



Clothing Optional: And Other Ways to Read These Stories

Alan Zweibel

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“Garry, it’s Alan. Look, I’m calling because I just felt the need to tell someone that I’m forty-four years old, and about an hour ago, for the first time in my life, I put suntan lotion on my ass. I’ll explain later. Bye.”

In **Clothing Optional**, Alan Zweibel offers a collection of laugh-out-loud personal narratives, essays, short fiction, dialogues, and even a few whimsical drawings. Zweibel first made a name for himself as one of the original writers for *Saturday Night Live*, but his career’s humble beginnings included creating one-liners for Catskill comedians at seven dollars a pop. That experience is only one of the hysterically inspired anecdotes (“Comic Dialogue”) in this quirky compilation.

Zweibel confesses his first love, as a young Hebrew school student, for Abraham’s wife, Sarah (“At this point, Sarah’s husband had been dead for more than three thousand years—so, really, who would I be hurting?”); recounts the time he was sent to a nudist resort to write an article (“The fact that I brought luggage is, in itself, worthy of some discussion”); offers a touching tribute to Saturday Night Live writer and mentor Herb Sargent (“Herb was New York. But an older, more romantic New York that took place in black and white like the kind of TV I grew up on and wanted to be a part of someday”); and imagines a scenario in which Sergeant Joe Friday, the stiff, monotoned character from *Dragnet*, is inexplicably partnered with Snoop Dogg (“Damn, Friday. You gotta learn to chill. Take some free time and kick it with your boys”)

Every piece is punctuated with the same wit and insight that have come to define Zweibel’s humor.

Unhinged and hilarious, **Clothing Optional** is an unguided tour through the uniquely peculiar life and mind of a man who *The New York Times* said “has earned a place in the pantheon of American pop culture.”

From the Hardcover edition.

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