

# Must Reads for Economics Nerds

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Economics is a very demanding subject filled with theories, graphs and loads of math. If you love the subject despite this (or because of this), and need a change from your regular textbook, here are some pleasure reads to satisfy the economist in you.

1. *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* tops the list. The name probably gave it away already, but *Freakonomics* isn't your everyday dead-serious book. This product of a collaboration between University of Chicago economist Steven Levitt, and New York Times journalist Stephen J. Dubner asks all the unusual questions. Staying true to economics concepts, it considers the possible link between legalised abortion and a drop in crime rates, the economics of drug dealing, and when/why school teachers may cheat. Belonging to both Economics and Sociology, *Freakonomics* has met criticism due to its light nature and apparently inaccurate data, but it is undoubtedly an eye-opening and fun read.

2. *The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine* provides some unusual insight into events that every economics and finance enthusiast is familiar with – The US housing bubble, and the subsequent financial crisis of 2007. This non-fiction talks about a few, not very famous people from the financial world who actually predicted the bursting of this housing bubble. This may not be a fully comprehensive account of the events but it more or less explains what went on in those years of possibly avoidable crisis. The dark humour and criticism of the major players behind this

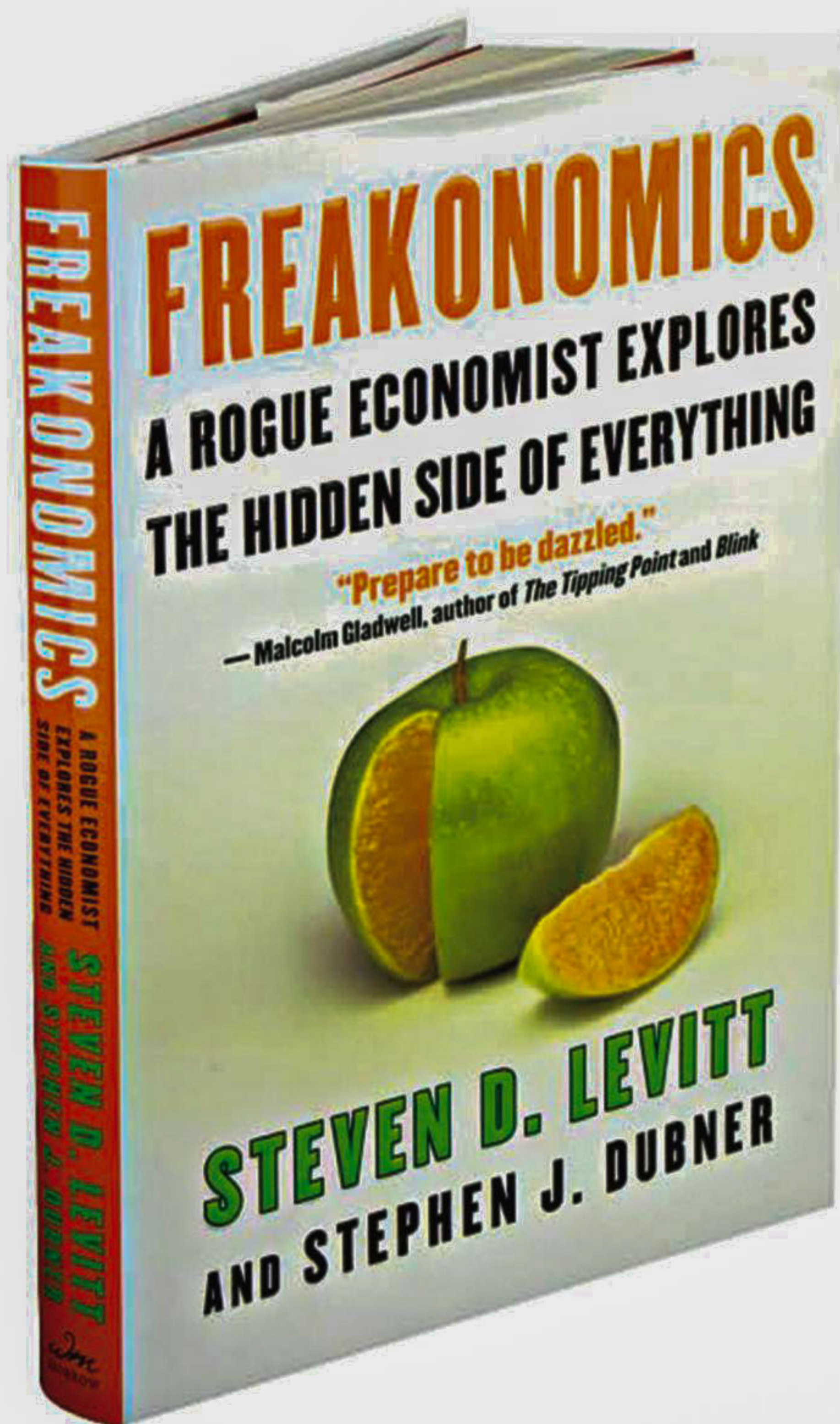
financial disaster that Michael Lewis uses in his writing, make it an interesting book.

3. *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* by Dan Ariely is a good place to start if you're into Behavioural Economics. This book looks deeper into the psychological and emotional factors that lie behind making decisions. It illustrates some interesting points such as why people may be keener on comparing things that are easily comparable, how consumers react to the idea of "free" products, and the reasons behind lack of self-control in people. Ariely brings into question the so-called rational human being and seeks to provide a more accurate model of rationality. By relying on examples, anecdotes, and fun experiments, Ariely will make you question yourself the next time you're making a decision.

4. *The Economic Naturalist: In Search of Explanations for Everyday Enigmas* is based on short and easy to read case studies from an assignment that writer Robert H. Frank gave his students in his economics classes at Cornell University. This book further feeds the notion that basic economics concepts can be used to answer some bizarre questions – Why does a \$500 tuxedo rent for \$90 a day while a \$20,000 car rents for only \$40? Why are whales, but not chickens, in danger of extinction?

These books may help you grasp some concepts better, and question others, but you will certainly learn some cool stuff.

Salma Mohammad Ali fears she is becoming a crazy cat lady and uses writing as a means to grasp on to sanity. Send her your views/hate/love at [fb.com/salma.ali209](https://fb.com/salma.ali209)



# The view up here ain't that great

SAMIN SABAH ISLAM

Being a 5' 6" girl in a country where the average height of women is 4' 1" is not as glamorous as it may seem.

*Jamai paowa jabe na*

At every *dawaat*, you'll have one very distant aunt or uncle distraught over finding a suitable groom of your altitude. Indeed *fupi*, I'll stop growing taller. In fact, let me just throw myself into a dryer and hope to come back a couple of inches shorter by tomorrow, because apparently I'm a sweater who can do that!

*Betrayal of clothes*

Every outfit is an awkward size that kills its style. In lazy days, you'd want to wear a maxi dress to avoid shaving your legs. Yet instead of being floor-touching like maxi dresses oath to be, they hang above and keep a generous portion of your hairy ankles exposed. For once it'd be nice to find regular jeans that aren't Capri pants. Every t-shirt in the women's section turn into a crop top your mother frowns upon, and you'll be resorting to the men's section in pursuit of proper-fitting cloths. Then you'd be hearing, "Apu, female section-ta right e". I know, Miss Shop-assistant, I know.

*The headless horseman*

Ah, gotta cherish the times you feel like the headless horseman because any part of your physique above the neck will not

make the group picture. If you are determined to flash your new haircut in said picture, enjoy doing that awkward knee bend. Your mounting height brands you as the official selfie-taker. For once it'd nice to be in the back and not have my face look

fatter, thanks.

*The space issue*

Nobody fears long journeys like tall people do because stuffing yourself in the car space that isn't made for your size is an ordeal of the most gruesome kind.



Those discriminating car/bus/aeroplane seat manufacturers are probably to be blamed for your awful back pain.

*Age misconceptions*

To wear a saree or not to wear a saree, that is the question. It's not rare for some aunty at the wedding to approach you asking, "Kon year e poro ma?" And you're with your biryani stuffed mouth like, "Sixth grade". Tall girls receive proposals from 30 year-old men from the age of 15, because some distant relative saw them clad in a saree at their *mama's holud* and got the wrong idea.

*Answering absurd questions*

Yes I really am that tall. No, I don't play basketball. Whether my parents are tall or not, my genealogy is none of your business. Yes I will get that hard-to-reach cookie jar for you. Oh I get clothes from this top-secret highly confidential place called the mall. Yes I will take little steps so you can catch up. The weather up here is the same as it is a foot below, reeking of your annoyingness.

After a long day of dealing with all those inches you just want to go home and take a long hot bath. Then you figure the bathtub isn't big enough to fit you and your legs awkwardly hang out. The struggle doesn't end.

Samin Sabah Islam is on a quest to find the perfect diet while simultaneously drooling over pizza. Throw her some tips at [sabahsamin11@gmail.com](mailto:sabahsamin11@gmail.com)