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# Levels Of Life Julian Barnes

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Something to Declare

The Man in the Red Coat

Letters 2008-2011

A Swim in a Pond in the Rain

From the Man Booker Prize-winning, New York Times-bestselling author of Lincoln in the Bardo

Talking It Over

The Dud Avocado

Flaubert's Parrot

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A novel

A Widow's Story

The Neruda Case

Suicide and the Soul

## MAYS CHASE

*Something to Declare* Vintage Canada  
Twice shortlisted for the Booker Prize, Julian Barnes continues to reinvigorate the novel with his pyrotechnic verbal skill and playful manipulation of plot and character. In *Love, etc.* he uses all the surprising, sophisticated ingredients of a delightful farce to create a tragicomedy of human frailties and needs. After spending a decade in America as a successful businessman, Stuart returns to London and decides to look up his ex-wife Gillian. Their relationship had ended years before when Stuart's witty, feckless, former best friend Oliver stole her away. But now Stuart finds that the intervening years have left Oliver's artistic ambitions in ruins and his relationship with Gillian on less than solid footing. When Stuart begins to suspect that he may be able to undo the results of their betrayal, he resolves to act. Written as an intimate series of crosscutting monologues that allow each character to whisper their secrets and interpretations directly to the reader, *Love, etc.* is an unsettling examination of confessional culture and a profound reflection on the power of perspective.

**The Man in the Red Coat** Random House

BOOKER PRIZE NOMINEE • The literary detective story of a retired doctor who is obsessed with the 19th century French author Flaubert—and with tracking down a stuffed parrot that once inspired him • From the internationally bestselling author of *The Sense of an Ending* Julian Barnes playfully combines a detective story with a character study of its detective, embedded in a brilliant riff on literary genius. A compelling weave of fiction and imaginatively ordered fact, *Flaubert's Parrot* is by turns moving and

entertaining, witty and scholarly, and a tour de force of seductive originality.

*Letters 2008-2011* Random House

At the start of this fiendishly comic and suspenseful novel, a mild-mannered English academic chuckles as he watches his wife commit adultery. The action takes place before she met him. But lines between film and reality, past and present become terrifyingly blurred in this sad and funny tour de force from the author of *Flaubert's Parrot*.

New York Review of Books

Levels of LifeVintage

**A Swim in a Pond in the Rain** Penguin

Master prose stylist Julian Barnes presents a collection of stories whose characters are growing old and facing the end of their lives -- some with bitterness, some with resignation and others with raging defiance. "Life is just a premature reaction to death," was what Viv's husband used to say. Once her lover and friend, he is now Viv's semi-helpless charge, who is daily sinking ever deeper into dementia. In "Appetite," Viv has found a way to reach her husband: by reading aloud snippets of recipe books until he calls out indelible -- and sometimes unfortunate -- scenes locked away in his brain. In "The Things You Know," two elderly friends enjoy their monthly breakfast meetings that neither would ever think of missing. Of course, all they really have in common is a fondness for flat suede shoes and a propensity for thinking spiteful, unspoken thoughts about one another's dead husbands. "The Fruit Cage" is narrated by a middle-aged man whose seemingly orderly upbringing is harrowingly undone when he discovers that his parents' old age is not necessarily a time of serenity but actually an age of aroused, perhaps violent, passions. In these stories, Julian

Barnes displays the erudition, wit and uncanny insight into the human mind that mark him as one of today's great writers, one whose intellect and humour never obscure a genuine affection for his characters.

*From the Man Booker Prize-winning, New York Times-bestselling author of Lincoln in the Bardo* Vintage

Combining the intellectual audacity of *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters* with the francophilia of the acclaimed *Flaubert's Parrot*, Julian Barnes explores the English experience of France over the centuries with dazzling wit and sophistication. This is Barnes's first collection of stories.

Talking It Over Penguin

With this book James Hillman initiated the "soul movement" in psychotherapy more than fifty years ago. Soul and suicide are dominant issues of this new millennium; soul because it cannot be reduced to genes and chromosomes; suicide because it raises fundamental religious, political, and legal conflicts. As Hillman writes in the Postscript to the second edition: "The individual consists of more than his or her personal individuality. Something besides 'myself' inhabits the soul, takes part in its life and has a say in its death...We need a...definition of self as the interiorization of community. Suicide, literally 'self-killing, ' now would mean both a killing of community and involvement of community in the killing." Hillman's book tries to carry Jung's ideas of a soul-informed psychology into the most wrenching agony of therapeutic practice: the suicide of the patient. It goes to the heart of therapy. Since we are each in a silent therapy with ourselves, the issue of suicide reaches into the heart of each of us. Suicide and the Soul resurrects "soul" from its reliquary in spiritual

churchiness and instills the idea with the passion-laden daily life of soul food, soul music, soul brother, soul sister, and soul death. This new edition is introduced by the eminent psychiatrist and pioneering social critic Thomas Szasz

**The Dud Avocado** Vintage Canada

A compact masterpiece dedicated to the Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich: Julian Barnes's first novel since his best-selling, Man Booker Prize-winning *The Sense of an Ending*. In 1936, Shostakovich, just thirty, fears for his livelihood and his life. Stalin, hitherto a distant figure, has taken a sudden interest in his work and denounced his latest opera. Now, certain he will be exiled to Siberia (or, more likely, executed on the spot), Shostakovich reflects on his predicament, his personal history, his parents, various women and wives, his children—and all who are still alive themselves hang in the balance of his fate. And though a stroke of luck prevents him from becoming yet another casualty of the Great Terror, for decades to come he will be held fast under the thumb of despotism: made to represent Soviet values at a cultural conference in New York City, forced into joining the Party and compelled, constantly, to weigh appeasing those in power against the integrity of his music. Barnes elegantly guides us through the trajectory of Shostakovich's career, at the same time illuminating the tumultuous evolution of the Soviet Union. The result is both a stunning portrait of a relentlessly fascinating man and a brilliant exploration of the meaning of art and its place in society. Flaubert's Parrot Vintage Canada  
An extraordinary collection—hawk-eyed and understanding—from the Man Booker Prize-winning, best-selling author of *The Sense of an Ending* and *Levels of*

Life. As Julian Barnes notes: "Flaubert believed that it was impossible to explain one art form in terms of another, and that great paintings required no words of explanation. Braque thought the ideal state would be reached when we said nothing at all in front of a painting . . . But it is a rare picture that stuns, or argues, us into silence. And if one does, it is only a short time before we want to explain and understand the very silence into which we have been plunged." This is the exact dynamic that informs his new book. In his 1989 novel *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*, Barnes had a chapter on Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, and since then he has written about many great masters of nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, including Delacroix, Manet, Fantin-Latour, Cézanne, Degas, Redon, Bonnard, Vuillard, Vallotton, Braque, Magritte, Oldenburg, Lucian Freud and Howard Hodgkin. The seventeen essays gathered here help trace the arc from Romanticism to Realism and into Modernism; they are adroit, insightful and, above all, a true pleasure to read.

#### **Death** Bloomsbury Publishing

Julian Barnes, author of the Man Booker Prize-winning novel *The Sense of an Ending*, gives us his most powerfully moving book yet, beginning in the nineteenth century and leading seamlessly into an entirely personal account of loss—making *Levels of Life* an immediate classic on the subject of grief. *Levels of Life* is a book about ballooning, photography, love and loss; about putting two things, and two people, together, and about tearing them apart. One of the judges who awarded Barnes the 2011 Booker Prize described him as "an unparalleled magus of the heart." This book confirms that opinion. "Spare and beautiful...a book of rare intimacy

and honesty about love and grief. To read it is a privilege. To have written it is astonishing." —Ruth Scurr, *The Times of London* "A remarkable narrative that is as raw in its emotion as it is characteristically elegant in its execution." —Eileen Battersby, *The Irish Times* This ebook edition includes a reading group guide.

#### Vintage Minis Vintage Canada

"I don't believe in God, but I miss him." So begins Julian Barnes's brilliant new book that is, among many things, a family memoir, an exchange with his brother (a philosopher), a meditation on mortality and the fear of death, a celebration of art, an argument with and about God, and a homage to the writer Jules Renard. Barnes also draws poignant portraits of the last days of his parents, recalled with great detail, affection and exasperation. Other examples he takes up include writers, "most of them dead and quite a few of them French," as well as some composers, for good measure. The grace with which Barnes weaves together all of these threads makes the experience of reading the book nothing less than exhilarating. Although he cautions us that "this is not my autobiography," the book nonetheless reveals much about Barnes the man and the novelist: how he thinks and how he writes and how he lives. At once deadly serious and dazzlingly playful, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* is a wise, funny and constantly surprising tour of the human condition.

#### The Noise of Time Vintage Canada

One of the Best Books of the Year: *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Financial Times* Most of us have only one story to tell . . . only one that matters, only one finally worth telling. This is mine. One summer in the sixties, in a staid suburb south of

London, nineteen-year-old Paul comes home from university and is urged by his mother to join the tennis club. There he's partnered with Susan Macleod, a fine player who's forty-eight, confident, witty, and married, with two nearly adult daughters. She is a warm companion, her bond with Paul immediate. And soon, inevitably, they are lovers. Basking in the glow of one another, they set up house together in London. Decades later, Paul looks back at how they fell in love and how—gradually, relentlessly—everything fell apart. As he turns over his only story in his mind, examining it from different vantage points, he finds himself confronted with the contradictions and slips of his own memory—and the ways in which our narratives and our lives shape one another. Poignant, vivid and profound, *The Only Story* is a searing novel of memory, devotion, and how first love fixes a life forever.

*A Novel* Random House Canada  
Jean Serjeant, the heroine of Julian Barnes's wonderfully provocative novel, seems ordinary, but has an extraordinary disdain for wisdom. And as Barnes—winner of the Man Booker Prize for *The Sense of an Ending*—follows her from her childhood in the 1920s to her flight into the sun in the year 2021, he confronts readers with the fruits of her relentless curiosity: pilgrimages to China and the Grand Canyon; a catalog of 1940s sexual euphemisms; and a glimpse of technology in the twenty-first century (when *The Absolute Truth* can be universally accessed). Elegant, funny and intellectually subversive, *Staring at the Sun* is Julian Barnes at his most dazzlingly original. "Brilliant. . . . A marvelous literary epiphany." —Carlos Fuentes, *The New York Times Book Review* "Barnes's literary energy and

daring are nearly unparalleled." —*New Republic*

*I Am God* Ballantine Books

When it comes to death, is there ever a best case scenario? In this disarmingly witty book, Julian Barnes confronts our unending obsession with the end. He reflects on what it means to miss God, whether death can be good for our careers and why we eventually turn into our parents. Barnes is the perfect guide to the weirdness of the only thing that binds us all. Selected from the book *Nothing to be Frightened Of* by Julian Barnes VINTAGE MINIS: GREAT MINDS. BIG IDEAS. LITTLE BOOKS. A series of short books by the world's greatest writers on the experiences that make us human Also in the Vintage Minis series: *Calm* by Tim Parks *Drinking* by John Cheever *Babies* by Anne Enright *Psychedelics* by Aldous Huxley

**The Sense of an Ending** Random House Canada

You put together two things that have not been put together before. And the world is changed... In *Levels of Life* Julian Barnes gives us Nadar, the pioneer balloonist and aerial photographer; he gives us Colonel Fred Burnaby, reluctant adorer of the extravagant Sarah Bernhardt; then, finally, he gives us the story of his own grief, unflinchingly observed. This is a book of intense honesty and insight; it is at once a celebration of love and a profound examination of sorrow. **\*\*ONE OF THE GUARDIAN'S 100 BEST BOOKS OF THE 21st CENTURY\*\***

*A novel* Restless Books

Winner of the 2011 Man Booker Prize By an acclaimed writer at the height of his powers, *The Sense of an Ending* extends a streak of extraordinary books that began with the best-selling *Arthur & George* and continued with *Nothing to*

Be Frightened Of and, most recently, Pulse. This intense new novel follows a middle-aged man as he contends with a past he has never much thought about—until his closest childhood friends return with a vengeance, one of them from the grave, another maddeningly present. Tony Webster thought he'd left all this behind as he built a life for himself, and by now his marriage and family and career have fallen into an amicable divorce and retirement. But he is then presented with a mysterious legacy that obliges him to reconsider a variety of things he thought he'd understood all along, and to revise his estimation of his own nature and place in the world. A novel so compelling that it begs to be read in a single sitting, with stunning psychological and emotional depth and sophistication, *The Sense of an Ending* is a brilliant new chapter in Julian Barnes's oeuvre.

*Love, etc.* Random House

Reading lists of some of the author's favorite books accompany her thoughts on the role of books and reading in her life

[A Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project](#) Vintage

Brilliantly imagined and irresistibly readable, *Arthur & George* is a major new novel from Julian Barnes, a wonderful combination of playfulness, pathos and wisdom. Searching for clues, no one would ever guess that the lives of Arthur and George might intersect. Growing up in shabby-genteel nineteenth-century Edinburgh, Arthur is saddled with a dad who is a disgrace and a mum he wishes to protect, and is propelled into a life of action. To his astonishment, his career as a self-made man of letters brings him riches and fame and, in the world at large, he becomes the perfect picture of the

honourable English gentlemen. George is irredeemably an outsider, and has no hope of becoming such a picture.

Though he's dogged and logical, a vicar's son from rural Staffordshire, he is set apart, and he and his family are targeted in his boyhood by a poison-pen campaign. George finds safe harbour in the reliability of rules, and grows up to become a solicitor, putting his faith in the insulating value of British justice.

Then crisis upsets the uneasy equilibrium of both men's lives. Arthur is knocked for a loop by guilt and other dishonourable emotions. George is put to the sorest test, accused of a horrible crime. And from that point on their lives weave together in the most profound and surprising way, as each man becomes the other's salvation. *Arthur & George* is a masterful novel about low crime and high spirituality, guilt and innocence, identity, nationality and race.

Most of all, it's a profound and witty meditation on the fateful differences between what we believe, what we know and what we can prove. George and his father pray together, kneeling side by side on the scrubbed boards. Then George climbs into bed while his father locks the door and turns out the light. As he falls asleep, George sometimes thinks of the floor, and how his soul must be scrubbed just as the boards are scrubbed. Father is not an easy sleeper, and has a tendency to groan and wheeze. Sometimes, in the early morning, when dawn is beginning to show at the edges of the curtains, Father will catechize him. "George, where do you live?" "The Vicarage, Great Wyrley." "And where is that?" "Staffordshire, Father." "And where is that?" "The centre of England." "And what is England, George?" "England is the beating heart of the Empire, Father."

"Good. And what is the blood that flows through the arteries and veins of the Empire to reach even its farthest shore?" "The Church of England." "Good, George." And after a while Father will begin to groan and wheeze again. George watches the outline of the curtain harden. He lies there thinking of arteries and veins making red lines on the map of the world, linking Britain to all the places coloured pink: Australia and India and Canada and islands dotted everywhere. He thinks of blood bubbling through these tubes and emerging in Sydney, Bombay, the St. Lawrence Waterway. Bloodlines, that is a word he has heard somewhere. With the pulse of blood in his ears, he begins to fall asleep again. —excerpt from *Arthur & George Through the Window* Vintage Canada

"[A] civilized discourse between two cultivated and sophisticated men. . . . It's a pleasure to be in their company." —Michael Dirda, *The Washington Post*

J.M. Coetzee's latest novel, *The Schooldays of Jesus*, is now available from Viking. *Late Essays: 2006-2016* will be available January 2018. After a meeting at an Australian literary festival brought them together in 2008, novelists Paul Auster and J. M. Coetzee began exchanging letters on a regular basis with the hope they might "strike sparks

off each other." Here and Now is the result: a three-year epistolary dialogue that touches on nearly every subject, from sports to fatherhood, literature to film, philosophy to politics, from the financial crisis to art, death, eroticism, marriage, friendship, and love. Their high-spirited and luminous correspondence offers an intimate and often amusing portrait of these two men as they explore the complexities of the here and now and reveal their pleasure in each other's friendship on every page. *Letters From London* Random House

The *Dud Avocado* follows the romantic and comedic adventures of a young American who heads overseas to conquer Paris in the late 1950s. Edith Wharton and Henry James wrote about the American girl abroad, but it was Elaine Dundy's Sally Jay Gorce who told us what she was really thinking. Charming, sexy, and hilarious, *The Dud Avocado* gained instant cult status when it was first published and it remains a timeless portrait of a woman hell-bent on living. "I had to tell someone how much I enjoyed *The Dud Avocado*. It made me laugh, scream, and guffaw (which, incidentally, is a great name for a law firm)." —Groucho Marx "[*The Dud Avocado*] is one of the best novels about growing up fast..." -*The Guardian*

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