

# One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories

By B. J. Novak

ONE MORE THING  
STORIES AND OTHER STORIES

B.J. NOVAK

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**One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories** By B. J. Novak

**New York Times Bestseller**

**A startlingly original debut from the actor, writer, director, and executive producer hailed as “a gifted observer of the human condition and a very funny writer capable of winning that rare thing: unselfconscious, insuppressible laughter” (*The Washington Post*).**

A boy wins a \$100,000 prize in a box of Frosted Flakes—only to discover that claiming the winnings might unravel his family. A woman sets out to seduce motivational speaker Tony Robbins—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 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. 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 just that might 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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### Editorial Review

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\*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 enthrallement 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

#### Review

"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*

"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*. . . . 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 enthrallement to the stock market. . . . 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. . . . 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." — *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*

#### About the Author

B.J. Novak is a writer and actor best known for his work on NBC's Emmy Award-winning comedy series *The Office* as an actor, writer, director, and executive producer. He is also known for his stand up comedy performances and his roles in motion pictures such as Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* and Disney's *Saving Mr. Banks*. He is a graduate of Harvard University with a degree in English and Spanish literature.

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