



## The Three Button Trick and Other Stories

*Nicola Barker*

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## **The Three Button Trick and Other Stories Nicola Barker**

**Nicola Barker weaves humor and tragedy through this fresh and original collection, as her characters struggle to find love, independence, and fulfillment in this new addition to the Ecco Art of the Story series**

Nicola Barker's collection of her nineteen most brilliant stories exemplifies her ability to create daring, witty, and dynamic characters, all their idiosyncrasies intact. Barker's stories often use wordplay and humor to stretch the boundaries of metaphor and reality as the outrageously original plots unfold. Through her confident and clever style, these short stories sling Barker to the forefront of fiction writing, as she is reminiscent of Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, and Margaret Atwood.

The collection begins with a smart tale of a teenage girl whose obsession with the size of her nose dangerously compromises her relationships with her friends and her family. "Inside Information" is a pun of a title, describing how the protagonist's unborn fetus is the only one able to reform his mother's compulsive shoplifting by pulling the ultimate prank. "G-String" and "Symbiosis: Class Cestoda" detail women who gain self-esteem, albeit through quirky methods, despite the cowardly men who try to suppress them. The title story, "Three Button Trick," is about a man who deliberately buttons his duffel coat incorrectly to attract sympathetic females. Carrie falls for this trick, and it takes twenty-one years, a curious friend, and an eighty-three-year-old widower for her to realize her mistake. Wesley is the protagonist of a three-part collection, "Blisters," "Braces," and "Mr. Lippy" who, traumatized by two unfortunate incidents as a young boy, is an eccentric obsessed with freedom and the sea.

Barker skillfully intertwines humor with despair to stimulate any reader's interest; she taps into the psyches of her characters to create an authentic, original, and highly enjoyable read. *The Three Button Trick and Other Stories* is a resonant, audacious volume from a writer of immense talent and originality.

## **The Three Button Trick and Other Stories Details**

Date : Published January 9th 2001 by Harper Perennial (first published 1999)

ISBN : 9780060933746

Author : Nicola Barker

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## **From Reader Review The Three Button Trick and Other Stories for online ebook**

### **Angus McKeogh says**

Really hit and miss. Some stories great. Some inane and pointless. Have to say I'm a bigger fan of her novels.

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### **Yuliya says**

fun and easy reading. some stories are a little shocking. anything can happen with anyone.

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### **Kira Henehan says**

I like her novels way better but as far as stories go, worth reading.

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### **Melissa says**

Excellent collection of short stories! Hilariously smart and wildly entertaining! Nicola Barker is such a great writer, witty and fresh! Will start to turn even the squeakiest of brain cogs collecting work-funk-dust in your 'ed. ;) If you are a slow reader like me, you will be annoyed that you can't finish some stories in one sitting because you will become addicted to the one you start to read, taking the book with you everywhere and wanting to sneak a peek whenever possible!

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### **Emily says**

She got me again! It is IMPERATIVE that you read her novel Behindlings before reading these stories, the reveal is amazing.

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### **Meghan says**

These stories were incredible. I absolutely love her style! So compelling, totally drawing you in. I was never sure what to expect. She kept me on my toes the whole way through. Thoroughly enjoyed it, and want to read much more by her!

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### **J.M. Hushour says**

Barker's writing is highly disturbing and hilarious. "Inside Information" details the efforts of a fetus who has dirt on the Universal Soul to convince his mother to abort him since birth erases the incarnation memories. "Parker Swells" is about a philosophical fish-pond thief. "The Piazza Barbirini" is indescribable. A few misses, but mostly great.

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### **Allisonm says**

Very different short stories. Each one is about 6 pages, and they all seem to have some really manipulating characters. Totally enjoyable.

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### **Ryan says**

Meh. I'm trying.

But I admit I'm not the biggest reader of short-stories. Some in here are dynamite, but I'm running out of steam.

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### **Nate Johnson says**

The writing is incredibly formulaic. It's the literary equivalent of counting the number of times someone says "um" while delivering a lecture, except not nearly as entertaining.

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### **Peter Arango says**

Every once in a while a collection of short stories turns out to be completely compelling and totally engrossing. I've been teaching Salinger's Nine Stories for years, and I love them, but the time had come to try something contemporary. I had read a couple of Nicola Barker's stories in a collection, and thought she mightbe exactkly the right sort of next book for my seniors. Homerun!

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### **Mylinh says**

A good writer and some good stories, but a few of the stories are a bit too disturbing for me. Didn't finish the book.

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### **Erin says**

The great thing about a short story collection is that there's almost always something for everyone. Which is good because, though I don't think highly of Nicola Barker's much-praised writing talent, I was able to enjoy

a few of the 19 stories included in this volume.

It took 93 pages for me to find a well-crafted, unique short story, but I must admit “Symbiosis: Class Cestoda” was worth the wait. What an astonishing idea! The solution to America’s growing obesity problem: Give them a tapeworm. Why didn’t I think of that? You can eat as much as you like of anything — pizza, pasta, doughnuts, peanuts, HoHos, cream puffs, cookies, ice cream, mocha lattes (a personal weakness) — and not gain a pound! And the brilliance with which Barker’s svelte, tapeworm-carrying character brushes off the man who’d driven her to eat is praiseworthy.

After wading through a few more tedious stories, I discovered “Dual Balls,” similar to “Symbiosis” in its structure and uniqueness. In it, Selina Mitchell, an elderly dumpling who dedicated her life to teaching, is dared by her best friend, Joanna, to do something completely out of character — wear a sexual device to school. If David Sedaris’ satires didn’t count, I would say this is the best short story I’ve read by a modern writer. I’d like to check out one of her novels, but I’m afraid they’d all be as dramatic a hit-or-miss reaction as it was with her short stories.

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