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One More Thing: Stories And Other Stories



Synopsis

WITH SPECIAL APPEARANCES by Lena Dunham, Jenna Fischer, Mindy Kaling, Julianne Moore, Carey Mulligan, Katy Perry, Jason Schwartzman, Emma Thompson, and Rainn Wilson B.J. Novak's *One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories* is an endlessly entertaining, surprisingly sensitive, and startlingly original debut that signals the arrival of a brilliant new voice in American fiction. A boy wins a \$100,000 prize in a box of Frosted Flakesâ" only to discover how claiming the winnings might unravel his family. A woman sets out to seduce motivational speaker Tony Robbinsâ" turning for help to the famed motivator himself. A new arrival in Heaven, overwhelmed with options, procrastinates over a long-ago promise to visit his grandmother. We also meet Sophia, the first artificially intelligent being capable of love, who falls for a man who might not be ready for it himself; a vengeance-minded hare, obsessed with scoring a rematch against the tortoise who ruined his life; and post-college friends who try to figure out how to host an intervention in the era of Facebook.Â Along the way, we learn why wearing a red T-shirt every day is the key to finding love, how February got its name, and why the stock market is sometimes just . . . down. Finding inspiration in questions from the nature of perfection to the icing on carrot cake, *One More Thing* has at its heart the most human of phenomena: love, fear, hope, ambition, and the inner stirring for the one elusive element that might just make a person complete. Across a dazzling range of subjects, themes, tones, and narrative voices, the many pieces in this collection are like nothing else, but they have one thing in common: they share the playful humor, deep heart, sharp eye, inquisitive mind, and altogether electrifying spirit of a writer with a fierce devotion to the entertainment of the reader.

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Novak's high-concept, hilarious, and disarmingly commiserative fiction debut stems from his stand-up performances and his Emmy Award-winning work on the comedy series, *The Office*, as writer, actor, director, and executive producer. Accordingly, his more concise stories come across as brainy comedy bits, while his sustained tales covertly encompass deep emotional and psychological dimensions. An adept zeitgeist miner, Novak excels at topsy-turvy improvisations on a dizzying array of subjects, from Aesop's fables to tabloid Elvis to our oracular enthrallment to the stock market. A master of cringe, Novak imagines a blind date with a warlord, a Comedy Central TV roast of Nelson Mandela, and a mortifying misunderstanding between mega-best-selling novelist John Grisham and his new editor. Writing with zing and humor in the spirit of Woody Allen and Steve Martin, Novak also ventures into the realm of George Saunders and David Foster Wallace. A boy wins a breakfast-cereal contest and discovers a shocking family secret. A sex robot falls in love. A man reveals the heartbreak behind the universally dreaded math problem about the two trains leaving the stations at different times. Baseline clever and fresh, at best spectacularly perceptive, and always commanding, Novak's ingeniously ambushing stories of longing, fear, pretension, and confusion reveal the quintessential absurdities and transcendent beauty of our catch-as-catch-can lives. **HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY:** Novak's television fame is an instant lure, one that will be pitched far and wide as Novak appears on major talk shows and travels to 20 cities in concert with an immense print and online ad campaign. --Donna Seaman --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

"It isn't easy to make a reader laugh out loud. Even when confronted with the sharpest, funniest prose, many people will respond with nothing more than a quiet chuckle. . . . Whatever the reason, all I can say is good luck chuckling quietly during *One More Thing*, the wonderfully cockeyed, consistently hilarious debut from B.J. Novak. . . . Given his background in TV comedy writing as well as stand-up, it's not surprising that Novak knows how to stick a great line or milk a funny premise with the right amount of squeeze. What's more striking is the wild imagination he brings to these pages, taking familiar narrative constructs -- a woman and a man on a blind date -- and infusing them with the unexpected. . . . His style is part Steven Wright and part Charlie Kaufman, married with a sharp ear for (and satire of) contemporary pop culture. . . . A gifted observer of the human condition and a very funny writer capable of winning that rare thing: unselfconscious, inexpressible laughter." --Jen Chaney, *The Washington Post* In one of the longer entries in his very funny debut collection of stories, B. J. Novak describes a writer and translator named J. C.

Audetat, who has a gift for “the off-the-cuff vernacular of his day” or what might be called “the poetry of everyday conversations.” . . . The same might be said of Mr. Novak, whose athletic imagination and ear for “the language of his own time and place (that is, the vernacular of that 21st-century genus of young, hip Americans, known to frequent urban habitats on the East and West Coasts) are showcased in this volume. . . . Mr. Novak has an idiosyncratic voice that’s distinctively his own, though *One More Thing* will also produce lots of comparisons to other writers. His more fully developed stories have a sense of the absurdities and sadnesses of contemporary American life reminiscent of George Saunders’s short fiction. Others will more likely elicit comparisons to David Sedaris’s books (without the curmudgeonly persona), Steve Martin’s prose pieces (with less conceptual strangeness) and Woody Allen’s *Without Feathers* and *Side Effects* (with less emphasis on big, existential questions). . . . Mr. Novak is nimble at showing how easily the ordinary can morph into the extraordinary and adept at making us see the surreal in the everyday. . . . A funny writer with a great ear, but also as a genuine storyteller with an observant eye and finely tuned emotional radar.” —Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times*

B.J. Novak meets--no, exceeds--expectations in *ONE MORE THING*, firmly establishing him as one of the best humor writers around. . . . The varied length of the stories adds to the pleasure--it’s like sampling a multicourse meal instead of gorging just on pizza. . . . Novak’s writing mirrors his acting in that both rely on dry wit and dead-pan delivery. His influences run from celebrated *New Yorker* humorist James Thurber to Steve Martin to the *Harvard Lampoon* style of comedy (no wonder, as Novak was a member of the publication in college) to stand-up comedian Steven Wright. But he synthesizes those influences and has delivered something wholly original. . . . The longer stories avoid easy laugh-out-loud punch lines in favor of quirky, offbeat twists that showcase his skill as a storyteller. . . . Novak has found success as an actor, screenwriter and producer, but it turns out that the “one more thing” he added to his résumé--author--might be where his greatest talent lies.” —Andy Lewis, *The Hollywood Reporter*

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perceptive, and always commanding, Novak's ingeniously ambushing stories of longing, fear, pretension, and confusion reveal the quintessential absurdities and transcendent beauty of our catch-as-catch-can lives.

- "Booklist, starred review" "Novak's debut contains a buckshot 64 fun and funny short stories crammed into a single volume. Part Etgar Keret, part McSweeney's, these tidy tales from the alum of TV's *The Office* depart from the 'how I became famous' comedian's biography for a decidedly more literary turn. . . . The bulk of Novak's stories are comedic, and more than a few are surprisingly tender. . . . Written by an author in complete control of his craft."
- "Publishers Weekly" "Everyone knew that B.J. Novak was smart and sexy, but funny, too!? Wow, screw that guy. I haven't laughed at words this hard since I read."
- "Joshua Ferris author of *The Unnamed and Then We Came to the End*" "ONE MORE THING is a funny and inventive debut collection, infused with a deadpan absurdist wit reminiscent of Woody Allen and Ian Frazier. B.J. Novak's stories are sly and playful, but they can pack a real emotional wallop."
- "Tom Perrotta, author of *Nine Inches*" "I am so relieved that I had not read B.J.'s book before I worked with him. I would just have spent every day at his feet instead of doing my job."
- "Emma Thompson" "Dark and hilarious, like the fudge Grandma used to make during her 'special' period. Deliciously funny!"
- "Jack Handey, author of *Deep Thoughts* and *The Stench of Honolulu*" "B.J. blew me away. He just keeps kicking short fiction in the rear, making it run ahead clutching its ass, and then he runs up and kicks it some more, and the result is one of the most aggressively, insanely awesome debuts in a while."
- "Gary Shteyngart, author of *Super Sad True Love Story*

My wife ordered this for me. We are big fans of *The Office* and she got this for me as a little present. I've never read a collection of short stories before, so I didn't know exactly what to expect. From what I understand, my experience has been atypical. BJ Novak weaves characters and stories together throughout his work in a way that is humorous and heartwarming. There are some adult themes throughout the book, so reader-beware. But it is overall a funny, though-provoking collection of stories and musings. Also, there is a great podcast from Studio Q where BJ Novak explains his process in writing this book that is definitely worth a listen!

This is the book for my short breaks. I love B.J. Novak whimsical short stories. Some stories really hit home, like "One More Thing." Some are light-hearted. But I love the fact that I can open the book at any time and reread any short story in 5 minutes and take my mind off life for a little.

J.D. Salinger, master of short stories, once had Seymour chide his brother Buddy for being too witty; a writer who indulged his penchant for cleverness ostensibly was like a cripple drawing attention to his club foot. Or something like that. The idea has stuck with me for many years and I have faulted even my favorite authors for 'cracking themselves up' and taking me out of their story. However, in reading Novak's collection, it suddenly occurred to me that in many ways, a good short story is like a well told joke. You have an intro, a build-up and a punch-line...not necessarily funny, but the more provocative the better. And if it does make you chuckle, where's the harm in that? Especially if you see it leading there all along and like the good 'laugher' in the comedy club, you surrender to the fun. Novak's experience in stand-up has certainly taught him how to tell a story well. His wry observations of current culture will make you want to share. I predict the term 'recalculating' as he employed it will soon be as over-used as the ubiquitous 'awesome'. Or perhaps it already is in some circles and he is first to point it out. You will see yourself or people you know in this collection as well as celebrities brought down to earth with foibles exposed. Somehow though, as with all great storytellers, their humanity does not make them tragic heroes, but lovable ones.

I'm 56% finished with the book, I may update when I'm 100% done, but so far it has been fantastic. I got to this book by reading "The Bassoon King" by Rainn Wilson (check it out, it's good stuff), so I'm reading from a Ryan from The Office type voice. Some of the stories have changed that, but overall the smart, somewhat pretentious language and sentence structure screams "Ryan". Anyway, the book has been fantastic, a wonderful mixture of short and even shorter stories that connect at appropriate times and rest comfortably between funny and thought-provoking.

One More Thing is a collection of short stories, essays, and super short one-sentence stories. They range from funny, to dark, to poignant, but always entertaining. This book comes from BJ Novak, one of the main writers of The Office (US), and it's very much the same sort of clever, laugh-out-loud humor. I am nearly always disappointed with fictional short story books, but this was the exception to the rule. This book made me laugh in the most unexpected of places. There were little subtleties that made it fun as you could connect some of the stories if you paid attention. Also, having just finished my first watch of The Office, I can see where the show got some of its off-kilter, who thinks of these things humor. I'll most-likely read this again, which I don't say about most books.

Love the stories. Novak is a brilliant, witty, talented author. I recommend the audiobook read by him for an extra dose of humor. I took off one star because the hard cover I ordered arrived stained.

I am an educator, and was looking forward to reading this. I loved the creativity of Novak's "The Book With No Pictures". However after reading many reviews of "One More Thing" prior to purchasing, it was not revealed the "R" rated nature of this book. While Novak certainly has a creative mind, the vulgarity within this work was appalling in my humble opinion. I would have appreciated a disclosure.

I cannot imagine that choosing a book based solely on the fact that you like the actor who wrote is ever sound logic, but it was my tactic in this case. Luckily, B.J. Novak does not disappoint. I so enjoyed reading this book. Each story was clever, hilarious, and incredibly well-written. I was surprised at the level of writing at times, not expecting the humor to be so high brow. That being said, it was brilliantly executed and had me in stitches. Just to attest at how funny I found this book, I was reading aloud sections at least once a page because I was laughing out loud at a book like a crazy person. To attest on behalf of this book even more, my friends didn't get annoyed with my constant interruptions because the book was that amusing. I seriously recommend buying this book. Great read for summer, or whatever season you do your leisure reading in.

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