

ENGLISH TEXT SUMMARY NOTES
“Romulus, My Father”

Text guide by: Daniela Ouzecky

Copyright © TSSM 2009

TSSM

ACN 099 422 670

ABN 54 099 422 670

A: Level 14, 474 Flinders Street Melbourne VIC 3000

T: 1300 134 518

F: 03 97084354

W: tssm.com.au

E: info@tssm.com.au

CONTENTS

Areas of Study	Chapter	Topics Covered
Area of study 1 – Reading and Responding	Chapter 1- Genre	-
	Chapter 2- Structure	-
	Chapter 3- Historical Issues	-
	Chapter 4- Style	-
	Chapter 5- Background Notes	-
	Chapter 6- Chapter Summaries	6.1 Chapter One 6.2 Chapter Two 6.3 Chapter Three 6.4 Chapter Four 6.5 Chapter Five 6.6 Chapter Six 6.7 Chapter Seven 6.8 Chapter Eight 6.9 Chapter Nine 6.10 Chapter Ten 6.11 Chapter Eleven 6.12 Chapter Twelve 6.13 Chapter Thirteen
	Chapter 7- Character Profiles	7.1 Romulus 7.2 Christina 7.3 Raimond 7.4 Hora 7.5 Mitru
	Chapter 8- Themes and Issues	8.1 Racial prejudice 8.2 Friendship 8.3 Mental illness 8.4 Love and passion 8.5 Fathers and sons 8.6 Principles and virtues 8.7 Poverty
	Chapter 9- Sample Essay Topics	-
	Chapter 10- Final Examination Tips	-

AREA 1:

READING & RESPONDING:

ROMULUS, MY FATHER

Chapter 1

GENRE

In *Romulus My Father*, Raimond Gaita amalgamates a Third Person and First Person account of the often wretched lives of his mother and father and their friends.

The biography brings particular attention to the life of his father Romulus, who struggled to overcome poverty and a difficult marriage. Within the telling of Romulus' story, the difficulties faced by post-war immigrants to Australia are also presented to the reader.

However, it is in many ways a philosophical text, which explores many topical issues, such as prejudice, and the nature and possible causes of mental illness. In his recollections of his mother's battle with depression, Gaita focuses on the ravaging effects that it can have on the individual and those closest to them. It also examines the way that it was perceived and treated by the broader community.

Romulus My Father is ultimately a story of a father and son relationship, between Raimond and his father. Particular attention is given to the importance of love, truth and justice.

Chapter 2

STRUCTURE

In *Romulus My Father*, Gaita traces his family's personal journey, not only as immigrants in a foreign and remote land, but also as individuals dealing with an intense and often traumatic emotional journey. Gaita often reflects on the importance of friendship, family, self-respect, work and love and his father's teachings.

Romulus My Father is largely told chronologically, beginning in Yugoslavia and tracing the physical and subsequently emotional journey of his father and those he shared his life with. There are no attempts to gloss over or sensationalise the experiences of his father's life.

However, the biography is by no means plot driven. It is a reflection on a man, his life and his lessons.

Chapter 3

HISTORICAL ISSUES

Following World War II, the Australian Government initiated a program to encourage migration, to increase the seriously depleted workforce, as so many soldiers were killed in the war. Migrants were offered free transport provided that they work and remain in the country for at least two years. This created a wave of immigration, mainly from southern Europe, which transformed the social fabric of Australia and made it what it is today- a multicultural society. However, some of the more confronting aspects of immigration are also projected through his recollections of the prejudice and ridicule his father had to face.

Romulus My Father also explores the narrow-mindedness of the society, which did not recognise postnatal depression, which he reflects upon during the telling of his mother's sad story.

Unfortunately, it was a period where post-natal depression was not acknowledged as a mental illness, nor was depression. There was no sympathy given to the sufferers or their families. The blame was centred on the victim, who was powerless to change the circumstances or symptoms, as neither medical attention nor medication were made available to her.

Through both the lack of medical recognition of the illness and public ignorance, Raimond's mother was branded negligent. Furthermore, both Christina, and her children were left to suffer at the hands of her depression, and her children were ultimately taken away from her.