



Thought-provoking . . .
beautifully paced, by turns
moving, sexy, and disturbing.
— *Washington Post Book World*

PAUL
THEROUX
THE
ELEPHANTA
SUITE

The Elephanta Suite by Paul Theroux

Paul Theroux

This startling, far-reaching booklet captures the tumult, ambition, hardship, and serenity that mark today's India. Theroux's Westerners chance venturing a ways past the subcontinent's well-worn paths to find woe or fact or peace. A middle-aged couple on holiday veers heedlessly from idyll to chaos. A buttoned-up Boston attorney unearths succor in Mumbai's reeking slums. And a tender lady befriends an elephant in Bangalore. We additionally meet Indian characters as singular as they're reflective of the country's refined ironies: an government who yearns to develop into a holy beggar, an earnest striver whose character is rewired by way of buying an American accent, a miracle-working guru, and others. As ever, Theroux's pix of individuals and areas explode stereotypes to exhilarating effect. The Elephanta Suite is a welcome The Elephanta Suite reward to readers of overseas fiction and fanatics of this remarkable writer.

Dissecting India with discommoding successUnqualified compliment is yet one reaction to any paintings through grasp stylist Paul Theroux for he's in a position to provoke, infuriate, annoy, anger, rile, stimulate and finally convince with equivalent facility.His newest book, "The Elephanta Suite" units out to slice via myriad and intricate cultural layers that make up India. He does it with discommoding success. brain you, loads of what he says approximately India via his protagonists will be construed as an unabashed try and bring up the reader's heckles. within the end, one isn't even certain no matter if he loves India or despises it. yet that's the entire aspect of the book. it's most unlikely to distil India right down to a neat and intellectually edifying formulation. Theroux methods India as a mature grownup who doesn't think in losing time on politeness as a tool to strike up a brief but shallow dating with an historical and baffling civilization. He treats India, at any cost India because it is now, as a strong civilization that may take many hits from a rancid critic within the correct spirit with out wasting its inherent greatness.With this slender quantity of 3 novellas Theroux proves over again his unremitting brilliance as a contriver of exceptional prose. He writes with incisive abilities rarely, if ever, noticeable in a Western author approximately India. He makes use of language either as a surgeon's scalpel and a blacksmith's sledgehammer. One can't get away the sensation that the underlying emotion surviving after his protagonists are scarred by way of their encounters with India is profound unhappiness. Be it the deeply unresolved couple, Beth and Audie Blunden, deeply unhappy "lawyer and moneyman" Dwight Huntsinger or deeply distressed visitor Alice, all of them stumble upon as essentially unsatisfied souls who're within the kingdom by means of selection or in a different way looking for anything remodeling basically to be swindled by means of the artful modern/ancient India.It is straight away visible to the reader that Theroux is an astute observer. correct from whatever as trivial as utilizing many alternative Indian names during this 274-page booklet to the extra advanced social and cultural undercurrents of a society pulled in contradictory instructions via its heritage and its modernity Theroux will get the main points right. now not that i've got learn greatly yet i'm keen to stay my neck out, and maybe make a idiot of myself, and say that he's The Elephanta Suite the 1st Western author to have grasped modern/ancient India so well.In a selected passage within the final novella "The Elephant God" he writes: "Now 'utterance' used to be a type of words, like 'miscreants', 'audacious', 'thrice', 'ample' and 'jocundity' that a few Indians utilized in

informal dialog and Indian writers utilized in sentences, within the similar means out the window the Indian farmers have been utilizing vintage sharp-nosed hand plows pulled by means of yoked oxen and girls carried water jars on their heads. India was once a rustic of usable antiques." The final line is especially arresting. Theroux, who's primarily an anthropological traveler, creates the Blundens, Huntsinger and Alice as consultant standard americans and units them up opposed to Indian characters reminiscent of Anna Hunphunwoshi, Dr. Nagraj, Mr. Shah, Sumitra and Amitabh. Deep down, those characters are simply cultural manifestations of the 2 international locations whose coming jointly The Elephanta Suite unavoidably explanations conflict. it isn't transparent even if Theroux's humans have come to India in particular looking for whatever spiritually ennobling or at least anything culturally challenging. or maybe they're utilizing India to straighten their very own lives. However, for all his significant characters the India event does become enormously unsettling. For instance, the tale of Dwight Huntsinger, a stuck-up Boston legal professional snapping up enterprise offers in Mumbai while he detests the city, and the way he comes unstuck while someday he discovers the dirty and manipulative underbelly of the city. rather than stepping again and checking himself in time, Dwight is going the entire manner looking for hidden sexual pleasures within the musty lanes close to his 5 superstar hotel. Theroux does a great activity of juxtaposing how cultural interactions can impact general people—an American in India and an Indian in America. The Indian in the United States being Shah, a fastidious felony brain aiding Dwight in vetting company contracts with Indian manufacturers, who after his maiden stopover at to the united states returns having shed his unctuousness bordering at the servility and develop into annoyingly self-assured. This topic of cultural transposition recurs within the final tale approximately Alice. whilst she first meets Amitabh on board a teach he comes throughout as a person obsequious, even deferential albeit importuning. Later within the tale after Alice has taught him and others American English and its nuances as a part of name middle education Bangalore, Amitabh turns into "American" in his language and attitude, rather like american citizens that Alice was once used to. Theroux makes many possible incidental yet damning observations approximately India and Indians in the course of the novellas. pattern this one: "The miracle to them used to be that India was once now not a rustic yet a creature, like a immense physique crawling with smaller creatures, pestilential with people—a immense awful being, occasionally offended and loud, occasionally passive and stinking, regularly hostile, even dangerous. And one other miracle used to be that they'd chanced on a distant a part of it that used to be safe." In one other position he writes: "If India had a human face, it used to be The Elephanta Suite be that of a hungry thin girl, starved of love, famished for money." Theroux additionally turns a disapproving eye on novelists, either local Indian and expatriate, and indicates they generally current a romanticized view of the country. In contrast, the writer offers an India shorn of all its exotica. In doing so he frequently cuts it too with reference to the bone. within the final novella he writes: "Indian novels she'd learn within the States had no longer ready her for what she observed here. the place have been the massive fruitful households from those novels? the place have been the jokes, the affection affairs, the lavish marriage ceremonies, The Elephanta Suite the solemn pieties, the virtuous peasants, the environmentalists, the musicians, the magic, the believable younger men? They appeared concocted to her now, and besieged in up-close India, all she considered used to be Hieronymus Bosch, turtle-faced crones, The Elephanta Suite stumpy men, deformed children." I might be thoroughly off the objective the following however the overarching experience I obtained whereas interpreting the e-book was once that each personality represented a few

point of the writer himself. Even in Sumitra, the conniving streetwalker, i couldn't support seeing lines of Theroux. Overall, "The Elephanta Suite" is a strong instance of the way evocative language can develop into within the fingers of a master. One could disagree with a lot of his cultural assertions or even be indignant by means of them, yet i myself learn books for his or her language first and narrative second. On that ranking Theroux is surely outstanding.

The Elephanta Suite

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