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Baps, a Jamaican shopkeeper, drops dead unexpectedly one Saturday morning and finds himself being transported to heaven via a crowded minibus. To enter heaven, he discovers that he must crawl through a culvert in a canefield. Everything about paradise that he had been raised to expect and believe, he finds to be utterly and completely wrong.

The Duppy Details

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From Reader Review *The Duppy* for online ebook

Ivy H says

This is one of the funniest books I've read in years ! It is very satirical and some would say politically incorrect, but the author manages to use his satire, caricature and bawdy humour to present a very real condemnatory image of not just Jamaica, but the rest of world and human kind. Winkler tackles politics, social issues and even the cultural habits of his fellow Jamaicans. It is a festival of laughs from the time Baps drops dead and becomes a "duppy" (ghost) to his ignominious journey to the muddy culvert that is the portal between Jamaica and Heaven. I laughed a lot when Baps was astonished to hear that unlike Jamaicans, the Americans have an automated portal system that takes their dead souls to heaven. It seems that even in the after life the Americans have managed to create a more efficient system. Lol. Baps is a guy who, while he was alive, tried to implement his brand of discipline on the rowdy, unruly and uncivilized fellow Jamaicans who came to buy things from his shop. Baps has a rather unique philosophy of business. Baps' main concern in Heaven (aside from getting a lot of generous "grinding" and "pum pum" from fat women) was " how to run a respectable shop that exerted rulership and discipline over ole negar." The first was easy because "none shall lack pum pum in Heaven." The second was tricky for Baps because the shop's customers were unruly and refused to adhere to his disciplinary standards of behaviour. Bap wants to teach Hector how to run the shop but the latter is confused and asks:

"Discipline sah?" He seemed stunned at this far reaching concept of shop keeping. "We not just out to sell salt fish and flour ?"

"On one level we selling salt fish and flour. But on anodder level we ruling ole negar."

What's even funnier is that Hector has no interest in Baps' desire to implement disciplinary standards for customers. Hector just wants to fill out a form so he can go on the list that will get him a huge "hood" (penis).

Then there's this philosopher in Heaven who does nothing literally because he spends all his time thinking (living inside his head) and accusing others of trying to get inside his thoughts and warp them. Winkler portrays the American Heaven as being very politically correct: all its officials have huge white wings and their best friends are sheep. The sheep serve a dual purpose: the first is the obvious Biblical symbolism of the animal itself and the second is the fact that sheep are known to be followers. I really laughed at that not so big hint by Winkler that the best friends of the American government are those that tend to follow where they lead. When one thinks that Winkler published this in 1996/7, he was probably writing it during the late years of the Bush (senior) administration and the early years of Clinton's first years in office. A little research into American Foreign Policy during Mr. Bush's administration will perhaps explain why Winkler takes this stance in this novel.

The Americans are even mad at God and have taken out a Federal warrant for his arrest because he hasn't listened to them and created a Hell. And God is portrayed as a "peenywally" (firefly) although he later takes the form of a man as he and Baps make a trip to the American heaven.

What a wonderfully comic and entertaining novel ! I could write a treatise on this novel but it is better if one reads it and experiences all the funny things first hand. It is books like these that remind me why I love analyzing literature so much. Winkler is very skilled at using satire to explore socio-political and economic issues that bothered him. He is as cutting in his mockery of his own Jamaican political system as he is of the then U.S. administration. Religion as an institution also gets a bit of attention in this novel. The writer uses the first person narrative technique and this truly allows the reader to be with Baps and experience all his

pitfalls and jubilation as he navigates his way through the wonders of Heaven. In the final analysis, Heaven ends up being different things to different people.

Kerry says

Winkler is a fantastic story-teller who captures the everyday vicissitudes of Jamaican culture with a unique vividness. This story was chock full of local vernacular and references which were delightful to read and downright hilarious!

I gave three stars because, whilst I found the story to be unique, funny and interesting, it was all too fantastical for me. Also, as someone who is non-religious, the overwhelming religiosity of the story (albeit 'progressive' and unorthodox) caused me to lose interest in the story after a while.

Very funny. Very interesting. VERY fantastical. Won't read again.

Denise says

Totally Jamaican classic comedy with a twist of controversy. It touches on religion, social casting, inhibitions, and boils them down in a cultural stew of Jamaican patois, beliefs and every day life.

Stop says

Read the STOP SMILING review of *The Duppy*:

Anthony C. Winkler's *The Duppy* is the most laugh-out-loud funny novel I've read in years. Chronicling the death and afterlife of Taddeus Baps, Jamaican shopkeeper cum "duppy" — island slang for soul or ghost — the book blends postmodern metafiction with folklorist regionalism in a raucous contemporary satire of the wages of sin.

Read the complete STOP SMILING review...

T says

This book was more philosophical than I expected it to be, with profound insight buried within sarcastic comments and outrageous events. This work of speculative fiction speaks about the spiritual condition of humans and how much we invest in suffering as a way to enforce 'justice'. It attempts to show how our 'shoulds' keep us from enjoying what is. I finished this book feeling like there was a tremendous amount being communicated by the author within its brief pages, and I felt certain that this book was a cultural critique of contemporary society.

Simone says

Nonsense.

Alana says

"One Saturday morning, not very long ago, I dropped dead and turned into a duppy." Definitely unconventional!

Rochelle says

hysterical. a definite re-read

Melanie R says

Love it. Possibly my absolute favourite. this book always makes me laugh and keeps me grounded.

Thank you so very much Mr. Winkler. Life would be so much simple if everyone recognised God and humanity like this!

Melody says

3.5 stars - Definitely worth a chuckle or two (or ten).

Judging by the number of reader reviews on GR, Winkler isn't especially well-known outside of his native Jamaica. Perhaps that is due to the very region-specific sense of humor that he employs in his work, but even those relatively unfamiliar with Caribbean culture and patois will appreciate the biting satire of this book. It's bawdy and often inappropriate, but it also captures a very specific type of character that is nonetheless rather charming in his ridiculousness. It's surprisingly hard to resist a story where a sexist, elitist blowhard becomes God's best friend and leads him to all sorts of shenanigans in myriad, ever more ridiculous versions of heaven (there is, after all, no such thing as hell). Mr. Baps is hardly Dante, and his misadventures far less profound, but one can't help learning just a little bit of *something* about the human condition by the end of the book.

If nothing else, I'd have to thank Winkler (I think) for adding the words "pum-pum" and "hood" to my vocabulary...

Stacia says

A duppy [ghost] relates ribald & amusing anecdotes of Jamaican heaven.

The Duppy is an entertaining, quick read, imo. I read another of Winkler's books (The Lunatic) a couple of years ago & quite enjoyed it. His books do seem to make the most Jamaican patois, raunchy humor, & outlook on life. Looking at Winkler's books on the Akashic Books site, it looks like ebook versions (nook, ibook, kobo, kindle) of his books are just \$2.99 for the month of February (2015).

It's kind of interesting because a year or two ago, I read Sweet Dreams by Michael Frayn, another book about heaven/the afterlife. In Sweet Dreams, God is an unassuming Englishman & it was just a lovely, humorous, charming, understated book. The Duppy is similar, with an overall happy vibe, but more of the laid-back, go with the flow, raucous atmosphere one might expect in Jamaica. They might make a fun duo of books to read together.

Rattyfleef says

This book is rated J for Jamaican. Foreigners are advised to have a West Indian on hand to translate.

Not for true. Most terms can be inferred from context. This was hilarious and rather sweet. Recommended. There's no plot as such, or rather it follows the old Man Vs Himself personal journey (y halo there secondary school lit). Tension comes from how dense Baps is and how it takes him so long to clue in. A quick read, I enjoyed it and it will be making the rounds through my relatives and friends who are in my basic area.

Features lots of swearing and offcamera sex, for those who have never read a Winkler book before.

Marvin says

"One Saturday morning, not very long ago, I dropped dead and turned into a duppy" [that is, a sort of Jamaican ghost]. Thus begins The Duppy. The rest relates Taddeus Augustus Baps's experiences in Jamaican heaven, with a side trip along with God and a doubting philosopher to the American heaven. The Jamaican heaven is sort of a glorified Jamaica, where everything makes one happy--including beatings & getting run over by a bus--and a person has all the sex one wants . . . and more. The other key factor is that there is no hell; everyone goes to heaven. This, of course, does not sit well with the Americans. In their sharply contrasting heaven, residents in white robes sit on clouds playing harps while sheep safely graze nearby. But they're upset with God about the absence of hell. "I met a gentleman from Chicago and he explained to me that without a hell, there was no point in heaven. He told me that on earth he had been a loyal Republican, a taxpayer, a war veteran, and if he had known that he would die and go to Democrat heaven, he would have killed himself. I asked him what difference killing himself would have made, and he said that suicides went immediately back to earth, taking the shape of the first available body--whether human, worm, animal, or bug. He was quite bitter and said that even if he had recycled back to earth as a dog and ended up in a Chinyman's stew pot, it would still have been better than to find himself in a nasty Democrat heaven where thrifty wage-earners had to enjoy the same pleasures as hardened gas-guzzlers and crooks. I asked him why he kept calling it a Democrat heaven and he growled and said because it was just the kind of heaven a pork-barrel Democrat hog would think up: freeness everywhere; compulsory laughter and joy; no struggle or pain.

He said that in Republican heaven every man would have a different size cloud depending on his own initiative and sweat. None of this ugly standardization of cloud, sheep, and harp. If a soul worked hard, he would earn a bigger cloud, louder harp, fatter sheep. If he was idle and good-for-nothing, he would end up on a mash-up cloud with only scrawny sheep for company. And if he didn't make his monthly payments, the bank would repossess his cloud and pitch him out on the street.

'You can't have homeless man in heaven!' I objected.

'Why not?' he growled.

'Because de man is dead. Him reach heaven!'

'That's just a technicality,' he snapped. Then he added, 'Maybe God isn't moral, but America is!'" (115-16)

I read this passage on election night, which added to the amusement.

Later, when Baps is making his own complaints to God about aspects of creation, God (who has become his close friend) urges him to try his hand to see if he could do better. At first he resists, but eventually he starts "writing down my ideas for a better world in an exercise book.

This was hard work. The world is not as easy to create as it looks. But I had in mind certain improvements I would immediately make in my creation.

First and foremost, I would create a fart-free woman. I don't care what anybody say, a farting woman is a hardship on creation.

On the other hand, I didn't want to deprive woman of a luscious-looking part she needs for wriggling up on the street and in a dancehall. So my improved woman that I drew up in an exercise book had a fat batty for wriggling, but one that discharged no fart." (149)

This gives you a taste for the book's humor. It's often mildly amusing, sometimes a little more than that, but much of it is pretty juvenile humor, and it doesn't add up to much.

Melki says

Duppy - /?d?p?/ noun - the duppy is an evil spirit or ghost. The term originated in Jamaican folktales.

One Saturday morning Thaddeus Augustus Baps died and turned into a duppy. While he was contemplating all the earthly mischief he might get up to, a spirit arrived to escort him to Heaven. This being *Jamaican* Heaven, it involved a ride on a minibus, followed by a crawl through a culvert. And, that's when things started to get *really* weird . . .

I cleared my throat. "Now what?"

"You dead and reach heaven. Enjoy yourself," she advised indifferently, her frizzy head ducked deep inside the open paper.

"How? Doing what?"

"Whatever you want!"

"Nothing happen today like it say in scripture. You don't even look like an angel. Angel not supposed to be so meaty."

"I am not a damn angel!" she growled, peering up crossly at me and sounding vexed. "I am a Jamaican! If you want angel, you have to migrate to America and join sheep heaven."

Things got even wackier when the lecherous, cantankerous Baps met God, and the two hit it off - hilariously. Their bromance, filled with conversations, and arguments, is hilarious. This is the funniest book I've read in a long, long time. Witness the trip our two main characters make to American Heaven, a place of "compulsory bliss."

A robed shepherd stopped his harp-plunking and peered down at us over the edge of his cloud. "Foreigner," he cried, "wouldst thou like to sit on my cloud with me and my sheep?"

"Not a backside!" Egbert bawled. "I not sitting with no sheep 'pon no cloud! I am Jamaican duppy! We don't walk wid sheep, we curry dem!"

This one is probably not for everyone. There's loads of sex, sexism, politically incorrect shenanigans, blasphemy, and a man with a penis on his forehead. Naturally, I loved it.

Lisa Kilgariff says

Winkle has a way with language and description that is not often encountered. He integrated a true feeling of Jamaican-ness into his story (perhaps a little overdone but well overdone...) creating a hilarious heavenly world with angelic sheep and 'nuff pum-pum (sex). His version of Jamaican heaven plays off the idea each Caribbean island holds, that God is (in this case) Jamaica and that their island is heaven on Earth. Winkler always manages to touch on some of the many social issues affecting the island and this book was first published in a time when the after effects of year of socialism were still affecting Jamaica which Winkler picks up in a semi-disdain full manner. The book, while touching such issues, manages to be light hearted and make gentle fun of Jamaica and American culture and beliefs, something which I will always approve of!

Compared to the only other Anthony Winkler book I've read (The Lunatic) it felt a little forced. He likes to play with controversial concepts and at some points it seemed almost like he was trying too hard to push buttons at the detriment of the actual plot.

The story managed to be light and funny while touching on some important social and religious issues, always a hard feat to attempt. Winkle pulled it off gracefully and while I am not sure I will be rereading this particular book soon, I am looking forward to reading some of his other works and would happily recommend this book to anyone looking for something different and entertaining!

This review was originally posted at [BaffledBooks](#).
