



Nothing to Be Frightened Of

By Julian Barnes

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Nothing to Be Frightened Of By Julian Barnes

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

A *NEW YORK TIMES* BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR

A memoir on mortality as only Julian Barnes can write it, one that touches on faith and science and family as well as a rich array of exemplary figures who over the centuries have confronted the same questions he now poses about the most basic fact of life: its inevitable extinction. If the fear of death is “the most rational thing in the world,” how does one contend with it? An atheist at twenty and an agnostic at sixty, Barnes looks into the various arguments for, against, and *with* God, and at his own bloodline, which has become, following his parents’ death, another realm of mystery.

Deadly serious, masterfully playful, and surprisingly hilarious, *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* is a riveting display of how this supremely gifted writer goes about his business and a highly personal tour of the human condition and what might follow the final diagnosis.

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Nothing to Be Frightened Of By Julian Barnes Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this virtuosic memoir, Barnes (*Arthur & George*) makes little mention of his personal or professional life, allowing his audience very limited ingress into his philosophical musings on mortality. But like Alice tumbling through the rabbit hole, readers will find themselves granted access to an unexpectedly large world, populated with Barnes's daily companions and his chosen ancestors (most of them dead, and quite a few of them French, like Jules Renard, Flaubert, Zola). This is not 'my autobiography,' Barnes emphasizes in this hilariously unsentimental portrait of his family and childhood. Part of what I'm doing—which may seem unnecessary—is trying to work out how dead they are. And in this exploration of what remains, the author sifts through unreliable memory to summon up how his ancestors—real and assumed—contemplated death and grappled with the perils and pleasures of pit-gazing. If Barnes's self-professed amateur philosophical rambling feels occasionally self-indulgent, his vivid description delights. (Sept.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Most critics strongly recommended Julian Barnes's reflections on mortality. However, perhaps reluctant to embrace his disbelief, they seemed more impressed by his descriptive skill in depicting his family—in particular, his emotionally remote brother—even though a few critics cited the author himself as emotionally closed in his personal writing. Reviewers also praised the scope of Barnes's literary erudition more than any actual insight into the subject of death. A few reviewers felt that this dance around the subject makes *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* weaker than Barnes's other books. But most embraced the book's novelistic ambiguity, enjoying the story even if the author himself does not know how it will end.

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From [Booklist](#)

Some say death is “nothing to be frightened of,” but most of us do fear death and dying. British novelist Barnes—reflective and erudite, a stellar stylist and a piquant wit—confronts the paradoxes, fantasies, horrors, mystery, and inevitability of death in this bracing, mordantly funny, and expansive mix of musings, literary criticism, and memoir. Although he assures readers that this is not his autobiography, Barnes does portray himself at transforming moments throughout his life and presents vivid portraits of his grandparents, parents, and philosopher brother Jonathan. He also ponders the fates of his “dead, French, nonblood relatives,” mostly writers he admires, such as Jules Renard, and assays the viewpoints on mortality of such standard-bearers as Montaigne and Richard Dawkins. Laced throughout this satisfyingly riverine blend of inquiry and apologia are sharp comments on religion (who fears death more, a believer or an atheist?); science; and the enshrinement of art. Barnes avers that “death is the one appalling fact which defines life,” then wonders if, for all his skepticism, he doesn’t write in the hope of immortality. --Donna Seaman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Russell Love:

The reason why? Because this *Nothing to Be Frightened Of* is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap that but latter it will shock you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this

book beside it was fantastic author who write the book in such wonderful way makes the content within easier to understand, entertaining approach but still convey the meaning entirely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this any longer or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of positive aspects than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking method. So , still want to delay having that book? If I have been you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

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