



## The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up

*Jacob M. Appel*

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## **The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up** Jacob M. Appel

Arnold Brinkman is a shy and retiring botanist; he loves his plants more than his country. But when his refusal to stand for the national anthem at a baseball game causes a major media incident, he is thrown into a world of pushy patriots, preachers, and press. And it's not going to get any easier when he refuses to apologize.

A hilarious bullet into the heart of modern America, this novel mixes the literary sensibilities of Jonathan Franzen with the raucous satire of D.B.C. Pierre, and was the recipient of the Dundee International Book Prize.

## **The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up Details**

Date : Published September 1st 2014 by Cargo Publishing (first published October 1st 2012)

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Author : Jacob M. Appel

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## From Reader Review The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up for online ebook

### Allie Riley says

Enjoyable satire. Arnold Brinkman, a liberal botanist from New York finds himself labelled a terrorist and traitor, a non-patriot (where patriot is construed as a moral virtue) because he fails to stand and sing "God Bless America" in tribute to two fallen soldiers at a baseball game. His failure to apologize means that things rapidly escalate and he eventually finds himself on the lam with a \$500,000 reward being offered for his capture.

This novel started off scarily believable and remained so for the most part before becoming slightly ridiculous. In all honesty that's part of what made it so enjoyable. The upholding of a particular brand of patriotism as a virtue and the decrying of those who failed to comply was taken to its most extreme conclusion in order to expose some of its flaws. Worth reading.

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### Kasa Cotugno says

Arnold Brikman is described as a "shy and retiring botanist," but his insistence on standing by his principles gets him in more trouble than he'd bargained for, making him the center of attraction as well as a fugitive. Hilarious. Written by a botanist, there is much insider info about making flowers the center of a diet as well as how to survive on the run in plain sight.

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### Rebecca McNutt says

A darkly comedic vision of the cost of blind patriotism, *The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up* still manages to be tasteful, but takes a more lighthearted view of tragedy.

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### Jared Della Rocca says

Two copies of this book was sent to our academic library by the author. We rarely get unsolicited works, and so the technical services librarian dropped the extra copy on my desk, knowing how much I read. I took a quick perusal of the back cover and asked her about it, since I didn't remember ordering it. She told me we had gotten two and thought I might want to read it. The premise looked interesting enough, so I thought I'd give it a try.

Well I'm glad I did, it's a really amusing story! Yeah there are some really far-fetched sections, and it's in desperate need of a copy-editor (grammatical errors, extra words where a sentence had been changed) but the story itself was really quirky and drew me in. It's a pretty quick read, but definitely enjoyable and something I would recommend for a trip to the beach or a flight.

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## Harry Maier says

Good start to this book by a man accomplished in many fields (law, medicine, journalistic reporting, and fiction). This won him a big literary award for humour, which is why I decided to read it. It is a satire on post 9-11 America and the "man who wouldn't stand up" becomes an invocation to do just that. However, the happy ending as well as the camp treatment of the protagonist's unlikely alliance with an eccentric criminal derails the book and reduces its capacity to be the satire it wants to be. It is truly disappointing that more is not made of Cassandra, whose name promises to add complexity to the plot, but ultimately goes nowhere. Further, one can't help but wonder whether the casting of the protagonist as a gardener who has effectively retreated from life isn't a gloss on Voltaire's *Candide*: in this day and age, it no longer suffice merely to tend your own garden. But again this goes nowhere and left me thinking I was making things up. If you want a diversion, this is a good read. If you are looking for thoughtful satire, take a pass.

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## Connie says

I really enjoyed this book that I won from Goodreads First reads. It made me think about whether we do things because it's expected or because we actually want to. The book had a huge variety of unusual characters all connected to a quiet guy who just wanted to do his own thing, which was mainly caring for his beloved plants. When life threw him a curve at a baseball game, his world was turned upside down. Some events were funny and some were sad and many reminded me of public figures that always turn up at happenings to further their own agenda. I had guessed about what the ending might be but it was not what I expected. I think that the story was very good and I would certainly suggest reading it. (I think that it's also begging for a sequel!)

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## Carlos Mock says

The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up by Jacob M. Appel

This is a satirical farce of what life has become in America post 9/11.

Arnold Binkmann is a liberal botanist living in New York City. He's married to Judith and lives a quiet life amongst his plants, nursery, and books. He does not like children. One day, Arnold is forced to take his nephew, Ray, to a game at Yankee stadium. On the 7th inning, as they play God Bless America, Arnold refuses to stand up. He's captured by the giant video screen on the stadium and Arnold defies the crowd by sticking his tongue out.

That's where things go south for Arnold. He's accused of being unpatriotic. His house is surrounded by the press and a religious fanatic: the reverend Spotty Spitford, all of them who insist that Arnold apologize.

The story could have ended here, if Arnold had apologized, but instead, Arnold refuses to do so. Things get nasty after this: Arnold's beautiful garden is vandalized, he goes to Reverend Spitford's church and insults him with a racial expletive, breaking a window from the church with a bible. The manager at Arnold's nursery business turns out to be Fidel Castro's man in Caracas - a famous terrorist who blew up a plane. Arnold is now wanted as a terrorist, and must hide from society. There's a possibility he may face prison time.

Out of options, Arnold is forced to share Cassandra's studio apartment in Brooklyn - the reporter who wanted an exclusive interview with him. As Cassandra reveals that she was the one who vandalized his garden, he storms out of her apartment and ends up being homeless on Central Park. There he meets the scandalous Bare Ass Bandit and joins him in his crime spree. Arnold loses all sense of humanity.

Finally, as Arnold is rejected by the Bandit, Arnold has a complete awakening. He realizes that: "Ordinary life is what he longed for more than anything. That and his wife." So he decides to go home and face the consequences of his actions.

The book is narrated from Arnold's third person point of view. Filled with insightful dialog, Appel exposes the sad state of our country. The right wing media has made a farce of being a patriot. Much like Becket's *Waiting for Godot*, Appel creates a story so absurd that the only reason we're drawn to the plot is because it seems so "real." Anyone who's listened to Fox News gets a daily dose of the absurd. Arnold expresses his sentiment best when he states: "Better to be uninformed than regularly demoralized." A wonderful and easy read! I recommend it highly....

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### **Lori says**

I won a goodreads first reads copy of the book " The Man Who Wouldn't Stand Up" by Jacob M. Appel. This story is about a man named Arnold Brinkman, he is in his late fifties, Arnold is a Botanist and has written many books on the subject of plants. Arnold Brinkman led a quiet life until the day he went to a baseball game with his nine year old nephew in New York. In between innings the audience was asked to stand up while "God Bless America" Was played. It was in honor of local soldiers. Arnold Brinkman chose to sit instead of stand up. This may have gone without notice but the stadium camera decided to focus on Arnold sitting and his image was shown on the big screen for all to see. When Arnold noticed himself on the screen instead of standing up he stuck out his tongue. this one second brought on a backlash for Arnold Brinkman. He had insulted a nation and America wanted an apology. For the next two to three months Arnold's quiet life had Terrible consequences. His life was turned into a hell he was unprepared for. now the press was on his block with hundreds of angry protester who are demanding that apology. They wanted Arnold's head on a platter. He could not leave his home.yet one night Arnold escaped his home and for the two months he was on the run. finding a way to survive, including hanging with people who he never thought possible. bad decisions along the way. I do not want to give too many spoilers. I felt sorry for Arnold in the beginning, he was an ass for sticking his tongue out but did not deserve the backlash and unwanted media circus that he and his wife endured. I also thought some of later chapters with Arnold on the run with the bandit is far fetched. For the most part I enjoyed this book. by Jacob Appel.

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### **Jessica says**

Arnold Brinkman, a botanist living in New York City, is a pretty good guy. He "recycles scrupulously and overpays his taxes," he's a loving husband, and he manages to live a pretty normal, low-key life. But then he refuses to stand up at a baseball game while "God Bless America" plays as a tribute to two local soldiers killed in action. He becomes the talk of the town immediately, labelled everything from a loser to a nutcase, and eventually a traitor and a terrorist. Arnold soon becomes the most wanted man in the country and is forced to go into hiding, shacking up with some unlikely characters to avoid jail time or worse for his "crime."

This book was a great satire that made some fantastic points regarding patriotism, mob mentality, and the media and sensationalism. I loved that this book managed to be a fun and interesting read while still raising some serious questions about our society.

I really enjoyed reading this book overall. I only had a couple of issues with this book -- there were quite a few grammatical and punctuation errors (I read an e-book copy that I won free in a giveaway, so I'm not sure if these issues have been fixed in print copies) and I really hated the ending. (view spoiler) Problems aside, I really liked this book, but it isn't the kind of book I'd recommend to everyone I know. I think only a certain type of person will enjoy the combination of farce, wit, satire, and the slightly pretentious vibe that the main character gives that make up this story, but I would recommend it to those who enjoy sarcasm and have a politically incorrect sense of humor.

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### **Angie says**

This book felt less like a satire and more like a farce to me. And in general, I don't enjoy farces. It wasn't a witty farce -- there are no real laugh lines. But the plot is ridiculous, the main character a caricature, and much of it doesn't make any sense. I felt like it started out with the potential to be a satire -- indeed the first 50 pages or so felt like they might develop into something really interesting. But then it fell short.

In one line, the character mentions Rosa Parks and compares himself to her with a scoff. In one sense, the comparison works at the beginning. Rosa Parks was also an accidental protester -- she has often said that she wasn't planning a national movement, she was just tired that day. But her movement was meaningful enough that it was turned into a national movement, and she was dignified enough to make it work. This guy isn't. In fact, for all his education, he really isn't very smart. At all. In fact he's so stupid that I lost interest in him.

All right, so what was the author trying to say with this? I have some guesses. Maybe:

"No matter how respectable we seem, we are all one tiny mishap away from our lives falling apart enough for us to expose the selfish, violent cad inside."

And then some ancillary points:

"Ethnicists are amoral."

"People who like plants should not be trusted."

"We might all be surrounded by closet criminals."

"A good woman will love you even though you don't deserve it in any way."

So, not my cup of tea. I was hoping for more from the book description. But that being said, there are probably lots of people out there who will enjoy the humor in it.

I got a free copy of this ebook in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Amy says**

Wow. Not really sure where to start. I gotta admit, the main character of this book is pretty awesome. I could completely relate to his predicament. I always hated being made to say the pledge of allegiance in school and I can't stand patriotic anthems. I've always thought that being forced to be patriotic is about the most

unpatriotic thing you can inflict upon someone. Although I don't have a problem with other people's actions, it really bothers me when they try to impose their systems on me. I leave them alone, I'd like the same courtesy in return. So yeah, I get this guy. I was totally behind him and his outrage. Which means you go on a really weird ride with him when he processes his own reactions and follows the domino trail. Feeling sympathy for him you just can't hate him for his own bad decisions. It's a very strange place to find yourself. Not sure I've felt so thoroughly connected throughout such a train wreck before. Must be a sign of brilliant story-telling.

This review is based on a free copy obtained through GoodReads First Reads.

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### **S. says**

I had a lot of mixed feelings about this one. On one hand, the characters were very well developed and believable and the plot is funny and fast paced. On another hand, however, the plot is also so unbelievable in some parts that it's really hard to feel like it could be real.

The writing is very fluent and consistent, very much like all the short-stories the author usually writes, the only difference is that this one's a novel. It feels like a short story but much longer.

The dark humour and the fact that the narrative is coherent, even though unbelievable, make for an enjoyable read.

Note: I've been kindly sent this book by the author, but that fact hasn't influenced my opinion of it. My review would probably be exactly the same if I had bought the book myself.

Full review at my reading blog: <https://passarinforeads.wordpress.com...>

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### **Anne says**

Fantastic! Kafkaesque, it reminded me of so many things. I suppose Jonathan Swift with 'A Modest Proposal' springs to mind, and Christopher Fowler's *Disturbia*. The satire is perfect. The nightmare complete. I loved every minute because it was so crazy. Who the hell reacts this way over one man not getting to his feet. It makes you put a lot of things into perspective. I think twice before getting aeriaded about anything now. Does it really matter? In then grand scheme of things who cares? Will the world stop if someone doesn't sing or tears a flag? It's just a song or a piece of fabric - in the words of the late Michael Winner "Calm down, Dear!"

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### **Jessica says**

I received this book for free from the author in exchange for an honest review.

As usual, Appel's characters are always so unique and eccentric and I loved all of them.

The only thing I didn't quite like was how absurd it got in the middle/end. It went a little too crazy.

Overall, I enjoyed it and it was another solid work of fiction from Appel.

## **Cindy says**

When Arnold Brinkman refuses to stand up for the National Anthem during a baseball game all hell breaks loose. And when he refuses to apologize for his non action Arnold becomes America's most hated and wanted man. Jacob Appel's book is satire at its finest. It's outrageous and over-the-top comical with unbelievable situations that made me shake my head and say what's next!. I absolutely loved this story and smiled while reading. Thank you, Mr. Appel, for sending me a complimentary copy. Love your writing and all your crazy and fascinating characters!

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