, Nobel Prize winner and one of the most compelling literary figures of the last fifty years. With great feeling for his formidable body of work, and exclusive access to his private papers and personal recollections, Patrick French has produced a lucid and astonishing account of this enigmatic genius: one which looks sensitively and unflinchingly at his relationships, his development as a writer and as a man, his outspokenness, his peerless creativity, and his extraordinary and enduring position both outside and at the very centre of literary culture. 'Its clarity, honesty, even-handedness, its panoramic range and close emotional focus, above all its virtually unprecedented access to the dark secret life at its heart, make it one of the most gripping biographies I've ever read' Hilary Spurling, Observer 'A brilliant biography: exemplary in its thoroughness, sympathetic but tough in tone . . . Reading it I was enthralled – and frequently amused (how incredibly funny Naipaul can be!)' Spectator 'A masterly performance . . . If a better biography is published this year, I shall be astonished' Allan Massie, Literary Review 'Remarkable. This biography will change the way we read Naipaul's books' Craig Brown, Book of the Week, Mail on Sunday

Owning a small portion of the Trinidad earth and a respectable house of his own is the dream and the reality sustaining Mohun Biswas through a life of frustration and despair after he marries into the domineering Tulsi family. Reprint. 15,000 first printing.

A survey of the life and work of the 2001 Nobel Laureate for Literature, V. S. Naipaul, *Man and Writer* introduces readers to the writer widely viewed as a curmudgeonly novelist who finds special satisfaction in overturning the vogue presuppositions of his peers. Gillian Dooley takes an expansive look at Naipaul's literary career, from Miguel Street to Magic Seeds. From readings of his fiction, nonfiction, travel books, and volumes of letters, she elucidates the connections between Naipaul's personal experiences as a Hindu Indian from Trinidad living an expatriate life and the precise, euphonious prose with which he is synonymous. Dooley assesses each of Naipaul's major publications in light of his stated intentions and beliefs, and she traces the development of his writing style over a forty-year career. Devoting separate chapters to three of his chief works, *A House for Mr. Biswas*, *In a Free State*, and *The Enigma of Arrival*, she analyzes their critical reception and the primacy of Naipaul's specific narrative style and voice. Dooley emphasizes that it is, above all, Naipaul's refusal to compromise his vision in order to flatter or appease that has made him a controversial writer. At the same time she sees the integrity with which he reports his subjective response to the world as essential to the lasting success of his work.

Shortly before retirement from his post as a librarian in a large commercial firm, sixty-two-year-old Mr. Stone marries, becomes inspired, and turns his creative idea into fact.

The autobiographical novel of a journey from the British colony of Trinidad to the ancient countryside of England.

V. S. Naipaul's first book about the United States is a revealing, disturbing, elegiac book about the hidden life and culture of the American South — from Atlanta to Charleston, Tallahassee to Tuskegee, Nashville to Chapel Hill.

AN AREA OF DARKNESS 'Brilliant ... tender, lyrical, explosive' Observer V.S. Naipaul was twenty-nine when he first visited India. This is his semi-autobiographical account—at once painful and hilarious, but always thoughtful and considered—a revelation both of the country and of himself. INDIA: A WOUNDED CIVILIZATION 'A devastating work, but proof that a novelist of Naipaul's stature can often define problems quicker and more effectively than a team of economists and other experts' The Times Prompted by the Emergency of 1975, Naipaul casts a more analytical eye, convinced that India, wounded by a thousand years of foreign rule, has not yet found an ideology of regeneration. INDIA: A MILLION MUTINIES NOW 'Indispensable for anyone who wants seriously to come to grips with the experience of India' New York Times Book Review It is twenty-six years since Naipaul's first trip to India. Taking an anti-clockwise journey around the metropolises—including Bombay, Madras, Calcutta and Delhi—he focuses on the country's development since Independence. The author recedes, allowing Indians to tell the stories, and a dynamic oral history of the country emerges.

An expatriate English couple and a West Indian would-be revolutionary yield to infidelity, sexual abuse, murder, and irrevocable mental and moral decay on a socially fragile, post-colonial Caribbean island.

Bien qu'il se refuse à l'admettre, le thème de l'identité est au coeur de l'oeuvre de V.S. Naipaul, tant dans ses récits de voyage que dans ses ouvrages de fiction. "Le masseur mystique", premier roman qu'il a publié, est un exemple flagrant de l'attitude de cet auteur iconoclaste. Sous des dehors d'épopée, contant la vie du masseur et mystique Ganesh Ramsumair, ce texte est en fait une véritable étude sur l'impossibilité d'accomplissement personnel dans l'île de Trinidad. Le présent ouvrage tente d'étudier par quels processus complexes le personnage de Ganesh Ramsumair passe pour élaborer sa personnalité. Quelle est la part de son héritage culturel dans la constitution de cette identité. Comment l'absence de modèle empêche toute identification. Comment, enfin, un environnement stérile condamne l'homme à la stérilité tant physique que spirituelle.

"A marvellous prose epic that matches the best nineteenth-century novels" Newsweek "A work of great comic power qualified with firm and unsentimental compassion." Anthony Burgess *A House for Mr Biswas* is V.S. Naipaul's unforgettable third novel. Born the "wrong way" and thrust into a world that greeted him with little more than a bad omen, Mohun Biswas has spent his 46 years of life striving for independence. But his determined efforts have met only with calamity. Shuttled from one residence to another after the drowning of his father, Mr Biswas yearns for a place he can call home. He marries into the domineering Tulsi family, on whom he becomes indignantly dependent, but rebels and takes on a succession of occupations in an arduous struggle to weaken their hold over him and purchase a house of his own.

Heartrending and darkly comic, *A House for Mr Biswas* masterfully evokes a man's quest for autonomy against the backdrop of post-colonial Trinidad.

The Nobel Prize winner's first novel traces the unlikely career of Ganesh Ramsumair, a failed schoolteacher and impecunious village masseur who in time becomes a revered mystic and the most beloved politician in 1940s Trinidad. Copyright © Libri GmbH. All rights reserved.

Understanding Africa is critical for all concerned with the world today: in what promises to be his final great work of reportage, one of the keenest observers of the continent surveys the effects of belief and religion on the disparate peoples of Africa. *The Masque of Africa* is Nobel Prize-winning V. S. Naipaul's first major work of non-fiction to be published since his internationally bestselling *Beyond Belief*. Like all of Naipaul's great works of non-fiction, *The Masque of Africa* is superficially a book of travels — full of people, stories and landscapes he visits — but it also encompasses a larger narrative and purpose: to judge the effects of belief (whether in indigenous animisms, faiths imposed by other cultures, or even the cults of leaders and mythical history) upon the progress of civilization.

In the "brilliant novel" (*The New York Times*) V.S. Naipaul takes us deeply into the life of one man—an Indian who, uprooted by the bloody tides of Third World history, has come to live in an isolated town at the bend of a great river in a newly independent African nation. Naipaul

gives us the most convincing and disturbing vision yet of what happens in a place caught between the dangerously alluring modern world and its own tenacious past and traditions.

The Mystic Masseur tells the story of Ganesh and his journey from failed primary school teacher and masseur to author, revered mystic and MBE. Miguel Street, a very early novel, won the Somerset Maugham Award on its appearance in 1959.

The first of Naipaul's twelve novels tells of the meteoric rise and hilarious metamorphosis of Ganesh Ramsumair from failed primary schoolteacher and struggling masseur to author, revered mystic, peerless politician and the most popular man in Trinidad.

In his first book of non-fiction since 2003, V.S. Naipaul gives us an eloquent, candid, wide-ranging narrative that delves into the sometimes inadvertent process of creative and intellectual assimilation. Born in Trinidad of Indian descent, a resident of England for his entire adult life, and a prodigious traveller, Nobel Laureate V. S. Naipaul has always faced the challenges of "fitting one civilisation to another." In *A Writer's People*, he discusses the writers to whom he was exposed early on, Derek Walcott, Flaubert and his own father among them; how Anthony Powell and Francis Wyndham influenced his first encounters with literary culture; what we have retained—and forgotten—of the world portrayed in Caesar's *The Gallic War* and Virgil's *Aeneid*; how the writings of Gandhi, Nehru and other Indian writers both reveal and conceal the authors and their nation. And he brings the same scrutiny to bear on his own life: his years in Trinidad; the gaps in his family history; the "private India" kept alive through story, ritual, religion and culture; his ever-evolving reaction to the more complicated and demanding true India he would encounter for the first time when he was thirty. Part meditation, part remembrance, as elegant as it is revelatory, *A Writer's People* allows us privileged insight—full of incident, humour and feeling—into the mind of one of our greatest writers. "He brings to non-fiction an extraordinary capacity for making art out of lucid thought. . . . I can no longer imagine the world without Naipaul's writing." *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

The Mystic Masseur Vintage Canada

One of the finest living writers in the English language, V. S. Naipaul gives us a tale as wholly unexpected as it is affecting, his first novel since the exultantly acclaimed *A Way in the World*, published seven years ago. *Half a Life* is the story of Willie Chandran, whose father, heeding the call of Mahatma Gandhi, turned his back on his brahmin heritage and married a woman of low caste—a disastrous union he would live to regret, as he would the children that issued from it. When Willie reaches manhood, his flight from the travails of his mixed birth takes him from India to London, where, in the shabby haunts of immigrants and literary bohemians of the 1950s, he contrives a new identity. This is what happens as he tries to defeat self-doubt in sexual adventures and in the struggle to become a writer—strivings that bring him to the brink of exhaustion, from which he is rescued, to his amazement, only by the love of a good woman. And this is what happens when he returns with her—carried along, really—to her home in Africa, to live, until the last doomed days of colonialism, yet another life not his own. In a luminous narrative that takes us across three continents, Naipaul explores his great theme of inheritance with an intimacy and directness unsurpassed in his extraordinary body of work. And even as he lays bare the bitter comical ironies of assumed identities, he gives us a poignant spectacle of the enervation peculiar to a borrowed life. In one man's determined refusal of what he has been given to be, Naipaul reveals the way of all our experience. As Willie comes to see, "Everything goes on a bias. The world should stop, but it goes on." A masterpiece of economy and emotional nuance, *Half a Life* is an indelible feat of the imagination.

(includes *The Suffrage of Elvira*, *A Flag on the Island* and *Mr. Stone and the Knights Companion*) Written early in V. S. Naipaul's prolific career, these three works of fiction — two novels and a collection of stories — are ample evidence of his cosmopolitan reach and his seemingly effortless command of broad comedy and acute observation.

The plethora of commentary from highly respected voices in a broad cross-section of academic disciplines, which V. S. Naipaul's death on 11 August 2018 elicited, ranged so widely, both cognitively and emotionally, that if a student of literature, unfamiliar with the Naipaulian era, read it all, they would have failed to make sense of the divergences.

Allegations included that he 'was a cruel man', 'a scarred man', 'the darkest dungeons of colonialism incarnate: self-punishing, self-loathing, world-loathing, full of nastiness and fury', 'a ventriloquist for the nastiest clichés European colonialism had devised to rule the world with arrogance and confidence' and so on. On the other hand, writers referred to Naipaul as a 'brilliant writer's writer', one 'who holds a mirror of imagination unto society to capture a certain view of reality' and one who 'has turned the genre of the travelogue into an art form'. Debates aside, many of us appreciate the value of Naipaul's writing to the deepest possible comprehension of the imperial impulse and the myriad reasons it manifested as colonialism. The *First Naipaul World Epics* is the first in a series of critical collections that aim to demonstrate this value. At the same time, the series seeks to help the new student through the quagmire of divergent opinions his personality and writing have generated.

A *New York Times* Notable Book Nobel laureate V. S. Naipaul's impassioned and prescient travelogue of his journeys through his ancestral homeland, with a new preface by the author. Arising out of Naipaul's lifelong obsession and passion for a country that is at once his and totally alien, *India: A Million Mutinies Now* relates the stories of many of the people he met traveling there more than fifty years ago. He explores how they have been steered by the innumerable frictions present in Indian society—the contradictions and compromises of religious faith, the whim and chaos of random political forces. This book represents Naipaul's last word on his homeland, complementing his two other India travelogues, *An Area of Darkness* and *India: A Wounded Civilization*.

The history of Trinidad begins with a delusion: the belief that somewhere nearby on the South American mainland lay El Dorado, the mythical kingdom of gold. In this extraordinary and often gripping book, V. S. Naipaul—himself a native of Trinidad—shows how that delusion drew a small island into the vortex of world events, making it the object of Spanish and English colonial designs and a mecca for treasure-seekers, slave-traders, and revolutionaries. Amid massacres and poisonings, plunder and multinational intrigue, two themes emerge: the grinding down of the Aborigines during the long rivalries of the El Dorado quest and, two hundred years later, the man-made horror of slavery. An accumulation of casual, awful detail takes us as close as we can get to day-to-day life in the slave colony, where, in spite of various titles of nobility, only an opportunistic, near-lawless community exists, always fearful of slave suicide or poison, of African sorcery and revolt. Naipaul tells this labyrinthine story with assurance, withering irony, and lively sympathy. The result is historical

writing at its highest level.

Naipul's first work of travel writing is an account of his journey in 1950 from London to his birthplace, Trinidad. He offers a record of his impressions there and elsewhere in the West Indies and South America, and examines their common heritage of colonialism and slavery.

In 1950, V. S. Naipaul travelled from Trinidad to England to take up a place at Oxford University. Over the next few years, letters passed back and forth between Naipaul and his family – particularly his beloved father Seepersad, but also his mother and siblings. The result is a fascinating chronicle of Naipaul's time at university; the love of writing that he shared with his father and their mutual nurturing of literary ambition; the triumphs and depressions of Oxford life; and the travails of his family back at home. *Letters Between a Father and Son* is an engrossing collection continuing into the early years of V. S. Naipaul's literary career, touching time and again on the craft of writing, and revealing the relationships and experiences that formed and influenced one of the greatest and most enigmatic literary figures of our age. 'Rare and precious . . . if any modern writer was going to breathe a last gasp into the epistolary tradition, it was always likely to be V. S. Naipaul' *New Statesman*

A stunning novel of the present moment that takes us into the hearts and minds of those who use terrorism as an ideal and a way of life, and those who aspire to the frightening power of wealth. Abandoning a life he felt was not his own, Willie Chandran (the hero of *Half a Life*) moves to Berlin where his sister's radical political awakening inspires him to join a liberation movement in India. There, in the jungles and dirt-poor small villages, through months of secrecy and night marches, Willie — a solitary, inward man — discovers both the idealism and brutality of guerilla warfare. When he finally escapes the movement, he is imprisoned for the murder of three policemen. Released unexpectedly on condition he return to England, he attempts to climb back into life in the West, but his experience of wealth, love and despair in London only bedevils him further. *Magic Seeds* is a moving tale of a man searching for his life and fearing he has wasted it, and a testing study of the conflicts between the rich and the poor, and the struggles within each. Its spare, elegant prose sizzles with devastating psychological analysis, bleak humour and astonishing characters. Only V. S. Naipaul could have written a novel so attuned to the world and so much a challenge to it.

In this book, an old, comically timid and absent-minded man, Surujpat Harbans, runs for office, aided by superstition, bribes, and an aggressive campaign.

In his long-awaited, vastly innovative new novel, Naipaul, "one of literature's great travelers" (*Los Angeles Times*), spans continents and centuries to create what is at once an autobiography and a fictional archaeology of colonialism. "Dickensian... a brilliant new prism through which to view (Naipaul's) life and work."—*New York Times*.

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