

Talking It Over Julian Barnes

From a writer who’s on a roll, fourteen stories that range freely through the historical past and contemporary life, touching on longing and love, loss and friendship, and a great many passions in between. It’s the strongest collection yet from Julian Barnes. From an imperial capital in the eighteenth century to Garibaldi’s adventures in the nineteenth, from the vineyards of Italy to the English seaside in our time, Julian Barnes finds the “stages, transitions, arguments” that define us. A newly divorced real estate agent can’t resist invading his reticent girlfriend’s privacy, but the information he finds reveals only his caulsouly shallow curiosity. A couple comes together through an illicit cigarette and a song shared over the din of a Chinese restaurant. A widower revisiting the Scottish island he’d treasured with his wife learns how difficult it is to purge oneself of grief. And throughout, friends gather regularly at dinner parties and perfect the art of cerebral, sometimes bawdy banter about the world passing before them. Whether domestic or extraordinary, each story pulses with the resonance, spark and poignant humor for which Barnes is justly heralded.

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 master of the heart.” This book confirms that opinion. “Sparse 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. From the Man Booker Prize-winning author of The Sense of an Ending—a rich, witty, revelatory tour of Belle Époque Paris, via the remarkable life story of the pioneering surgeon, Samuel Pozzi. In the summer of 1885, three Frenchmen arrived in London for a few days’ intellectual shopping: a prince, a count, and a commoner with an Italian name. In time, each of these men would achieve a certain level of renown, but who were they then and what was the significance of their sojourn to England? Answering these questions, Julian Barnes unfurls the stories of their lives which play out against the backdrop of the Belle Époque in Paris. Our guide through the life stories is Samuel Pozzi, the society doctor, free-thinker and man of science with a famously complicated private life who was the subject of one of John Singer Sargent’s greatest portraits. In this vivid tapestry of people (Henry James, Sarah Bernhardt, Oscar Wilde, Proust, James Whistler, among many others), place, and time, we see not merely an epoch of glamour and pleasure, but, surprisingly, one of violence, prejudice, and nativism—with more parallels to our own age than we might imagine. The Man in the Red Coat is, at once, a fresh portrait of the Belle Époque; an illuminating look at the longstanding exchange of ideas between Britain and France; and a life of a man who lived passionately in the moment but whose ideas and achievements were far ahead of his time.

This monumental novel, divided into four separate books, celebrates the end of an era, the irrevocable destruction of the comfortable, predictable society that vanished during World War I.

The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature

Exploring the Writer’s Archives

A novel

The Sense of an Ending

Before She Met Me

Exploring the archives of the Man Booker prize-winning novelist Julian Barnes – including notebooks, drafts, typescripts and publishing correspondence – this book is an extraordinary in-depth study of the creative practice of a major contemporary novelist. In Julian Barnes from the Margins, Vanessa Guignery charts the genesis and publication history of all of Barnes’s major novels, from his debut with Metroland, through Flaubert’s Parrot and A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters to The Sense of an Ending.

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 scholarship. This book presents a collection of twelve interviews with eminent English contemporary writers held during a period of four years. The book allows an illuminating insight into a very lively and thought-provoking literary culture, stirred not only by recent ideas of postmodernism but also by the manifold issues of nationality, culture, and gender subjected to permanent redefinitions towards the end of the twentieth century. The interviews with Peter Ackroyd, John Banville, Julian Barnes, Alain de Botton, Maureen Duffy, Tibor Fischer, John Fowles, Romesh Gunesekere, and others are written by the author, who is also a writer and public, the role of the literary tradition, the relevance of contemporary literary theory for the production of literature, images of nationality, intertextuality, changes in the attitude towards language and meaning, and the reception of literary texts by critical reviewers and literary critics.

In this powerfully affecting Flaubert’s Parrot gives readers a brilliant take on the deceptions that make up the quivering substrata of erotic love. “An interplay of serious thought and dazzling wit. . . . It’s moving, it’s funny, it’s frightening. . . . fiction at its best.”—New York Times Book Review.

Writers & Company

Techniques of Narrative Seduction in Julian Barnes’ “Talking It Over”

Maggie’s Child

The Remains of the Day

Letters From London

Talking It OverRandom House

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 honorable English gentlemen. George is irredeemably an outsider, and has no hope of becoming such a picture. The heart of this book begins with the son finding out that his father has set up his family as targets for a poison-pen campaign. George is a dutiful, hardworking, and grows up with the reliability of rules, and grows up with the implacable 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 dishonorable 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 Wytley.” “And where is that?” “Staffordshire, Father.” “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 hand. He lies there thinking of groans 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 though 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

Flaubert’s parrot: Relates a cranky amateur scholar’s search for the truth about Gustave Flaubert, and the obsession of this detective whose life seems to oddly mirror those of Flaubert’s characters. History of the world in 10 1/2 chapters: An eccentric, playfully skewed, surprisingly comprehensive chronicle of life on planet Earth. A novel whose threads of coincidence and hidden connection are woven into a narrative tapestry brilliant with wit, intelligence, and emotion.

At the start of this friendly 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.

Talking it over

Essays on Art

Julian Barnes from the Margins

Interviews with Contemporary English Writers

In the bestselling tradition of Bill Bryson and Tony Horwitz, Finker Buck’s The Oregon Trail is a major work of participatory history: an epic account of traveling the 2,000-mile length of the Oregon Trail the old-fashioned way, in a covered wagon with a team of mules—which hasn’t been done in a century—that also tells the rich history of the trail, the people who made the migration, and its significance to the country. Spanning 2,000 miles and traversing six states from Missouri to the Pacific Ocean, the Oregon Trail is the route that made America. In the fifteen years before the Civil War, when 400,000 pioneers used it to emigrate West—historians still regard this as the largest land migration of all time—the trail united the coasts, doubled the size of the country, and laid the groundwork for the railroads. The trail years also solidified the American character: our plucky defiance in the face of adversity, our impetuous cycle of financial bubbles and busts, the fractious clash of ethnic populations competing for the same jobs and space. Today, amazingly, the trail is all but forgotten. Finker Buck is no stranger to grand adventures. The New Yorker described his first travel narrative Flight of Passage as “a funny, cocky gem of a book,” and with The Oregon Trail he seeks to bring the most important road in American history back to life. At once a majestic American journey, a significant work of history, and a personal saga reminiscent of bestsellers by Bill Bryson and Cheryl Strayed, the book tells the story of Buck’s 2,000-mile expedition across the plains with tremendous humor and heart. He was accompanied by three cantankerous mules, his boisterous brother, Nick, and an “incorably filthy” Jack Russell terrier named Olive Oyl. Along the way, Buck dodges thunderstorms in Nebraska, chases his runaway mules across miles of Wyoming plains, scouts more than five hundred miles of nearly vanished trail on foot, crosses the Rockies, makes desperate fifty-mile forced marches for water, and repairs so many broken wheels and axels that he nearly reinvents the art of wagon travel itself. Apart from charting his own geographical and emotional adventure, Buck introduces readers to the evangelists, shysters, natives, trailblazers, and everyday dreamers who were among the first of the pioneers to make the journey west.

With a rare narrative power, a refreshing candor about his own weakness and mistakes, and an extremely attractive obsession for history and travel,The Oregon Trail draws readers into the journey of a lifetime.

Alien Hearts was the last book that Guy de Maupassant finished before his death at the early age of forty-three. It is the most original and psychologically penetrating of his several novels, and the one in which he attains a truly tragic perception of the wounded human heart. André Mariolle is a rich, handsome, gifted young man who cannot settle on what to do with himself. Madame de Burne, a glacially dazzling beauty, wants Mariolle to attend her exclusive salon for artists, composers, writers, and other intellectuals. At first Mariolle keeps his distance, but then he hits on the solution to all his problems: caring for nothing in particular, he will devote himself to being in love; Madame de Burne will be his everything. Soon lover and beloved are equally lost within a hall of mirrors of their common devising. Richard Howard’s new English translation of this complex and brooding novel—the first in more than a hundred years—reveals the final, unexpected flowering of a great French realist’s art.

THE WILEY BLACKWELL COMPANION TO CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND IRISH LITERATURE An insightful guide to the exploration of modern British and Irish literature The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature is a must-have guide for anyone hoping to navigate the world of new British and Irish writing. Including modern authors and poets from the 1960s through to the 21st century, the Companion provides a thorough overview of contemporary poetry, fiction, and drama by some of the most prominent and noteworthy writers. Seventy-three comprehensive chapters focus on individual authors as well as such topics as Englishness and identity, contemporary Science Fiction, Black writing in Britain, crime fiction, and the influence of globalization on British and Irish Literature. Written in four parts, The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature includes comprehensive examinations of individual authors, as well as a variety of themes that have come to define the contemporary period: ethnicity, gender, nationality, and more. A thorough guide to the main figures and concepts in contemporary literature from Britain and Ireland, this two-volume set includes studies of notable figures such as Seamus Heaney and Angela Carter, as well as more recently influential writers such as Zadie Smith and Sarah Waters. Covers topics such as LGBT fiction, androgyny in contemporary British Literature, and post-Troubles Northern Irish Fiction Features a broad range of writers and topics covered by distinguished academics Includes an analysis of the interplay between individual authors and the major themes of the day, and whether an examination of the latter enables us to appreciate the former. The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Contemporary British and Irish Literature provides essential reading for students as well as academics seeking to learn more about the history and future direction of contemporary British and Irish Literature.

Anna Bikont’s National Jewish Book Award in the Holocaust category A monumental work of nonfiction on a wartime atrocity, its sixty-year denial, and the impact of its truth Jan Gross’s hugely controversial neighbors was a historian’s disclosure of the events in the small Polish town of Jedwabne on July 10, 1941, when the citizens rounded up the Jewish population and burned them alive in a barn. The massacre was a shocking secret that had been suppressed for more than sixty years, and it provoked the most important public debate in Poland since 1989. From the outset, Anna Bikont reported on the town, combing through archives and interviewing residents who survived the war period. Her writing became a crucial part of the debate and she herself an actor in a national drama. Part history, part memoir, The Crime and the Silence is the journalist’s account of these events: both the story of the massacre told through oral histories of survivors and witnesses, and a portrait of a Polish town coming to terms with its dark past. Including the perspectives of both heroes and perpetrators, Bikont chronicles the sources of the hatred that exploded against Jews and asks what myths grow on hidden memories, what destruction they cause, and what happens to a society that refuses to accept a horrific truth. A profoundly moving exploration of being Jewish in modern Poland that Julian Barnes called “one of the most chilling books,” The Crime and the Silence is a vital contribution to Holocaust history and a fascinating story of a town coming to terms with its dark past.

Pulse

Flaubert’s Parrot

Nothing to Be Frightened Of

A Corpus Stylistic Analysis

England, England

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.

With the same brilliant style and idiosyncratic intelligence that have marked all his novels--and with a bold grasp of intricate political realities--Julian Barnes's ironic glance turns home. Letters from London takes in everything from Lloyd's of London's demise to Maggie's majesty to Salman Rushie's death sentence. Formidably articulate and outrageously funny, Letters from London is international voyeurism at its best--a peek into the British mindset from the vantage point of one of the most erudite and witty British minds.

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 Macloed, 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.

Only the author of Flaubert’s Parrot could give us a novel that is at once a note-perfect rendition of the angsts and attitudes of English adolescence, a giddy comedy of sexual awakening in the 1960s, and a portrait of the accommodations that some of us call “growing up” and others “selling out.”

Love, Etc

The Silken Web

Talking it Over

The Porcupine

The Only Story

Gratiosque visionary Sir Jack Pitman has an idea. Since most people are too lazy to travel from landmark to landmark, why not simplify things and create a new England on the Isle of Wight? Unfortunately, his idea is a huge success, and the resulting theme park threatens to supersede the original. Called England, England, it has all the elements of “Old England” in one convenient location. Wander into the new Sherwood Forest and you may spot Robin Hood and his now sexually ambiguous Merrie Men. Or take a stroll to see Stonehenge and Anne Hathaway’s Cottage, enjoy a ploughman’s lunch atop the White Cliffs of Dover, then pop over to see the Royals, now on contract to Sir Jack, in their scaled-down version of Buckingham Palace. Every detail has been considered: even the postcards come pre-stamped! Julian Barnes’ first novel in six years is a froliciously funny examination of the search for authenticity and truth in a fabricated world.

In his latest novel, Julian Barnes, author of Talking It Over and A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters, trains his laser-bright prose on the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe. Stoya Petkanov, the deposed Party leader, is placed on trial for crimes that range from corruption to political murder. Petkanov’s guilt -- and the righteousness of his opponents -- would seem to be self-evident. But, as brilliantly imagined by Barnes, the trial of this cunning and unrepentant dictator illuminates the shadowy frontier between the rusted myths of the Communist past and a capitalist future in which everything is up for grabs.

In Love, etc. Julian Barnes has created a deep, dark feast of human frailties and needs. Love, etc. stars three characters introduced a decade ago in Talking It Over — to which this novel has an eerie, freestanding relation. Which is precisely what Stuart felt about his wife Gillian, until his witty, feckless, former best friend Oliver stole her away. Fabulously engaging and profoundly unsettling.

She was Mrs. Lyle Forrest now, the coolly elegant wife of Louisville’s most prominent publisher, the slum girl whose dreams -- and nightmares -- came true the night she married the multimillionaire old enough to be her father. For twelve years Maggy played the role of beautiful, devoted wife, the burnished jewel in Lyle’s crown, mother of the child he adored. She did it for David, the son who could never know the price she paid to protect him, would never see her scars. . . . Suddenly Maggy’s hard-won control shattered when Nick King came back to claim her. It was twelve years since they’d parted, twelve years of fear and loathing at the hands of Lyle Forrest. She couldn’t afford to remember the sordid-searing passion she’d known so long ago in the arms of the only man she’d ever loved. She must think of David, her son, Lyle’s most potent weapon, and not of the man she could never forget, Nick, who’s returned to set her free. . . . A riveting novel of love, lust, and savagery in Kentucky’s bluegrass country—a spellbinding story of a mother’s sacrifice, a dynasty’s power, and one man’s passion to reclaim the woman who was born to be his.

The Man in the Red Coat

A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters
The Crime and the Silence

“Do You Consider Yourself a Postmodern Author?”

First there’s Stuart, stolid, conventional, but not quite so dull as he pretends to be. Then there is Oliver, his glamorous, epigrammatic best friend. And veering wildly between them is Gillian, the cryp- tic beauty who marries Stuart and then astonishes everyone by falling in love with Oliver. These three are at once the pro- tagonists and the hilariously unreliable “eye-witnesses” of this funny, elegant, and affecting novel by bestselling author Julian Barnes, which reimagines the ro- mantic triangle as a weapon whose edges cut like razor blades.

BOOKER PRIZE WINNER • From the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, here is “an intricate and dazzling novel” (The New York Times) about the perfect butler and his fading, insular world in post-World War II England. This is Kazuo Ishiguro’s profoundly compelling portrait of a butler named Stevens. Stevens, at the end of three decades of service at Darlington Hall, spending a day on a country drive, embarks as well on a journey through the past in an effort to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving the “great gentleman,” Lord Darlington. But lurking in his memory are doubts about the true nature of Lord Darlington’s “greatness,” and much greater doubts about the nature of his own life.

From the winner of the 2011 Man Booker Prize for Fiction comes a novel of profound insight and comic flare. Shy, sensible banker Stuart has trouble with women; that is, until a fortuitous singles night, where he meets Gillian, a picture restorer recovering from a destructive affair. Stuart’s best friend Oliver is his complete opposite - a language teacher who “talks like a dictionary”, brash and feckless. Soon Stuart and Gillian are married, but it is not long before a tentative friendship between the three evolves into something far different. Talking It Over is a brilliant and intimate account of love’s vicissitudes. It begins as a comedy of errors, then slowly darkens and deepens, drawing us compellingly into the quagmires of the heart.

Kathleen, Eric and Seth all get caught up in a web of lies so fragile that one fateful encounter could tear it apart - and force Kathleen to make a choice between the family that needs her and the needs of her own heart.

The Oregon Trail

Keeping an Eye Open

Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne

A Novel

Parade’s End

Anyone who loves France (or just feels strongly about it), or has succumbed to the spell of Julian Barnes’s previous books, will be enraptured by this collection of essays on the country and its culture. Barnes’s appreciation extends from France’s vanishing peasantry to its hyper-literate pop singers, from the gleeful iconoclasm of nouvelle vague cinema to the orgy of drugs and suffering that is the Tour de France. Above all, Barnes is an unparalleled connoisseur of French writing and writers. Here are the prolific and priapic Simenon, Baudelaire, Sand and Sartre, and several dazzling excursions on the prickly genius of Flaubert. Lively yet discriminating in its enthusiasm, seemingly infinite in its range of reference, and written in prose as stylish as haute couture, Something to Declare is an unadulterated joy. It’s a hilariously revisionist account of Noah’s ark, narrated by a passenger who doesn’t appear in Genesis. It’s a sneak preview of heaven. It encompasses the stories of a cruise ship hijacked by terrorists and of woodworms tried for blasphemy in sixteenth-century France. It explores the relationship of fact to fabulation and the antagonism between history and love. In short, A History of the World in 10½ Chapters is a grandly ambitious and inventive work of fiction, in the traditions of Joyce and Calvino, from the author of the widely acclaimed Flaubert’s Parrot.

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 Gericault’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.

“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.

Arthur & George

Character and Characterisation in Julian Barnes’ Talking it Over

Cross Channel

Metroland

Discussion Notes on Talking it Over by Julian Barnes

Account of love’s vicissitudes begins as a comedy of misunderstanding, then slowly darkens and deepens.

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.

In his first collection of short stories, Barnes explores the narrow body of water containing the vast sea of prejudice and misapprehension which lies between England and France with acuity humor, and compassion. For he/d their English characters come to France as conquerors or hostages, laborers, athletes, or aesthetes, what they discover, alongside rich food and barbarous sexual and religious practices, is their own ineradicable Englishness. The ten stories that make up Cross Channel introduce us to a plethora of intriguing, original, and sometimes ill-fated characters.

Elegantly conceived and seductively written, Cross Channel is further evidence of Barnes’s wizardry.

Jean Serjeant, the heroine of Julian Barnes’s wonderfully provocative novel, seems ordinary, but has an extraordinary disdain for wisdom. And as Barnes’swinner 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

A New American Journey

Levels of Life

Staring At The Sun

The Lemon Table

Alien Hearts