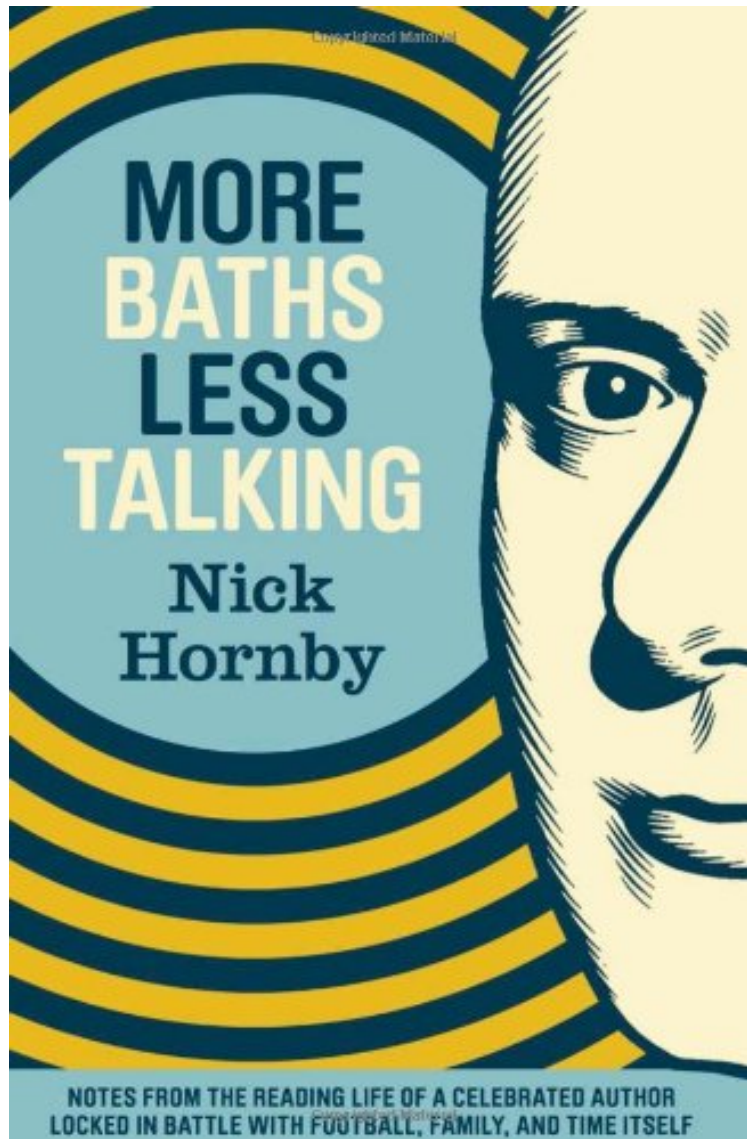


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## More Baths Less Talking: Notes from the Reading Life of a Celebrated Author Locked in Battle with Football, Family, and Time Itself

*Nick Hornby*

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**Nick Hornby : More Baths Less Talking: Notes from the Reading Life of a Celebrated Author Locked in Battle with Football, Family, and Time Itself** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised More Baths Less Talking: Notes from the Reading Life of a Celebrated Author Locked in Battle

with Football, Family, and Time Itself:

18 of 18 people found the following review helpful. More Lucy Less HuckBy takingadayoffDespite the promise that the previous volume of *Stuff I've Been Reading* columns would be the last (*Shakespeare Wrote for Money*), Nick Hornby is back with another. The format is simple and irresistible. He lists the books he's bought (including books given to him or that he borrowed) and the books he's read in the past month. Then he writes about them and anything else that's on his mind for a couple of pages. It's less a column really, and more of a blog that has a casual and sometimes first draft feel. It's fun to compare what you've been reading to his choices and if you've any books in common, to see what he thinks about them. In the past few years, he's made some changes in his reading patterns. He used to read a lot of contemporary fiction, and now he reads backlist items as well and more non-fiction. And since he's now an Academy Award nominated screenwriter, some of the books he reads are Hollywood-oriented. Right off the bat, Hornby mentions a book I had started to read but gave up as potentially too depressing - David Kynaston's *Austerity Britain*. Hornby talked me into giving it another shot. It sounds like the kind of social and political history that Dominic Sandbrook and David McCullough do so well. He reads biography, history, children's books, even a self-help title. He reaches back in time to catch up with Muriel Sparks' fiction and several Charles Dickens novels. Many 'books bought' never make it to the 'books read' column, including *Babbitt* and *Peter Pan*. He has a weakness for gossipy and well-written biography such as Steven Kanfer's *Ball of Fire* (Lucille Ball) and Richard Schickel's *Elia Kazan*, the latter title not being quite gossipy enough. In keeping with the spirit of the magazine he is writing for, Hornby stays away from saying negative things about the books, which is too bad since you get the feeling he is holding back. But occasionally he drops his guard and lets a criticism slip past. Impressed by Ernest Hemingway's claim that it was the book from which all American literature derives, Hornby reads *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. He dismisses it with a single "meh," which I completely agree with. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. My GuyBy C. EbelingNick and me, we're just an old couple who met way back in the day in *The Polysyllabic Spree*, his first collection of "Stuff I've Been Reading" columns from *The Believer Magazine*. He had me at the first bifurcated list of books bought and books read. We're celebrating our 4th anniversary of book talk with *More Baths, Less Talk*. We finish each other's sentences now, pick up one another's books, even the obscure ones. We're comfortable. Okay, maybe he's a little grumpier now and then, and there is that time of the year when he just lies on the couch watching World Cup soccer, then tries to cover up his lack of reading with idle chatter about anything other than books. He apparently has endless shelf space, too, which he does not share with me. But has the magic faded? Nah, and it never will. The books change all the time, keeping the conversation fresh and surprising. We share values (yup, one factual error and a novel loses its ability to suspend my disbelief, too). The guy's fiction is pretty darn good, too. I'm looking forward to more anniversaries of any kind. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Favorite Hornby booksBy Debnance at ReaderbuzzI've read a good bit of Nick Hornby, but I have to say that my favorite Nick Hornby books are these, the books composed of essays he has written for *The Believer*. Hornby has compiled several books now that are composed entirely of essays about the books Hornby is reading. Oddly, I haven't read much of what Hornby reads and I'm not inspired to go out and buy the books he reads, but (who knows why?) I'm terribly intrigued at reading about Hornby's reading. Lots of biographies and classics and histories. Books about musicians and soccer players and politicians. I don't read any of that. Almost never. But I still love reading about the books he has read and attempted to read and (even) given up on. Mysterious.

"Read what you enjoy, not what bores you," Nick Hornby tells us. That simple, liberating, and indispensable directive animates each installment of the celebrated critic and author's monthly column in the *Believer*. In this delightful and never-musty tour of his reading life, Hornby tells us not just what to read, but how to read. Whether tackling a dismayingly bulky biography of Dickens while his children destroy something in the next room, or getting sucked into a serious assessment of Celine Dion during an intensely fought soccer match featuring his beloved Arsenal, or devouring an entire series of children's books while on vacation, Hornby's reviews are rich, witty, and occasionally madcap. These essays capture the joy and ire, the despair and exhilaration of the book-lover's life, and will appeal equally to both monocle-wearing salonnières and people, like him, who spend a lot of time thinking about Miley Cyrus's next role.

"Hornby is a champion of the book, of reading, of the pleasure of a smart literary experience. He has a quality desperately needed in these times: intelligent enthusiasm."—*The New Republic*"A witty and illuminating blueprint to the habits and how-to's of reading good books well."—*Brain Pickings*"[Nick Hornby] has a knack for creating appealingly irresolute characters and is a genial guy with excellent taste and a smart, irreverent sense of humor."—*Boston Globe*"...this book is much more than funny. He understands writers and what they are trying to do. This book crackles with insight."—*Star Tribune*"A wonderfully eclectic to-read list, Hornby reminds everyone how important it is to revel in the written word."—*Publishers Weekly*"Hornby is an entertainingly unpretentious critic; any

reader would come away with a handful of book recommendations they'd be eager to check out."—Kirkus