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A brilliantly funny exploration of the twin mysteries of parenthood and families from the Pulitzer Prize winner and *New York Times*—bestselling author of *Insane City*.

In his *New York Times*—bestselling *I'll Mature When I'm Dead*, Dave Barry embarked on the treacherous seas of adulthood, to hilarious results. What comes next? Parenthood, of course, and families.

In uproarious, brand-new pieces, Barry tackles everything from family trips, bat mitzvah parties and dating (he's serious about that title: "When my daughter can legally commence dating—February 24, 2040—I intend to monitor her closely, even if I am deceased") to funeral instructions ("I would like my eulogy to be given by William Shatner"), the differences between male and female friendships, the deeper meaning of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, and a father's ultimate sacrifice: accompanying his daughter to a Justin Bieber concert ("It turns out that the noise teenaged girls make to express happiness is the same noise they would make if their feet were being gnawed off by badgers").

Let's face it: families not only enrich our lives every day, they drive us completely around the bend. Thank goodness we have Dave Barry as our guide!

You Can Date Boys When You're Forty: Dave Barry on Parenting and Other Topics He Knows Very Little About Details

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Ken Cramer says

This is really two books -- one about fatherhood and growing up and relationships, and even how to be a best-selling author... And it's rather funny. But the second book here concerns his trip with his wife and daughter to Israel -- interesting, but not that funny; in fact, at times very heartbreaking. His epiphany is sobering to be sure. But this is why it's really two books, because you cannot push these two pieces together and make them properly stick. Bill Murray encountered the same problem with an audience expecting laughs when he did *Razor' Edge*, just following *Ghostbusters* -- Bill Murray will not be funny even though you expect him to be, and Dave Barry will not be funny in his portrayal of his family trip to Israel, even though you expect him to be.

Sharyn says

I saw Dave Barry at a festival where he was the keynote speaker and the audience did not stop laughing for a minute. I bought this book and got it signed, and he was funny then. I read a chapter every night before bed, laughing throughout. I particularly liked his Israel commentary as I have been to almost all the places he described. It is a Dave Barry book, and if you like his humor you will like the book.

Alan says

Dave Barry misses the mark on this one...

I would not say that I am a dyed-in-the-wool Dave Barry fan (what does died in the wool really mean anyway?), but I have greatly enjoyed some of his earlier books, namely, "Babies and Other Hazards of Sex", "Homes and Other Black Holes", and "Bad Habits". In fact, I had to stop reading these books while lying in bed, because my laughing kept waking up my wife or interrupting her reading.

Seriously, Dave Barry's track record as a humorist is the stuff of legend, which brings us to "You Can Date Boys When You're Forty."

This book also has lots of laugh out loud bits, but it has more than that, too much more. OK, Dave B has a tendency to sprinkle his humor with the occasional expletive, but in this book, it's riddled with them. For some strange reason Dave Barry dowsed this book with episodes of crass vulgarity that IMO were supposed to come off as funny, but as least for me, sorely missed the mark.

I'd be reading along enjoying some truly funny Dave Barry when the evil Dave Barry would pound out of the page and derail the whole experience with excessive and humor-free crass vulgarity. Sigh. Call me a prude, but that was my experience.

The three Dave Barry books I listed at the beginning of this review above live happily on our book shelves, but this one, sadly, is on its way to the recycle bin.

I really, really, really wanted to like the whole thing, but I just couldn't do it.

5 stars for the humor minus two stars for the episodes of crassness.

Rose says

Did I seriously just rate a Dave Barry book two stars for "it was an okay read??" To quote Niles Crane: I'm just going to go check outside and see if the world has ended ...

I've been a Dave Barry fan since the mid-nineties, pouring over his weekly column each Sunday in the newspaper. My first Dave Barry book was "Dave Barry in Cyberspace," given to me as a birthday gift from my mum. I devoured it upon first reading, read it over and over again afterwards, and have been a diehard Barry devotee since then. I believe I have read every single one of his non-fiction books (and I've read many of them dozens of times), and I've adored his three adult novels -- particularly "Insane City," which I'd rank somewhere in my Top Twenty Favorite Novels of all time.

So it hurts quite a lot to find myself giving this offering only two stars. Alas, there's nothing for it. First of all, this is a very slim read. Now, there's actually nothing wrong with that in and of itself; just because a book is short doesn't mean it can't be awesome (Brandon Sanderson's "The Emperor's Soul" springs immediately to mind), so what bugged me wasn't that the book was short.

What bugged me is that, of the nine essays (not counting the introduction) that the book offered, only three were enjoyable: "Sophie, Stella and the Bieber Plan" (in which he takes his twelve-year-old daughter and her best friend to a Justin Bieber concert), "Death" (in which he takes a darkly humorous, and somewhat poignant, look at getting older and facing mortality), and "Seeking WiFi in the Holy Land" (a "travel journal" of sorts in which he recounts his experiences on a two-week trip to Israel).

The other essays, alas, were a bust. Not because they weren't funny -- they technically were -- but because I've read them before. Many, many times. "Air Travelers' FAQ," in which he discusses the perils of air travel? Check. "'Grammar,'" in which he does another encore of his Mr. Language Person column? Check. "Nothing! Really," in which he discusses the hilarious way in which women like to talk about emotions and men _don't_ like to talk about emotions?? Check -- and, if I'm being honest, I'm starting to weary of Barry's observations about How Emotional Women Are So Different From Men, Who Do Not Have Emotions Or Think.

(I'm tired of it in part because it's bunk: yes, the majority of women spend way more time talking about emotions than the majority of men do, but the old "Men Are From Mars" saw is something I'm really past. But I'm ALSO tired of it because Barry's novels _utterly reject the idea_ of easy gender stereotypes, and I can't figure it out. I can't figure how he can write his characters as nuanced men and women who have individual strengths and weaknesses and personalities, and are people first and their gender second -- and yet, in essays, he'll come back to, "It's so HILARIOUS that women expect men to listen to them because men are too dumb to think and women have too many emotions!!" over and over and over. He's PROVEN that he can see people beyond those lines when he writes characters in his novels [Megan from "Insane City" springs immediately to mind], so I just can't figure it.)

Even the "50 Shades" essay was kind of a let-down -- and, seeing as that was the part of the book I was most excited for, it rather pains me to admit to that. Maybe my expectations were too high because he'd done such an incredible job of parodying the "Twilight" series in his last essay collection, "I'll Mature When I'm Dead," and I was expecting similar levels of Awesome with his "50 Shades" commentary ... but I don't know. There was something lacking there.

That's not to say it was all a let-down. "Sophie, Stella and the Bieber Plan" and "Death" were both great reads -- for *entirely* different reasons -- and "the Bieber Plan," in particular, had me laughing out loud quite a lot. And the highlight of the book, "Seeking WiFi in the Holy Land," was very nearly worth the price of the book alone. Barry is a superb travel writer, combining the factual with the personal, the serious look at other places and cultures with the humorous of his fish-out-of-water experiences. I always enjoy reading his essays about his travels ("Dave Barry Does Japan" is my second-favorite non-fiction book of his, second only to "Dave Barry Turns 50"), and this was no exception. I laughed AND I learned -- it was a winning combination.

But for the rest of the book, well ... it's treading old ground. We've been here before. It plays like a collection of Greatest Hits; the fact that it's technically new material doesn't erase the fact that the subject matter has been done by Barry dozens of time before. I was hoping for something like "I'll Mature When I'm Dead," which, for the most part, covered fresh ground.

I can't complain; "I'll Mature When I'm Dead" was a lovely treat, and his novel "Insane City" is one of the more enjoyable novels I've read in the past few years. So we've gotten a lot of good stuff from Barry lately. This just didn't happen to be any of it.

Micahb says

This may more appropriately be titled, "I took a trip to Israel and wrote this book to expense the entire thing". I haven't read a lot of Dave Barry, but what I have read I usually find funny. This was an exception. Maybe it was because I was listening to him read it, maybe my tastes have changed. All I know is, most of the punchlines felt tired and inevitable.

Camille Maio says

I used to read a bunch of Dave Barry's columns, but I don't think I'd ever read a book by him! Loved it. So many laughs. The only part that was slow was the chapter about visiting Israel. It seemed difficult to be humorous in such a solemn place. But huge hats off to all the other chapters, where make this a must-read!

Jennifer W says

I'm biased, Dave Barry reminds me of my dad (I'm trying to think of how to write this review so you all won't think my dad is dead, because he's very much alive). They have the same sense of humor. Repeating things is funny, as is reminiscing about the past when music was good and men were manly. So even if I've heard some of these jokes before (his comments on writing sound similar to previous jokes about The DaVinci Code), I still laughed hysterically and could picture my father laughing hysterically and/or saying

something similar. I laughed my way through this in 2 nights, and really, consider it time well spent. Keep writing funny stuff, and I'll keep reading it and sharing it with my father.

Jan says

I'd read three of Dave Barry's novels before picking up this first non fiction one of his, my first. I thought the novels were pretty funny, especially *Insane City*. I laughed all the way through that one. So I figured this would be more of the same. It wasn't. I was kind of disappointed. It had a few parts that were somewhat amusing, others were just, how can I say it?, well just plain stupid. Not really a book to recommend to anyone. I guess I should have known better when I picked it up at The Dollar Tree, where everything is \$1.00. 'Nuff said.

Donna says

I almost feel bad for giving this only 3 stars. I think sometimes I expect more when I walk into it expecting to be entertained the whole way through because that is who he is and what he does, right? So that is why I feel kind of bad.

I wasn't entertained liked I thought I would be, but I did like it. And some of it was laugh out loud funny. It would have been 4 stars if some of it didn't make me cringe. But I love Dave Barry. I read his column always. I'm still a fan, even if this wasn't my favorite book.

Anne says

Excellent choice for a long family drive. Everyone laughed.

Deborah Markus says

There's no point in reviewing Dave Barry. The only thing to do is quote him, so people can decide for themselves if they enjoy his humor or if -- and I'm not here to judge, since I celebrate diversity of thought and anyway it's not as if we choose what we find funny -- they are bad people.

So here is a quote from Barry's account of his trip to Israel, which I offer to you the way friends of mine sometimes offer me those "super-taster" test strips. Have you seen these? They're these skinny little strips of paper you're supposed to let sit on your tongue for about 15 seconds. If after that time you don't notice anything, you're normal. If you can't keep the paper in your mouth for that long because you're too busy retching and spitting and wondering if everything you eat for the rest of your life is going to taste like a rusty nail (answer: yes), you're what's known as a "super taster," which makes you better than other people -- normal people, nice people, people who can just sit down and eat already without being a total diva about every damned ingredient. What a bunch of freakin' peasants.

Anyway. Here's your quote:

I find a sidewalk stall where an elderly man is displaying many kinds of footwear. I pick up a sandal and show it to the man.

"Forty shekels," he says, in a heavy accent.

At this point, I'm supposed to bargain. All the guide books say so. I'm supposed to offer the man, say, fifteen shekels, and then, in the ancient Middle Eastern tradition, we'll haggle for a while, and finally we will agree on a price. Or we will kill each other's entire families. But the rule of buying in a Middle Eastern market is never pay the asking price.

However, I come from a long line of WASPs. Our tradition is to pay full price, then get revenge by starting an exclusive country club.

So: are you a super taster? I mean, a good person? I mean, do you want to read this book now?

If you're a writer, you should read *You Can Date Boys* just for the last chapter, which will seem terrifyingly familiar to anyone who's had even the tiniest smidgen of success with their writing. This chapter is called "How to Become A Professional Author," and it's all about how, if you'd like to make it big as a writer, you should (of course!) write a long letter to an author you admire and ask for free advice. "This is," as Barry points out, "the only known way to succeed as a writer." Bonus points if you offer the already-successful author the chance to work with you on a project!

Read this book if you need something funny to read, or if you want advice on making big bucks in the field of writing. (Ask me how! Actually, don't!)

Diane ~Firefly~ says

I've always enjoyed Dave Barry's humor. This is a bunch of stories, but the trip to Israel with his wife and daughter doesn't really fit with the rest as it is more serious than funny. It was good and interesting, but jarring against the rest of the stories.

Cyndi says

Back in the nineties Dave Barry had a sitcom on tv with Harry Anderson playing his part. It was called 'Dave's World' and it was hilarious, most of the time. This book is like that. Although parts of it only warrant a chuckle, the rest of it is hilarious.

Tony Laplume says

For the most part, this is Dave being Dave, only older (65!) and somewhat starting to show it (or at least, incapable of ignoring it).

The part I'm going to highlight is Dave not really being Dave at all. The only previous Dave I'm aware of that comes close are the 9/11 material from *Boogers Are My Beat* and *Insane City*. The latter is also his most

recent work of fiction, which unlike a lot of the others is a solo work. It's also his next most recent release.

And so maybe, and in the case of Dave Barry this is definitely speaking in relative terms, Dave is growing up. Just a little.

The part I'm referring to is "Seeking Wifi in the Holy Land," which concerns his family's recent trip to Israel. In which Dave is still funny, but is more than just funny. He sometimes even comes off as profound.

(I mean, the guy *did* win a Pulitzer. They don't give those for fart jokes, do they?)

Anyway, it might be worthwhile for Dave to consider writing more stuff like that. I've said for years he's America's next Mark Twain. This may be some of the material that truly justifies such grandiose statements.

And shockingly, not *once* does his most famous phrase, "would make a great name for a rock band," even get *suggested*. But things are still hearty. And all is right in the world.

Dave's, at least.

Karin says

You Can Date Boys When You're Forty by Dave Barry

★ ★ ★

This is, at the time of this writing, Dave Barry's latest book of hitherto unpublished essays, based on the fact that it was published in 2014 and it's only April. The title, naturally, is misleading and has been chosen from one line in the book because it's funny. Or at least I thought it was funny, and it makes me look good because I—stay with me here—want my kids to hold off on dating until they are twenty-five when their brains have fully matured, biologically speaking. Not that anyone else in my house agrees with me, and one of my daughters has had two boyfriends already and she hasn't even finished high school (I know, you're shocked).

In this book Dave tells us about his trip to a Justin Bieber concert with his 13 year old daughter, Sophie, manliness, what women want (that essay could just as easily be titled "a review of 50 Shades of Grey," and I'm sure I enjoyed it far more than I would ever enjoy the book, which, like his wife, I haven't read), and so on. This book is about more than just laughs, however, for example, in one essay he learns you real good grammar.

So why only three stars, even though my 15 year old yelled at me for laughing too loud when she was trying to fall asleep on a school night? I'll tell you:

1. not all the essays are equally funny
2. sometimes he uses language offensive to me (but perhaps not to you)
3. He is sporting, and I'm not making this up, a haircut that looks a lot like what some of the boys I went to high school wore—in the 1970s.
4. No other reasons that I can think of.

