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A Visit From The Goon Squad



Synopsis

Bennie is an aging former punk rocker and record executive. Sasha is the passionate, troubled young woman he employs. Here Jennifer Egan brilliantly reveals their pasts, along with the inner lives of a host of other characters whose paths intersect with theirs. With music pulsing on every page, *A Visit from the Goon Squad* is a startling, exhilarating novel of self-destruction and redemption. National Bestseller National Book Critics Circle Award Winner PEN/Faulkner Award Finalist A New York Times Book Review Best Book One of the Best Books of the Year: Boston Globe, Chicago Tribune, The Daily Beast, The Miami Herald, The Minneapolis Star-Tribune, Newsday, NPR's On Point, O, the Oprah Magazine, People, Publishers Weekly, Salon, San Francisco Chronicle, Seattle Times, Slate, Time, The Washington Post, and Village Voice

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Customer Reviews

After reading a few chapters of Jennifer Egan's latest novel, *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, I'd determined it was really a collection of linked stories more than a novel. Reading further, however, I saw the larger themes and the cohesiveness of the whole. It is, indeed, a novel, and an excellent one at that! The book opens sometime in the recent past, and kleptomaniac Sasha is recounting a story to her therapist. Her former boss, record producer Benny Salazar, is mentioned in passing. The next chapter takes place several years earlier. Here Sasha is still Benny's assistant, and now it is he that is the first person narrator. Benny's just trying to get through a visit with his pre-teen son while mentally stifling a lifetime's worth of shame. He reflects, in passing, on his old high school gang, and in the next chapter we're back in San Francisco, circa 1980, with them. Benny wants

Alice, but Alice wants Scotty. Scotty wants Jocelyn, but teenage Jocelyn is seeing Lou, a record producer more than twice her age. Don't worry, he'll get his chapter. They all get a chapter or two or three. The story skips back and forth in time and place. The voice moves from first person to third person and even to second. Asides or characters that seemed tangential become central. And eventually several themes become apparent. The main one is not even subtle, as the traversing between points A and B is referenced several times in various ways. Scotty at one point asks, "I want to know what happened between A and B." An aging rock star's comeback album is entitled A to B. Even the two sections of this book, which might have been labeled "Part I" and "Part II" in another book, are here "A" and "B." Another theme is the passage of time.

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