

NOTES FROM: *The Stranger*, by Albert Camus

SUMMARY: This is one of the most famous existentialist novels ever written, and it explores the theme of the "absurd" character of existence.

Things happen for reasons we can't figure out or get a hold on, our lives drift on, mostly without our ever being able to draw a convincing narrative arc, and then we come to the moment of our inevitable death, not really having understood anything that has happened to us.

Bleak, sure. But Camus is definitely NOT a pessimist, this story is brilliant (in a sentence, it's about a man who has just lost his mother, who murders an Arab man for no reason on the beach in Algeria), and it's well worth reading.

"Mother died today. Or maybe yesterday; I can't be sure."

"If something is going to happen to me, I want to be there."

"I looked up at the mass of signs and stars in the night sky and laid myself open for the first time to the benign indifference of the world."

"I may not have been sure about what really did interest me, but I was absolutely sure about what didn't."

"I had only a little time left and I didn't want to waste it on God."

"I realized then that a man who had lived only one day could easily live for a hundred years in prison. He would have enough memories to keep him from being bored."

"After awhile you could get used to anything."

"I've never really had much of an imagination. But still I would try to picture the exact moment when the beating of my heart would no longer be going on inside my head."

"Also, whether I died now or forty years hence, this business of dying had to be got through, inevitably."

"Since we're all going to die, it's obvious that when and how don't matter."

"I had been right, I was still right, I was always right. I had lived my life one way and I could just as well have lived it another. I had done this and I hadn't done that. I hadn't done this thing but I had done another. And so?"