



The Mystic Masseur

V.S. Naipaul

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

The Mystic Masseur

V.S. Naipaul

The Mystic Masseur V.S. Naipaul

Two prize-winning early novels by V.S. Naipul, brought together in one volume.

The Mystic Masseur Details

Date : Published January 1st 2003 by Pan MacMillan (first published 1957)

ISBN : 9780330487122

Author : V.S. Naipaul

Format : Paperback 215 pages

Genre : Fiction, Humor, Cultural, India, Literature, Nobel Prize, Novels, Asian Literature, Indian Literature, Politics, 20th Century, Literary Fiction

 [Download The Mystic Masseur ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Mystic Masseur ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Mystic Masseur V.S. Naipaul

From Reader Review The Mystic Masseur for online ebook

Maryam says

?? ??? ?? ????? ???? ????? ??? ??? ??? ??? ? ??? ????? ?? ????? ?????? ??? ?? ??

Jigar Brahmbhatt says

With only few brushstrokes Naipaul is able to get a character on his or her feet. Amused, I had to read some passages again to see how that works. A lot of it depends on the dialogue and how a character speaks, and the writer has a very good ear for it. The advantage is that he has to throw only scanty details here and there to make the whole thing work and not go into longish essays about what's going on. The use of dialect at hand is the key and it is gorgeously handled. There is a remarkable control over the narrative, the kind very few writers show, but that's what we have come to learn about Naipaul already.

It is a funny book and the restraint makes the joke work. Too much explanation, a word too may, and you won't laugh. In a way, The Mystic Masseur prepares you to meet Mr. Mohun Biswas.

Muhajjah Saratini says

Seperti banyak orang Indonesia di Suriname, di Trinidad juga banyak orang India. Dan mereka masih ketat menjaga tradisi.

Mulai dari ratapan saat ada yang meninggal, mahar dari pihak perempuan saat pernikahan, juga perlakuan suami terhadap istri. Mereka juga menjaga kepercayaan terhadap hal-hal mistis.

Melalui Ganesh, penulis menunjukkan semua itu. Sindirannya pasti mengena telak. Naipaul memang berniat menunjukkan kepada para pembaca mengenai diri mereka sendiri. Soalnya, biasanya memang sulit menyadari kelemahan dan kekuatan diri sendiri. Seperti si Ganesh ini.

Shantanoo Desai says

Naipaul is a genius when it comes to creating characters that have a very particular trait; being clueless. The protagonist Ganesh, is a baffled lad in Trinidad and tries his skills in quite a few stratas until life catches the right pace.

The plot is beautiful and filled with satire when it comes to the whole "Indian" thing. The sycophancy of his Father-in-law when he realizes his son-in-law made it big in life, his wife's lopsided nepotism and his close friends who seem to persuade him for writing books would bring a chuckle for sure, if one is acquainted to such behaviour in regular life.

A subtle tinge of Creolisation is noticed when the reader realizes that Trinidad and Tobago are colonial frontiers of the British, and the process of being creole is seen as a subtle progression in society.

No one can compete with V.S. Naipaul when it comes to writing books wig the colonization reference, and this book brings out the best.

Hrrostami says

[illegible]

Paul says

Naipaul's first novel; a comic satire set in the Indian community on Trinidad in the 1930s and 1940s. Ganesh Ramsumair stumbles through life and marriage and into the massage of the title, quite by accident. His political career is also entirely accidental. There is a splendid cast of colourful characters and the comic and slapstick element is high. There is also an undertone of satire. The characters have been described as Dickensian, however I felt that there was just a touch of P G Wodehouse about the book; because it dealt with quite a small enclosed group within a wider society, which generally did not intrude into the story. The story ends in Oxford, as the author himself ended up in Britain and I wondered if there was just a shade of the author's own journey from his homeland here. The satire is a little cruel at times and there is an element of cynicism underlying the whole story. The book was certainly amusing, but I was not quite sure whether Naipaul actually liked his characters or meant us to like them; I probably need to read more of his work to make a judgement. However, it is well written and was a quick and easy read.

J.C. says

I don't really know anything much about Trinidad, but I did enjoy this book and found it interesting in terms of insight into that society (or at least the book's interpretation of that society) during the 30's and 40's. The book is of course funny, as it is an effective satire of a society caught between oral and written culture, western civilization just cutting through. The protagonist rides this wave almost by force, taking the opportunity and rides it to the end. There can be an argument made that he exploits the people who seek him, as the mystic masseur, but i've written my thoughts on in this in my copy of the book, and would rather you read it and figure that out for yourself. Needless to say, it's as much to say about western capitalism as it does about human nature.

One word of warning: if you don't like it when characters or narration use a broken version of grammar, then this book is not for you. The dialect is sometimes jarring, sentences like "Ah, sahib. I know you just come to comfort a old man left to live by hisself. Soomintra say I too old-fashion. And Leela, she always by you. Why you don't sit down, sahib? It ain't dirty. Is just how it does look.'", and that's a very light example, but you get the point. I think the funky dialect is obviously to give it more of an oral and historical context/feel.

The ending falls flat a little, but i think that's the point and i didn't feel like it ruined the experience for me too much. The pace completely changes, but with where the protagonist, Ganesh, is towards the end of the book, its as if the narrator is doing the reader a favor. I won't throw out any spoilers in that regard, so you'll just have to read it and see for yourself what i'm talking about.

I read this book for a world literature class, and even though I had to read it within a week and a half among

Tanuj Solanki says

Naipaul creates a comic system full of characters mired in their petty motives, and lets it loose. The result is a funny read.

The refinery of the dialect, the technique of creating a self-sustaining system, and the realization of tragedy as a greater force than out and out comedy -- add these three to *The Mystic Masseur* and you get very close to Naipaul's first masterpiece in *'The House of Biswas'*. For Naipaul aficionados *Massuer* is a must read because not only does it do fairly well as a novel, it also exposes the components that were in creation before their final culmination in *Mr. Biswas*.

Judy says

This is Naipaul's first novel, which I found at my local library in a volume of his first three novels. Apparently Naipaul has had two phases in his writing: an early comic vision of which *The Mystic Masseur* is an example and a later disturbing darker period.

V S Naipaul was born in Trinidad, an island in the Caribbean, to which his grandfather had come from India. The island is a polyglot of races, nationalities and languages and has been ruled by various European nations since the 15th century. After slavery was abolished, the plantation owners brought in indentured labor from India.

Naipaul uses a combination of humor, magical realism and scenes from Indian/Hindu immigrant life to describe the coming of age of Ganesh Ramsumair, an orphan who makes it through some college education, fails as a school teacher and returns to his native village. In an effort to support his wife, he takes up healing as a masseur, though he is a complete quack. Mostly he studies the books he acquires, lining his walls and gaining knowledge until he gains fame as the "pundit."

The Indians from India who reside in Trinidad comprise a tightly knit and enclosed culture with their own foods, customs and competitions. Ganesh finally rises in the world and enters politics only to find disillusionment in the end. Naipaul's writing is lively and robust but I can't fully agree that his vision is comic. He makes some fun of his own people but what comes through is a rueful account of life as second class citizens in a post colonial world.

Sorin Hadârc? says

I haven't expected a satire but then again, Naipaul is known to exhibit a healthy sense of humour. And it helps portray the Trinidadians with lots of insight, I think. Reads well in South Asia.

Jasmin Mohd-zain says

The story is simple and the history of Indians in Trinidad is embedded in it.

A good satire which was absorbing the in the first half of the book.

However became a bit of a drag the second half and a curt dissappointing ending at the end.

Ganesh metamorph as his country Trinidad change. What he despised of in the beginning finally caught up with him in the end as G. Ramsay Muir, ESQ

Bhargavi Balachandran says

I can't remember chuckling so much reading any book in the last few months.. Mystic Masseur by V.S Naipaul is one of the finest comic capers i have laid my eyes upon.It is the story of the rise of Ganesh Ramasumair,a failed Primary school teacher and struggling masseur to a writer ,mystic and finally a MBE(Member of executive council) in Trinidad.The book is written in the strangely hilarious English spoken by the Trinidadian people and is set in Colonial Trinidad. Sample some of the rioutous sentence constructions..

"The Pundit we looking for."

"I does read."

"It have man I want to see in oilfields."

Delightful, no?.

Add to that a motley crew of characters like Ramlogan,Ganesh's father-in-law ,who schemes to get him married off to his daughter and later tries to profit from Ganesh's meteoric rise; The great belcher,the elderly quintessential match-making relative who belches and burps like there was no tomorrow; Leela,Ganesh's wife who punctuates after every word;Suruj Mooma and Suruj Poopa,who motivate Ganesh to write his book and several others.

The first 100 odd pages were so funny that when i read that this was Naipaul's first book,i was in awe. He wrote this book when he was 25!!..However,I had to strain myself to finish the next 100 odd pages as the breezy,wry wit that was so abundant in the first 100 pages disappears without a trace.Despite the narrative being slightly disjointed after Ganesh becomes a Mystic,the book is hilarious.People who love self-deprecating wit,will love Mystic Masseur.The book is a glorious caricature of the people,the sounds and the sights of Trinidad.

Naipaul won the Nobel prize for Literature in 2001 and has scores of other prestigious awards in his kitty.For people who are starting out on Naipaul's books,Mystic masseur is highly recommended.As for me,i loved the book,despite the sagging,lack-lusture narrative after those 100 pages and am excited to start his third book,Miguel street.

Vikrant Rana says

Spoiler Alert

This is raw Naipaul much before the Indian trilogy, and before he polished all those edges of a genius. The book is about Providence, the meteoric rise of a teacher turned Masseur turned Mystic turned politician and finally into a brown English Sahib. This metamorphosis is fantastic, unapologetic except right at the very end, and destined. Good stuff!

Ero says

Wonderfully written, with a dickensian flair for satire. At the end however I was left with a bitter taste in my mouth-- it's clear that the author didn't really like any of his characters very much. No hope for redemption. Understanding without empathy-- just exceedingly skilled mockery. Sort of a disappointment. But as the craft of writing goes this is pretty exemplary.

Ben Thurley says

I liked, but didn't love, this slender satirical comedy of the rise and rise of Ganesh Rumasumair – failed school-teacher, incompetent masseur, perpetually dissatisfied family-man, and self educated pundit. Casting around for purpose and acclaim, he decides to write and publish a book (in fact a very slim pamphlet) on Hinduism. Despite the initial poor reception of his work, and through a series of unlikely events, he gains a reputation as a mystic and healer and eventually becomes an official in the colonial administration of Trinidad.

There are some genuinely funny moments, and the burgeoning commercial empire that accretes around Ganesh's career as a spiritual advisor, is a pointed dig at the cosiness of religion and capitalism. The politics and preoccupations of the Hindu-Indian community in Trinidad are robustly satirised, but I found the novel as a whole lacked a lightness of touch and little of the gorgeous sensuality of Naipaul's later writing.

Mala says

Sir Naipaul has such a formidable reputation, both as a scholarly writer & a curmudgeon that, readers/people are afraid to approach him(ask writer Paul Theroux!).

I feel lucky that I started my acquaintance with this writer through his first book, 'The Mystic Masseur' (1957) which is rather simple & approachable.

I think if you plan to read a writer's entire oeuvre then it's better to read them in a chronological order so as to enjoy more the gradual evolution of their worldview/artistic vision that inform & shape their work.

This work forms part of Naipaul's early Carribean novels yet it's about the Indian community in Trinidad (as most of his fiction is). You feel as if you are transported to some rural non-descript small town & village in

India! The dialogues among these people sometimes read like literal translation from Hindi! It adds to the realism but gets discomfiting at times. I don't know how a native speaker will handle it.

It's a simple tale, simply told, but with a liberal dose of irony & humour: the novel traces the life of Ganesh Ramsurnair, resident of a small town called Fourways, who receives an English education but fails as a teacher, attempts to follow his father's profession as a masseur but realises he is not cut out for it. All along, his one passion has been reading & collecting books & he aspires to be a writer. But success eludes him: explaining himself to his long-suffering wife, he says:

"Leela, is the thing. Everybody who want to write have to face. Poverty & sickness is what every writer have to suffer."

"But you ain't writing, man!"

Ganesh didn't reply."

He meets people who see 'an aura' & 'power' in him, they encourage him to write & ply him with more books.

Turns out all that reading & writing had not been in vain: it was a preparation for his true calling, that of a spiritual healer, the mystic masseur!

"we never are what we want to be," he wrote, "but what we must be."

An Indian dishing out spiritual mumbo-jumbo is as natural as a CPA crunching numbers! Of Course he becomes a Caribbean sensation. To be fair to him, he is not a fake like the others:

"His prestige was secured by his learning...Ganesh elevated the profession by putting the charlatans out of business...he could speak on almost any subject...he was no bigot...but more than his powers, learning or tolerance, people liked his charity."

With providence favouring him, Ganesh prospers, so do the people around him & his backward village of Fuente Grove.

With such popularity, entering politics is only the next logical step, only there's a pesky nemesis called Narayan in the vein of The Fountainhead's Ellsworth Toohey, albeit on a lower narrative scale.

But now Ganesh is a man of the world, he crushes all opposition & becomes MLC & then M.B.E., a pucca brown sahib! The novel ends on a brilliant, cynical note.

This novel is a slice of life: readers get to see the sacred thread ceremony for a Brahmin boy(a coming-of-age event like the Jewish Bar Mitzvah), an Indian funeral, then a wedding. Naipaul merrily caricatures the two latter events.

Pls don't believe that Indian husbands beat their wives on their wedding night— they beat them afterwards! Hee hee! Kidding.

See it in the context of the taming of the shrew. Of Course, Naipaul tells a lot in just a few lines about Indian sexuality: as chastity is prized, pre-marital sex is a big no no & permissiveness in general, is frowned upon. In such a scenario, youngsters get their carnal knowldge from equally clueless adults as is the case here.

One heartening thing esp. with reference to the Goodreads folks, is the supreme value placed on books in this novel: thus readers here with 2000+ books on their 'read' shelf, not only add heft to their profile but there is a good chance that, 'providence' smiling upon them, they might end up writing proper books.

Note to self: must add books, must add books.....

Greg says

Relativity strikes again! The only book I had read previously by this author was "House for Mr. Biswas"

which I thought very, very good and just slightly short of a five star rating (of which I am very stingy). My expectations, therefore, were much too high for "The Mystic Masseur". Granted, this is Naipaul's first book, and if I hadn't read "Biswas" my rating might be a bit higher. But to me, this does indeed feel like an early work of an author, particularly a number of intended jokes which just fall flat for me. If you haven't read Naipaul, start here and save "House for Mr. Biswas" for a few rainy, down days, periods we all have when we desperately need a literature lift: a "lili" if you will.
