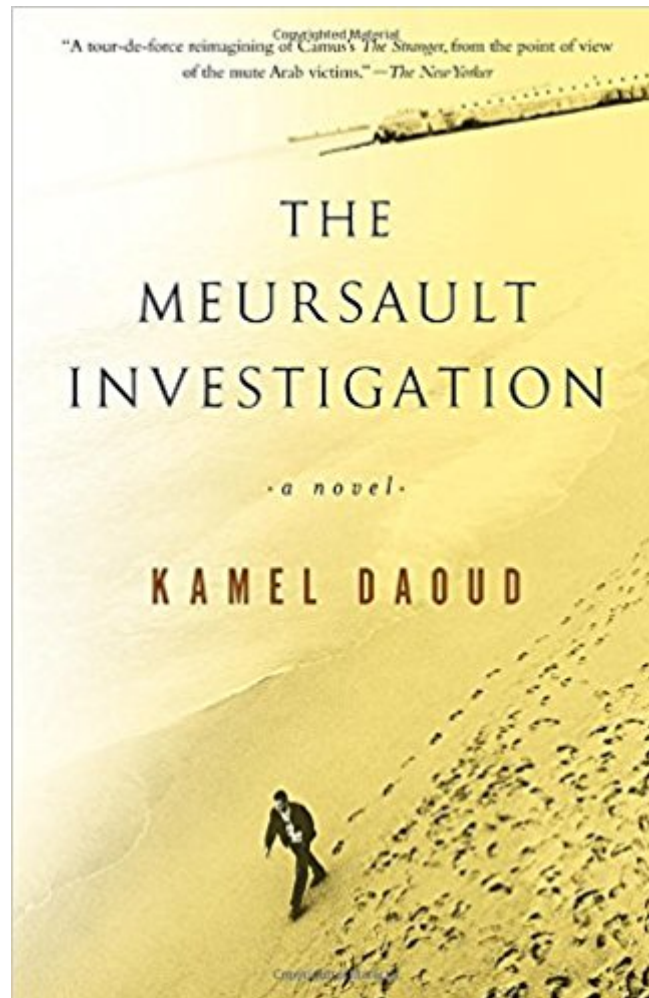


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The Meursault Investigation



Synopsis

A New York Times Notable Book of 2015 • Michiko Kakutani, The Top Books of 2015, New York Times • TIME Magazine Top Ten Books of 2015 • Publishers Weekly Best Books of the Year • Financial Times Best Books of the Year • A tour-de-force reimagining of Camus's The Stranger, from the point of view of the mute Arab victims. • The New Yorker He was the brother of the Arab • killed by the infamous Meursault, the antihero of Camus's classic novel. Seventy years after that event, Harun, who has lived since childhood in the shadow of his sibling's memory, refuses to let him remain anonymous: he gives his brother a story and a name "Musa" and describes the events that led to Musa's casual murder on a dazzlingly sunny beach. In a bar in Oran, night after night, he ruminates on his solitude, on his broken heart, on his anger with men desperate for a god, and on his disarray when faced with a country that has so disappointed him. A stranger among his own people, he wants to be granted, finally, the right to die. The Stranger is of course central to Daoud's story, in which he both endorses and criticizes one of the most famous novels in the world. A worthy complement to its great predecessor, The Meursault Investigation is not only a profound meditation on Arab identity and the disastrous effects of colonialism in Algeria, but also a stunning work of literature in its own right, told in a unique and affecting voice.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Albert Camus's "The Stranger" (in the Matthew Ward translation) begins: "Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe. I don't know." Kamel Daoud's "The Meursault Investigation" (in John Cullen's translation) begins: "Mama's still alive today. She doesn't say anything now, but there are many tales she could tell. Unlike me: I've rehashed this story in my head so often, I almost can't remember it anymore." Daoud is an Algerian journalist based in Oran, where he writes for Algeria's third-largest French-language newspaper. His novel is a tour-de-force, has won a number of prizes, is being translated around the world, and will be the basis of a 2017 film. Meursault is the name of Camus's narrator, a pied noir who seems to be without ambition, motivation, or inner life. When his boss in Algiers offers a bigger job, an opportunity to live in Paris and travel, he turns him down. "I said that people never change their lives, that in any case one life was as good as another and that I wasn't dissatisfied with mine here at all." That evening when Marie, the woman with whom he's been having sex, asks if he wants to marry her, "I said it didn't make any difference to me and that we could if she wanted to." In the middle of the book, almost carelessly, Meursault shoots an anonymous Arab on the beach, then fires four more bullets into his body. The Arab is a stranger, and Meursault feels no more remorse for the killing than love for Marie or enthusiasm for his job. Daoud's brilliant idea was to tell the story of the murder from the point of view of the dead Arab's brother, who was a child at the time. He's now an old man, sitting in an Oran bar, talking to an unidentified and silent interlocutor, hashing and rehashing the murder.

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