



The Sly Company of People Who Care: A Novel

By Rahul Bhattacharya

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The Sly Company of People Who Care: A Novel By Rahul Bhattacharya

In flight from the tame familiarity of home in Bombay, a twenty-six-year-old cricket journalist chuck's his job and arrives in Guyana, a forgotten colonial society of raw, mesmerizing beauty. Amid beautiful, decaying wooden houses in Georgetown, on coastal sugarcane plantations, and in the dark rainforest interior scavenged by diamond hunters, he grows absorbed with the fantastic possibilities of this new place where descendants of the enslaved and indentured have made a new world. Ultimately, to fulfill his purpose, he prepares to mount an adventure of his own. His journey takes him beyond Guyanese borders, and his companion will be the feisty, wild-haired Jan.

In this dazzling novel, propelled by a singularly forceful voice, Rahul Bhattacharya captures the heady adventures of travel, the overheated restlessness of youth, and the paradoxes of searching for life's meaning in the escape from home.

The Sly Company of People Who Care is the winner of the 2012 Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje Prize.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. The narrator of this debut, an Indian national, is a 22-year-old cricket reporter who has left Bombay to explore Guyana's exotic landscape and people ("Guyana was elemental, water and earth, mud and fruit, race and crime, innocent and full of scoundrels"), many of whom he befriends. In vigorous yet lyrical prose employing a pungent vernacular, Bhattacharya describes Guyana's horrid heat and thunderous rain in sensuous detail: the pretentious, decaying buildings of its capital, the unbearable humidity that settles on the men who go "porknocking," or searching for diamonds in the muddy soil. Violence breaks out easily during nights of drinking, yet people care about strangers. The narrator falls for a seductive young woman, but their first trip together—to Venezuela—veers from romance to threat when he re-enters Guyana without papers. In fact, a dark undercurrent of dread haunts the novel, and what begins as a desultory adventure story delivers the shock of multiple betrayals. Bhattacharya's distinctive voice, which incorporates both Guyanese and Indian dialects, results in an authentic and sybaritic tale. (May)

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Review

"Rivers and waterfalls flow through the mesmerising narrative of this beguiling debut novel. . . The story powerfully juxtaposes joy with horror. Nature is majestically described, and Bhattacharya skilfully sketches the interactions between humans and a bewilderingly beautiful landscape . . . Bhattacharya displays an artful handling of his own narrative. The tributaries of stories open up into the main swell of narrative. The greatest joy is in the novel's unexpected twists and turns, so the reader shares the narrator's wonder at the flash of toucan, the sudden glint of a river, or a floating blue butterfly."—Anita Sethi, *The Independent*

"To follow in the footsteps of the likes of Naipaul is a daunting journey, but Bhattacharya, in his first novel, has shown a talent reminiscent of the early works of that great pioneer."—David Dabydeen, *The Guardian*

"Bhattacharya's gift for reproducing the rhythms and intricacies of his characters' speech...places him in the company of Mark Twain. He understands the world by listening to it."—*The New Yorker*

"*The Sly Company of People Who Care* is a travel novel that reads like award-winning journalism . . . From the novel's very first line, we know we're in the care of a narrator unmatched in his lyricism and sensitivity."—Alice Gregory, *The Boston Globe*

"This ferociously gifted writer has already been hailed as the natural successor to the great Naipaul – and yes, he is that good. His narrator has a charming, confident voice that engages instantly and his descriptions of landscapes and people are ravishing."—*The Times* (UK)

"[*The Sly Company of People Who Care*]'s heart lies in the exuberant and often arresting observations of a man plunging himself a world full of beauty, violence and cultural strife. It's impossible, reading Bhattacharya, not to be reminded of V.S. Naipaul." — Dinaw Mengestu, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Bhattacharya's understanding of displacement and drifting comes from a completely original place, and he has all of the humour and the sharpness of the young Naipaul, with none of the spleen. This book, and this writer, are here to last." —*India Today*

“In vigorous yet lyrical prose employing a pungent vernacular, Bhattacharya describes Guyana's horrid heat and thunderous rain in sensuous detail. . . Bhattacharya's distinctive voice, which incorporates both Guyanese and Indian dialects, results in an authentic and sybaritic tale.” — *Publishers Weekly* (starred)

“Words as musical notes, a book as symphony. . . An exotic locale and lyrical language make for a dazzling debut.” — *Kirkus Reviews* (starred)

“[*The Sly Company of People Who Care*] is a lovingly delicate study of Guyanese culture, in which Bhattacharya captures the restlessness of youth, the yearning for new experiences, and the driving need of travelers to go beyond their own internal borders.” — *Booklist*

“An exceptional first novel, which leaves the reader to decide where facts lie and fiction rings true. . . A madcap cast of original characters abound. . . Their explicit, rum-infused patois, more potent than V.S. Naipaul's Caribbean-speak, is addictive. . . It is certainly the best first novel by an Indian I have read in a long time.” — *Outlook India*

“What a voice, what a startling, funny, charming, provocative voice! Rahul Bhattacharya's narrator is a true wanderer and a gifted poet of description. The journey he takes us on, through Guyana, through histories and selves, is a wonder.” — Sam Lipsyte, author of *The Ask*

About the Author

Born in 1979, **Rahul Bhattacharya** is the author of the cricket-tour book *Pundits from Pakistan*, which was voted one of the Ten Best Cricket Books of all time in *The Wisden Cricketer* (London). He lives in Delhi, India. This is his first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Corey Gardner:

As people who live in often the modest era should be up-date about what going on or details even knowledge to make these keep up with the era that is always change and progress. Some of you maybe will update themselves by reading books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to a person is you don't know what kind you should start with. This *The Sly Company of People Who Care: A Novel* is our recommendation to help you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and wish in this era.

Laura Crabtree:

Nowadays reading books be a little more than want or need but also be a life style. This reading habit give you lot of advantages. Associate programs you got of course the knowledge the particular information inside

the book that will improve your knowledge and information. The info you get based on what kind of guide you read, if you want drive more knowledge just go with education books but if you want really feel happy read one together with theme for entertaining for example comic or novel. The particular The Sly Company of People Who Care: A Novel is kind of publication which is giving the reader unpredictable experience.

Shirley Williams:

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