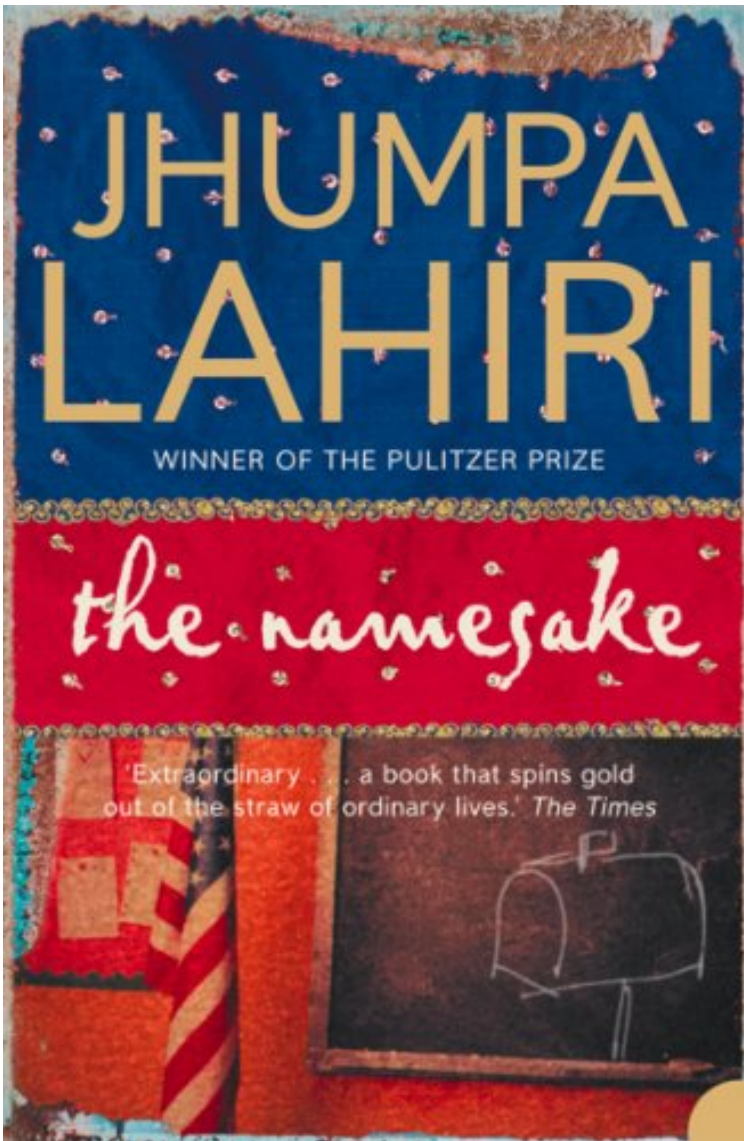


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The Namesake



Par Jhumpa Lahiri
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThe Namesake is the story of a boy brought up Indian in America.'When her grandmother learned of Ashima's pregnancy, she was particularly thrilled at the prospect of naming the family's first sahib. And so Ashima and Ashoke have agreed to put off the decision of what to name the baby until a letter comes'For now, the label on his hospital cot reads simply BABY BOY GANGULI. But as time passes and still no letter arrives from India, American bureaucracy takes over and demands that 'baby boy Ganguli' be given a name. In a panic, his father decides to nickname him 'Gogol' after his favourite writer.Brought up as an Indian in suburban America, Gogol Ganguli soon finds himself itching to cast off his awkward name, just as he longs to leave behind the inherited values of his Bengali parents. And so he sets off on his own path through life, a path strewn with conflicting loyalties, love and lossSpanning three

decades and crossing continents, Jhumpa Lahiri's much-anticipated first novel is a triumph of humane storytelling. Elegant, subtle and moving, *The Namesake* is for everyone who loved the clarity, sympathy and grace of Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize-winning debut story collection, *Interpreter of Maladies*. 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

This recording features a spare, elegant reading by Choudhury of a story about identity, cultural assimilation and the burden of the past. Ashoke and Ashima Ganguli move from Calcutta to Cambridge, Mass., where they have a son who ends up being tagged with the strange name of Gogol. How he gets the name serves as an important theme as he deals with it and his heritage. The fact that Choudhury herself is half Indian aids her narration, as characters with that country's accent abound here. But much more important to this project is her lovely, mellifluous voice and even tone, which complements the text's own lush imagery. Perhaps owing to her English pronunciation, she is also adept at putting a polished spin on the voices of the upper-crust Manhattanites with whom Gogol becomes intertwined for a while. With such an excellent narrator, the recording neither needs nor includes much in the way of musical embellishment. The book itself makes several jumps in time and occasionally seems disjointed, but this production is a treat for the sheer combination of Lahiri's striking, often enchanting descriptions and Choudhury's graceful rendering of them. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.