

Arthur and George. Julian Barnes. 2006. 464 pages. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2006. 9780307264664

Find books. In the vast expanse of late-Victorian Britain, two boys come to life: George, the son of a Midlands vicar, and Arthur, in shabby genteel Edinburgh, both of them feeling at once near to and impossibly distant from the beating heart of Empire. One falls prey to a series of pranks en route to a legal vocation, while the other studies medicine before discovering a different calling entirely, and it is years before their destinies are entwined in a mesmerizing alliance. George knows that this is not exactly what the Bible means, but as he grows up this is how the words sound to him. Arthur. For Arthur there was a normal distance between home and church; but each place was filled with presences, with stories and instructions. In the cold stone church where he went once a week to kneel and pray, there was God and Jesus Christ and the Twelve Apostles and the Ten Commandments and the Seven Deadly Sins. Inside the Vicarage, everything is quiet. There are prayers, books, needlework. You do not shout, you do not run, you do not soil yourself. The fire is sometimes noisy, so are the knives and forks if you do not hold them properly; so is his brother Horace when he arrives. But these are the exceptions in a world which is both peaceful and reliable. Arthur and George grow up worlds and miles apart in late 19th century Britain: Arthur in shabby-genteel Catholic Edinburgh, George in the vicarage of a small Staffordshire village. Arthur is to become one of the most famous men of his age, George a Birmingham solicitor, is happy in hardworking obscurity. But as the new century begins, they are brought together by a sequence of events that made sensational headlines at the time as The Great Wyrley Outrages. 01/06/2006 - Book Review: Arthur & George - Jennifer Reese, Entertainment Weekly (Grade: A). 01/04/2006 - The Secret Life of Conan Doyle - Benjamin Lytal, New York Sun p.12. 01/03/2006 - The Strange Case of Julian Barnes - Wendy Lesser, Slate.com. Arthur & George book. Read 1,557 reviews from the world's largest community for readers. As boys, George, the son of a Midlands vicar, and Arthur, living... George would tell you, in effect, "Oh yes I was bullied, but so were all the small, bookish boys." Appalled by absurd evidence in the case, and the obvious racism in all this, Arthur enters the scene. The book blurbs don't tell us who Arthur is, and we don't find out until we're 50 pages in or so, so let's call him a "real-life famous detective." The whole book is based on a real-life drama, so I think it would have been better to advertise in advance who "Arthur" is. Had I realized (I must be slow, lol) I would have paid more attention to his upbringing in the early chapters.