

One More Thing: Stories and Other Stories by B.J. Novak

*Well...I am going to begin by apologizing to those of you that are not fans of the short story format. I am one of those people. I like short stories but having to read an entire book of them can be difficult to garner enthusiasm to finish the book. This is a lesson learned for me and hopefully I will not introduce another one any time soon.*

On a positive note, the short stories were funny! Some more than others but they all had wit, sarcasm, and cynicism...some of my favorite sentiments. If I were to pick a favorite, it has to be "The Rematch". This story taken from the fable of the Tortoise and the Hare is so well written that you can imagine that this is the follow up to the original Aesop's Fable *The Tortoise and the Hare*. Who hasn't wondered what happened to the Hare after his devastating loss to the Tortoise? I really enjoyed that these two characters let the moment define them for the better and worse. And I like that there is a story of redemption and also that it has a moral. It teaches the lesson that we can be impetuous and cocky but if we learn the lesson we can be redeemed with hard work and concerted effort. This was by far my favorite of all of the short stories.

My other top short stories include "Sophia", "Kellogg's" and "Never Fall in Love." The story of "Sophia" was so cleverly written about a female sex robot. Sophia was perfect in every way and, yet, he didn't want her anymore once she showed emotion. Currently, human nature does not allow for empathy and we find ourselves isolated by fear of others emotions, which does not allow us to have true relationships. In "Kellogg's", my favorite statement is that he loved his parents but "I was a name-brand kid, and I was meant to have a name-brand life." We all feel like we don't belong to the family that we grew up with. We feel so different from them but we never act on it because eventually we turn into them. This character refuses to be his parents and acts on his need to be different. I enjoyed "Never Fall in Love" for its brevity and to-the-point message. It is true that once we stop looking for something, it comes to us organically.

Although this is not one of my favorite books, I can appreciate the messages ironically delivered through these extremely short blurbs. It's not a format that I like and I think some of the messages could have been built into greater, longer stories. I admire the author's ability to execute the stories but just wish there had been more of a driven plotline or an overreaching lesson captured throughout the stories. Maybe a book of fables?

What did you think of the short story format? Like? Dislike?

Which was your favorite story in the book?

What was your favorite sentiment throughout the book?

Would you have organized the stories differently? How?

Could the author have combined the stories to make one fluid novel? Was there a theme?