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The Namesake: A Portrait of the Film

Jhumpa Lahiri, Mira Nair

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Jhumpa Lahiri, Mira Nair : The Namesake: A Portrait of the Film before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Namesake: A Portrait of the Film:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Lovely and thought provoking story By seminole Wasn't sure how I would like this book. Not my typical read. Our book club selected this book for the month. What a great choice . The characters are so well developed. There are times you want to tell some of the characters to snap out of it and be grateful for your family. The storyline is one that makes you see the world differently. Reflecting is how I feel. One part just tore me up. Enjoy 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Namesake-fabulous read author By P. Hawker Such a well written book with nice character development, good flow of the story and lovely family history. Interesting to see the play between characters and how their upbringing and culture played in their decisions. Liked how actions that were taken early in Gogol's life returned in the end to show him his paths. Thoroughly enjoyable read author. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A rose by any other name.... By AlexJouJouis still a Rose. And Gogol, by any other name, is still Gogol. Although it takes him quite some time to figure that out. I quite enjoyed this journey through one family's story. The gentle way time passed, the incredible amount of description provided that lets you really see and feel the environment and people, the daily wear of life. I would say this book is like a stream that meanders quietly down a path with a few bends along the way. It is not my usual genre (my books usually have blood or sizzle in them!) but I was gradually enchanted and persuaded to appreciate this due to the wonderful writing and the emotion I attached to the characters. I felt real pain when certain events happened - and a keen sense of disappointment and loss. I don't want to give the impression it is a depressing story - although it has enough realism to

keep it far out of the fantasy realm - yet the ups and downs of life happen as the characters go through school, jobs, friends. Enjoyable. Not a quick read for me surprisingly - I really paid attention to each word and took a few breaks to digest the story. It felt like that is the way I was supposed to read it - more of a casual sipping than a full fledged devouring. I will pick up more by this author!

Original essays and glorious photography, stunningly designed in this unique moviebook from the director of *Monsoon Wedding* and *Vanity Fair* Fox Searchlight release. In her essay "Writing and Film," the Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jhumpa Lahiri writes about the experience of seeing her novel "transposed" from paper to film. "Its essence remains, but it inhabits a different realm and must, like a transposed piece of music, conform to a different set of rules. . . . To have someone as devoted and as gifted as Mira reinvent my novel . . . has been a humbling and thrilling passage." Mira Nair's essay, "Photographs as Inspiration," begins with the provocative comment: "If it weren't for photography, I wouldn't be a filmmaker." She explains how photographs help her crystallize the visual style of her films and which particular photos influenced her vision for *The Namesake*. These two essays, written exclusively for this Newmarket Pictorial Moviebook, introduce an amazing panoply of images of people and places shot mainly in New York and Calcutta during the making of the movie, accented by excerpts from Lahiri's bestselling novel. Six Indian and American photographers' works are represented. Brilliantly illuminating the immigrant experience and the tangled ties between generations, *The Namesake* tells the story of the Ganguli family, whose move from Calcutta to New York evokes a lifelong balancing act to adapt to a new world while remembering the old. The couple's firstborn, Gogol, and sister Sonia grow up amid these divided loyalties, struggling to find their own identity without losing their heritage. Kal Penn (*Harold Kumar Go to White Castle*, *Superman Returns*) stars as Gogol.

.com Any talk of *The Namesake*--Jhumpa Lahiri's follow-up to her Pulitzer Prize-winning debut, *Interpreter of Maladies*--must begin with a name: Gogol Ganguli. Born to an Indian academic and his wife, Gogol is afflicted from birth with a name that is neither Indian nor American nor even really a first name at all. He is given the name by his father who, before he came to America to study at MIT, was almost killed in a train wreck in India. Rescuers caught sight of the volume of Nikolai Gogol's short stories that he held, and hauled him from the train. Ashoke gives his American-born son the name as a kind of placeholder, and the awkward thing sticks. Awkwardness is Gogol's birthright. He grows up a bright American boy, goes to Yale, has pretty girlfriends, becomes a successful architect, but like many second-generation immigrants, he can never quite find his place in the world. There's a lovely section where he dates a wealthy, cultured young Manhattan woman who lives with her charming parents. They fold Gogol into their easy, elegant life, but even here he can find no peace and he breaks off the relationship. His mother finally sets him up on a blind date with the daughter of a Bengali friend, and Gogol thinks he has found his match. Moushumi, like Gogol, is at odds with the Indian-American world she inhabits. She has found, however, a circuitous escape: "At Brown, her rebellion had been academic ... she'd pursued a double major in French. Immersing herself in a third language, a third culture, had been her refuge--she approached French, unlike things American or Indian, without guilt, or misgiving, or expectation of any kind." Lahiri documents these quiet rebellions and random longings with great sensitivity. There's no cleverness or showing-off in *The Namesake*, just beautifully confident storytelling. Gogol's story is neither comedy nor tragedy; it's simply that ordinary, hard-to-get-down-on-paper commodity: real life. --Claire Dederer
From Publishers Weekly
One of the most anticipated books of the year, Lahiri's first novel (after 1999's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Interpreter of Maladies*) amounts to less than the sum of its parts. Hopscotching across 25 years, it begins when newlyweds Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli emigrate to Cambridge, Mass., in 1968, where Ashima immediately gives birth to a son, Gogol--a pet name that becomes permanent when his formal name, traditionally bestowed by the maternal grandmother, is posted in a letter from India, but lost in transit. Ashoke becomes a professor of engineering, but Ashima has a harder time assimilating, unwilling to give up her ties to India. A leap ahead to the '80s finds the teenage Gogol ashamed of his Indian heritage and his unusual name, which he sheds as he moves on to college at Yale and graduate school at Columbia, legally changing it to Nikhil. In one of the most telling chapters, Gogol moves into the home of a family of wealthy Manhattan WASPs and is initiated into a lifestyle idealized in Ralph Lauren ads. Here, Lahiri demonstrates her considerable powers of perception and her ability to convey the discomfort of feeling "other" in a world many would aspire to inhabit. After the death of Gogol's father interrupts this interlude, Lahiri again jumps ahead a year, quickly moving Gogol into marriage, divorce and a role as a dutiful if a bit guilt-stricken son. This small summary demonstrates what is most flawed about the novel: jarring pacing that leaves too many emotional voids between chapters. Lahiri offers a number of beautiful and moving tableaux, but these fail to coalesce into something more than a modest family saga. By any other writer, this would be hailed as a promising debut, but it fails to clear the exceedingly high bar set by her previous work. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.
From School Library Journal
Adult/High School--A novel about assimilation and generational differences. Gogol is so named because his father believes that sitting up in a sleeping car reading Nikolai Gogol's "The Overcoat" saved him when the train he was on derailed and most passengers perished. After his arranged marriage, the man and his wife leave India for America, where he eventually becomes a professor. They adopt American ways, yet all of their friends are Bengalis.

But for young Gogol and his sister, Boston is home, and trips to Calcutta to visit relatives are voyages to a foreign land. He finds his strange name a constant irritant, and eventually he changes it to Nikhil. When he is a senior at Yale, his father finally tells him the story of his name. Moving to New York to work as an architect, he meets Maxine, his first real love, but they separate after his father dies. Later, his mother reintroduces him to a Bengali woman, and they fall in love and marry, but their union does not last. The tale comes full circle when the protagonist, home for a Bengali Christmas, rediscovers his father's gift of Gogol's short stories. This novel will attract not just teens of other cultures, but also readers struggling with the challenges of growing up and tugging at family ties. Molly Connally, Chantilly Regional Library, VA Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc.