



Of secrets and Greek culture

SHAH TAZRIAN ASHRAFI

"It's a very Greek idea, and a very profound one. Beauty is terror. Whatever we call beautiful, we quiver before it."

Donna Tartt's love for Greek culture is reflected in her bestselling debut novel, "The Secret History".

In a Vermont-based fictitious, elite college, Richard Papen befriends an exclusive group of students who study ancient Greek. The professor, Julian Morrow, is a strict person who enrolls only a handpicked few in this course, and Richard manages to be a part of it. The group of five (other than Richard) is far different from the ordinary. From their way of thinking to how they lead their lives, everything is unconventional and of course, Greek-y.

In this regard, Henry should be called the oddest one. He holds a very calm attitude, which is very confusing to those who try to observe him, even Richard. Henry's basically the group's leader. As Richard slowly gains popularity in the group despite being a new addition, he stumbles across the group's obsession with Greek culture, practices of odd rituals, and many secrets that turn his life around.

The novel begins with a prologue to Bunny's death, who is apparently the most annoying one in the circle. It is very obvious who the killer is, so the readers aren't left in any sort of suspense about that. Mainly, the reason behind his murder and the consequences snatch the readers' attention. Told from the perspective of Richard, we get to follow the events with additional branches that ultimately lead to the scene that's narrated in the Prologue.

Despite the progression being

slow, I loved how Tartt built the story and then presented the aftermath. There is a lack of suspense in the first part, which might be boring to many of the readers. But as the story develops and secrets reveal, the atmosphere gets tensed. There are many reasons that lead to the murder and within those, many other come to light. Hence, to connect all the pieces together, the slow approach adopted by the author was fairly necessary. Her writing style made the "slow progression" kind of bearable for me.

I fell in love with the characters here, despite how odd they were. In their own sense, the characters are properly portrayed, and it's not like you don't get enough of them here. Every character in this book forms an important part and leaves an impression on the reader. For example, I disliked Bunny, admired Henry and Julian's personalities, and felt comfortable with Richard's POV, who is preferably the sanest one in the group. There are some recurring characters too who aren't introduced at first but show up in the other half of the book.

The Secret History is a very difficult book. It tired me at times and I had mixed feelings about it. However, I fell in love with the book after completing it. If you're planning to give it a shot, read it carefully and bear its pace since it's very important and makes sense once the pieces of the puzzle form a clear picture. All in all, this novel is something you shouldn't miss out if you're up for an intense read.

Shah Tazrian Ashrafi wants 2018 to be as smooth as stormtroopers missing easy kill shots. Send him prayers at tazrian1234@gmail.com

NARCISSISTIC TRAITS WE'VE ALL SEEN

WASIQUE HASAN

Self-love is important. However, like any good thing, too much of it is bad. If you've gone over to the dark side of self-love, then you will be able to relate to most of the points made in this article. I apologize for any and all rude awakenings, but you should really tone it down a notch and recall that the universe does not revolve around you.

VANITY FAIR

This is the name of the only magazine worthy of posting pictures of such humble people. Since they're God's gift to mankind, they can't be anything less than absolute perfection. This is why they'll have at least three mirrors in their room, to better appreciate the masterpiece that is them.

You'll often find them coming up to you at a gathering and telling you to take a picture of the two of you, with your phone. Because how could they be troubled to get their phone out for a plebeian like you?

YOU? I THINK YOU MEAN ME

Ah, who doesn't love it when people butt into conversations not involving them and take the spotlight? Protest all you want, but the effort is futile. You can take the attention away from the narcissist, but you can't keep the narcissist away from the attention. No situation is safe from the blight of the narcissist.

Got an A in an exam? "Oh, I got an A+ ha-ha. It was such an easy test."

Sang a song well? "I had a cold, you know. Otherwise I could have performed really well too."

Your grandmother passed away? "My cousin's friend's little brother's pet ostrich died too, man."

ANY PUBLICITY IS GOOD PUBLICITY

Getting recognised is very important to

a narcissist. It doesn't matter how that recognition comes. This means nothing you say will faze them, because you're just a hater. As a result, they remain blissfully unaware of their flaws because criticism, constructive or otherwise, bounces right off them. If you say they sell their soul for attention, they'll make the flawless rebuttal that you're just jealous of their success. Not to mention how they'll share cringe-worthy quotes about how you know you're doing something right if people dislike you.

Newsflash: Maybe, just maybe, there's a reason so many people dislike you. A little introspection never hurt anyone.

WHO NEEDS FRIENDS WHEN YOU CAN HAVE FOLLOWERS

Narcissists do have friends. However, these friends are faker than your average WWE fight. That's because most narcissists don't have it in them to stomach opinions different from their own, because they're always right. Good friends are ones you can disagree with, and tell them things they'll disagree with. If you don't have that, then are these friends really any better than groupies to the imaginary rock star that is you? Eventually the only "friends" you keep say exactly what you want to hear, thus reinforcing your biases and views.

At the end of the day, we're all guilty of harbouring some of these narcissistic traits. I know I am. That's okay, however. What really matters is if we can admit this to ourselves and work on fixing these, little by little. Working on self-improvement is true self-love, never forget that.

With a heart of ash and a PC of potato, Wasique Hasan could use some help. Send memes to cheer him up at facebook.com/hasique.wasan

