



The Polysyllabic Spree

Nick Hornby

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The Polysyllabic Spree is the first title in the Believer Book series, which collects essays by and interviews with some of our favorite authors—George Saunders, Zadie Smith, Michel Houellebecq, Janet Malcolm, Jim Shepard, and Haruki Murakami, to name a few. In his monthly column "Stuff I've Been Reading", Nick Hornby lists the books he's purchased and the books he's read that month - they almost never overlap - and briefly discusses the books he's actually read. The Polysyllabic Spree includes selected passages from the novels, biographies, collections of poetry, and comics discussed in the column.

The Polysyllabic Spree Details

Date : Published November 30th 2004 by McSweeney's (first published 2004)

ISBN : 9781932416244

Author : Nick Hornby

Format : Paperback 143 pages

Genre : Writing, Essays, Nonfiction, Books About Books, Humor

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From Reader Review The Polysyllabic Spree for online ebook

Shirley says

Hornby is utterly honest and unpretentious when it comes to appraising both his varying abilities to read the books he has bought (in general, purchased books far outpace the read ones, of course) and the books he's actually read.

I love this: "all the books we own, both read and unread, are the fullest expression of self we have at our disposal." That's the best nod to cognitive dissonance I've heard in some time. (Oh yes, I do intend to read those biographies of Rilke and Woolf on my shelf some day...)

Steve says

Nick Hornby has always been an interesting figure to me, at a remote intersection between the laddish and the literary. His defining affections are football (the English kind), rock music, and pub culture. At the same time, he reads lots of books – and some of them are serious. Maybe such a subspecies is less rare in England, but where I'm from they're scarce. Of course, as a writer it's not so surprising that he's a reader, too. It's the kind of books he reads, though, and his criterion for choosing them that makes *Polysyllabic Spree* worthwhile to read. It's a short compilation of columns he wrote for Dave Eggers' magazine *The Believer* where he discussed his monthly book purchases and gave short reviews of the ones he actually read (with the former list always longer than the latter). He also included a few excerpts, among them works by Dickens, Chekhov and Patrick Hamilton.

Hornby's well-stropped wit, where the jokes are often at his own expense, complements his entertaining take on things from the Every Man point of view. Joe Sixpack was the old appellation around these parts, but I'm not sure what the English equivalent might be – something involving pints and pies I would guess. Anyway, he's not the type to be taken in by anything pretentious and "litrary" . At the same time, he can enjoy good writing; even classics and critically acclaimed stuff. Maybe I'm making too much of this, but if his other interests really do seem at odds with his taste for the writerly arts, the apparent anomalies somehow make his declarations more affecting. Maybe it's like the extra attention you might pay to a hipster extolling the virtues of one Jane Austen novel over another, or a guy in a hoodie holding court on which cozy mysteries are best. A fresh perspective can be good, especially from a fish who cares enough to come out of the water to give it. Beyond that, Hornby himself writes very well. Despite his incongruities (or maybe because of them), to my mind he's credible. He sold me on a good half-dozen titles from his list.

Jasmine says

This book has convinced me I have to read *How to Breathe Underwater*, *Meat is Murder*, *We're in Trouble*, and *True Notebook*.

Hornby is interesting and fun he makes fun of the believe staff and does his best to not make fun of books, he fails miserably. I'll be off buying the next two volumes while you are all out buying this one.

It reminds me of Umberto Eco when he talks about how important it is to own books that you don't read and

how stupid people are who ask if you have read them all.

Ruthiella says

“Last month, I ended by saying that I was in need of some Dickensian nutrition, and maybe it’s because I’ve been sucking on the bones of pared-down writing for too long. Where would David Copperfield be if Dickens had gone to writing classes? Probably about seventy minor characters short, is where.”

What an entertaining and humorous collection of essays about reading, not reading and the acquisition of books. I really enjoyed the heck out of this slim volume, reading one or two essays per day. Any serious reader will recognize many of their own foibles and feel at home in these pages and he’s a fan of Dickens, what more could I want?

Phrynne says

This book is a collection of the author's articles written for a literary magazine. Each one starts with a list of the books he has bought and the books he has read that month. He always buys many more than he reads - a familiar problem. I love Nick Hornby's sense of humour and laughed out loud many times while reading, plus I shared the best bits with anyone who would listen and they unfailingly laughed too. I enjoyed this book much more than I expected to. A really good read.

Cheryl says

Nick Hornby begins his book with the month of Sept 2003, listing on the left the 10 books he acquired that month (a few Salingers, a couple of biographies, some poetry), and the 4 books he read that month (the Salingers and one from a TBR pile).

And then he tells us, *“So this is supposed to about the how, and when, and why, and what of reading--about the way that, when reading is going well, one book leads to another and to another, a paper trail of theme and meaning; and how, when it's going badly, when books don't stick or take, when your mood and the mood of the book are fighting like cats, you'd rather do anything but attempt the next paragraph, or reread the last one for the tenth time.”*

Well, this kind of book is tailor-made for Goodreads fans. In a way, Goodreads is a polysyllabic spree too.

“All the books we own, both read and unread, are the fullest expression of self we have at our disposal...But with each passing year, and with each whimsical purchase, our libraries become more and more able to articulate who we are, whether we read the books or not.”

I would add that not only do our libraries articulate who we are, they also articulate who we want to be.

On quoting Gabriel Zaid, “the truly cultured are capable of owning thousands of unread books without losing their composure or their desire for more.”, he enthuses *“That’s me! And you, probably! That’s us!”*

Yes! it is me! Hi! (nerdy Horshack wave) Thanks for giving me again even more titles for my TBR pile, Nick! (So Many Books: Reading and Publishing in an Age of Abundance)

This inaugural volume is the second one I've read in this series (the first was the last one of the series, More Baths, Less Talking) and it's just as good.

Lauren says

This is for the true bibliophile - for those I-can't-stop-buying-new-books-even-though-I-have-piles-unread-at-home types (a group to which I happily claim membership). Nick Hornby spent a little over a year analyzing his reading habits - what he bought, what he started and couldn't finish, what he loved - and each month printed an article in the Believer magazine with his musings. I was hesitant at first to read the collected articles because I thought I'd have to have Nick Hornby's taste in books (whatever that is). What I found was a surprisingly insightful look at the love of reading. I found myself dog-eared pages to read passages on the phone to my father (my bibliophile role model), or to remind myself of books that sounded interesting (damn you, Nick Hornby, for encouraging my habit!). He really sums the whole thing up when he says, "I suddenly had a little epiphany: all the books we own, both read and unread, are the fullest expression of self we have at our disposal." Indeed. I highly encourage you to add this one to your collection.

Chelsea says

Oh, Nick Hornsby. You are a clever, clever man. Now I'm going to have to suck it up and read some of your novels.

He talks about books, and how he keeps buying books, but not necessarily reading them. And then he decides that a person's collection of books - the ones they bought rather than the ones they've read - is the best way to define them. And then I considered proposing.

I think I would have given it a five if I had read more of the books he talked about. Or heard of, even. But I still enjoyed him, and his mocking of the Polysyllabic Spree.

Kim says

So, I have this Dunkin Donuts receipt that I was using for a place-mark for this book. It's from March 14th and it's for 3 iced coffees... and now it's torn and there's a gaping hole right over the total, it looks like it got wet at some point. There are numbers written all over it, some circled, some underlined, some with exclamation points. There's something sticky on the edge. I was number 750.

I sort of feel like that right now. It did a really good job holding my spot (twss) and it didn't complain or get lost or anything. I ran out of space to write on it so I had to switch to a cleaner note pad piece of paper and yet it stuck with me because it knew that I would need it someday.

Let's start at the first number... 25:

"I reread Stop-Time because Frank Conroy is so eloquent and moving about books and their power at the end of Stone Reader. I don't reread books very often; I'm too conscious of both my ignorance and my mortality. ...But when I tried to recall anything about it other than its excellence, I failed. Maybe there was something about a peculiar stepfather? Or was that This Boy's Life? And I realized that, as this is true of just about every book I consumed between the ages of say fifteen and forty, I haven't even read the books I think I've read. I can't tell you how depressing this is. What's the fucking point?"

Well said, Nick. This is why we are soul mates. You may not know that right now. You may sit in your flat in London listening to music and reading emails and such, drinking tea and watching your children play. Maybe you should close your drapes in case someone is watching? You are oblivious that I am the one for you. I am the Annie Wilkes to your Paul Sheldon. (You dirty dirty bird.)

Nick used to write a column for something called The Believer. It sounds like a magazine or something, I don't care. He writes about books that he's purchased and books that he's read each month. Hmm... sounds somewhat familiar. (except, like, he gets paid for it) How many reviews have I read over my 3 ½ years here on GR? What did I do before GR? Scan the NYTBR? Not really. Okay, sometimes... but, this--- this beautiful community has expanded my vistas... I have 409 books on my to-read shelf. How awesome is that? I know that GR gets a lot of flack, mainly from within... too many vote whores, too many silly reviews that have nothing to do with the book, too many pictures, too many cliques, yadda yadda yadda... As Steppenwolf once sang "Nothing is like it used to be." So what? It is what it is (Lifehouse) and I like it. I am guilty of many of the aforementioned grumblings and I don't care. And I really like that Nick Hornby likes to do it (heh) too. (Oh forgive me Paul for prattling away and making everything all oogy)

I recently wrote a review for Julie Orringer's *How to Breathe Underwater*--a collection of short stories. I stammered and driveled throughout it. Nick read it too and this little summary: "*Orringer writes about things that everyone writes about--youth, friendship, death, grief, etc.---but her narrative settings are fresh and wonderfully knotty. So, while her themes are as solid and recognizable as oak trees, the stuff growing on the bark you've never seen before.*" **BAM!** (God, I love you.)

This, by the way, is the only book he reviews that I've read. I'm such a lacking stalker.

Next number: 58

"One of the reasons I wanted to write this column, I think, is that because I assumed that the cultural highlight of my month would arrive in book form, and that's true, for probably eleven months of the year. Books are, let's face it, better than everything else. If we played Cultural Fantasy Boxing League, and made books go fifteen rounds in the ring against the best that any other art form had to offer, then book would win pretty much every time. Go on, try it. "The Magic Flute" v. Middlemarch? Middlemarch in six. "The Last Supper" v. Crime and Punishment? Fyodor on points. See? I mean, I don't know how scientific this is, but it feels like the novels are walking it."

(MISERY IS ALIVE!! MISERY IS ALIVE!!! Oh, this whole house is going to be full of romance! Ooooooh! I'M GOING TO GO PUT ON MY LIBERACE RECORDS!)

Don't fight it, Nick. It's like the fates have spoken, my love.

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"I am, I think, a relatively passive reader, when it comes to fiction. If a novelist tells me that something happened, then I tend to believe him, as a rule. In his memoir Experience, Martin Amis recalls his father, Kingley, saying that he found Virginia Woolf's fictional world "wholly contrived: when reading her he found that he kept interpolating hostile negatives, murmuring 'Oh no she didn't' or Oh no he hadn't' or 'Oh no it wasn't' after each and every authorial proposition"; I only do that when I'm reading something laughably bad."

Ok, there's a difference between passive and passion. I only passionately throw books against walls and yell at characters who do stupid things. It's because I CARE. This is why I love this site, because people write with enthusiasm and it's not all textbooky and crap. This is what I love about this collection. The ranting

about football and why finishing David Copperfield left you feeling bereft. There's always MORE to the story because we are self centered narcissists. And that's okay.

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"I don't have the wall space or the money for all the art I would want, and my house is a shabby mess, ruined by children...But with each passing year, and with each whimsical purchase, our libraries become more and more able to articulate who we are, whether we read the books or not. Maybe that's not worth the thirty-odd quid I blew on those collections of letters, admittedly, but it's got to be worth something, right?"

I don't feel so guilty that I have a whole bookcase of un-read books or that I haven't read Dickens yet or that I still go to the library every week and I still look forward to sharing my thoughts with this wacky ass community on GR. Wow, this was as rewarding as a shrink session. The weight has been lifted, Nick! Grumblers grumble on. I've been vindicated, time to get another iced coffee.

Sue says

Absolutely loved this book. I not only laughed out loud many times, I snickered many more, I have a list of books I want to check out (and some music), and I and I have even more admiration for Dickens. I also really enjoy meeting another reader who buys books for the love of them, not knowing exactly when he will read them (if ever).

Another of my favorite quotes: "Zaid's finest moment, however, comes in his second paragraph, when he says that 'the truly cultured are capable of owning thousands of unread books without losing their composure or their desire for more.'" (referring to So Many Books, Gabriel Zaid) p 124

Hornby reads widely so the reader is exposed to so many books, old, new, literary, sport. Run, don't walk, to get a copy if you enjoy reading about reading (unless you require it be "serious").

Heartily recommended

Addendum: The quote below (p 91) where Hornby writes he read but never swore once, refers to his reading poetry, specifically What Narcissism Means to Me by Tony Hoagland. He offered his "line" up as a cover blurb thinking it might be useful on a book of poetry.

Diana says

A collection of Hornby's columns from the Believer magazine. He starts with a plea for eliminating dullness in books:

'It is set in stone, apparently: books must be hard work, otherwise they're a waste of time. And so we grind our way through serious, and sometimes seriously dull, novels, or enormous biographies of political figures, and every time we do so, books come to seem a little more like a duty, and Pop Idol starts to look a little more attractive.'

And then:

'If you're reading a book that's killing you, put it down and read something else, just as you would reach for the remote if you weren't enjoying a TV programme.'

I read on eagerly waiting for lists of brilliant, readable, funny, informative books. Very exciting. I have been looking for these my whole life and finally somebody was going to tell me all their names!

Each chapter lists books that Hornby has bought, and (much shorter) lists that he has read. I know it's a cliché to say it, but I really did laugh at his tales of buying more books than he can ever read, being unable to pass a book shop without purchasing, agonising over what he 'ought' to read.

However his lists aren't as promising as I had hoped. Of those that I've read, aside from Dickens, none are as entertaining as his own work. He even recommends dreary Ian McEwan. Then he backtracks and raves about Marilynne Robinson's *Housekeeping*, saying 'I have always prized the accessible over the obscure, but after reading *Housekeeping* I can see that in some ways the easy accessible novel is working at a disadvantage.' So what was all that stuff about giving up if it makes you sweat?

He gets very excited about John Carey's *What Good Are the Arts?* He says 'while reading it, you become increasingly amazed at the muddle that apparently intelligent people have got themselves into when they attempt to define the importance of - and the superiority of - high culture.' I was going to order it until I found a review by Jeanette Winterson, which completely trashes it. I may order it anyway.

And here's what he has to say about reviewing:

'At the beginning of my writing career I reviewed a lot of fiction, but I had to pretend, as reviewers do, that I had read the books outside of space, time and self - in other words I had to pretend that I hadn't read them when I was tired and grumpy, or drunk, that I wasn't envious of the author, that I had no agenda, no personal aesthetic or personal taste or personal problems, that I hadn't read other reviews of the same book already, that I didn't know who the author's friends and enemies were, that I wasn't trying to place a book with the same publisher, that I hadn't been bought lunch by the book's doe-eyed publicist. Most of all I hadn't to pretend that I hadn't written the review because I was urgently in need of a quick couple of hundred quid. Being paid to read a book and then write about it creates a dynamic which compromises the reviewer in all kinds of ways, very few of them helpful.'

Jacob says

"One man's struggle with the monthly tide of books he's bought and the books he's been meaning to read."

Struggle...

So it's fiction, right?

Kaethe says

Hornby's monthly column for the *Believer* is amusing but also more true to the experience of being a reader than the usual review. I enjoy following the lists of what he's acquired, and what he's actually read, and seeing when he gets to things. As well, he reveals just a bit about his normal life, and how it gets in the way

of his reading. Finally, there's the really interesting aspect of how all this combines, at what sort of reading continuity and bizarre juxtapositions come up.

Jonathan says

This is a compendium of a year's worth of Hornby's columns about books bought and/or read in *The Believer* magazine. The tone is colloquial like whoa, a bit skittish. Hornby, who's penned *About A Boy* and *A Long Way Down*, among other novels, is (unlike much of what he attempts to read) high readable himself. This little jam of a book flies over 140 pages.

Yes, it is fun to commiserate with a for-real writer who laments things like being given book recommendation (or, worse, being gifted books outright):

“Usually, of course, I treat personal book recommendations with the suspicion they deserve. I’ve got enough to read as it is, so my first reaction when someone tells me to read something is to find a way to doubt their credentials, or to try to dredge up some conflicting view from my memory. (Just as stone always blunts scissors, a lukewarm “Oh, it was OK,” always beats a “You have to read this.” It’s less work that way.)”

The title comes from the moniker he's given an imaginary (or are they?) squad of *Believer* mag honchos who issue edicts to him as to how he will write his column. (One stipulation: Abandon any book that's not going well, and DO NOT mention it by name.) He imagines them in flowing robes, 12 of them (6 of each gender of course); of course this is meant to drum up the Polyphonic Spree, those be-robed indie choir rockers, as Hornby (also author of *Songbook* and *High Fidelity*; need I say more?) is some kind of music snob.

This book (I was -- gasp -- gifted it!) is hardly necessary but sometimes insightful and often amusing. Poignant and yet funny are his thoughts on books about autism; his own son has the condition. He gushes over Dickens and Vonnegut and more, interspersing some poems and excerpts he loves amidst his own columns/chapters.

Here's Hornby on novels, their epic and lengthy qualities:

“But there comes a point in the writing process when a novelist—any novelist, even a great one—has to accept that what he is doing is keeping one end of a book away from the other, filling up pages, in the hope that these pages will move, provoke, and entertain the reader.”

And on how one can Wiki his way to impressing others:

“A good chunk of coming across as educated, after all, is just a matter of knowing who wrote what: someone mentions Patrick Hamilton, and you nod sagely and say, *Hangover Square*, and that’s usually enough. ... ‘the truly cultured are capable of owning thousands of unread books without losing their composure or their desire for more.’”

I honestly feel better on the other side of thumbing through this read. That's what he intended, and that's what matters.

Jenny (Reading Envy) says

Nick Hornby is one of my soulmates. It doesn't matter that he doesn't know me personally or know I exist. I reserve the right to fall in love with every reader and lover of books, just a little bit. I want to be him. I want to get paid to do what he does. A bit of envy, then.

I reread some of the chapters in this book because I was studying how he talks about books. Each month for his column in *The Believer*, Hornby lists the books he has bought and the books he has read, followed by a narrative about how they are linked or how one led to another or excuses for why he hasn't read what or how much he expected to read.

I've marked a bunch of things to read and smiled/laughed at some of his thoughts on familiar authors or books (a description of Peter Hamilton calls him an "urban Hardy, with everyone doomed from the first page"), but more than that he made me fantasize about all the books I already own. Some I've started and set aside for other things but now they're running through my head, crowding each other for attention. Others I've always had good intentions to read and will, someday.... Hornby understands that just because your house is full of books to read does not mean you won't buy more of them.

This book was also discussed on the Reading Envy Podcast Episode 02.

Kathleen says

Tuesday night found me at a Shell station on the outskirts of Nashville, Tennessee. I was filling up my tank before heading back to my hotel to curl up in a warm bed and crash. As I shivered in my too light for the 52° weather dress and sandals (it had been 30 degrees warmer when I started the day in Montgomery, Al), I yawned to remind myself of how completely beat I was and then immediately locked my keys in the car.

As I sank onto a gas station bench to wait for AAA (who were delayed due to some sort of accident which had turned a major interstate into a parking lot), I felt quite sorry for myself. Then I reached into my purse and pulled out *The Polysyllabic Spree*. 35 minutes later when the AAA guy arrived to rescue me, I was grinning ear to ear and marking my place in my book in markedly better spirits than I had been in before I had dived into it.

The Polysyllabic Spree is a collection of essays that Nick Hornby wrote earlier this decade for *The Believer*. I was completely entertained as Mr. Hornby related the details of his book reading and book buying habits for the each month. I loved that he got completely the joy of acquiring books, even when you have books everywhere and could probably never read them all if you bolted the front door and just chained yourself to the shelf. His reading tastes are quite eclectic and his writing in this is like that in his novels - breezy and fun.

The only complaint I have about the book is that due to *The Believer's* desire to be snark-free, books that Mr. Hornby did not care for are just referred to as abandoned literary novel, etc. I would have appreciated a warning! Quite a few of his positive reviews made me want to pick up that book right that minute and see if I loved it as well.

He spoke of a Biography of Richard Yates so glowingly that I wanted to read a book by Mr. Yates (Just the knowledge that Larry David dated his daughter, the model for Elaine in *Seinfeld*, was enough to pique my curiosity. The real Alton Benes, this I've got to see).

Coincidentally, I had a copy of *Revolutionary Road* tucked in my suitcase and so leapt in (to the book, not the suitcase). I have several more on the list from Mr. Hornby that have moved up to the top of my ever changing next to read list.

I would only change the lack of negative reviews. No need to be nasty, but it would have been nice to get a few "yikes, avoid this one!" warnings.

All in all, an entertaining book by a man who understands that "Books are, let's face it, better than everything else." Highly recommended for bibliophiles who don't just like books, but love them.

Anthony Chavez says

Nick Hornby is flat out interesting all around, and he writes about my favorite topics, all of which I want to read and absorb. He is exceptional at relating what it means to be a fan of almost anything, for example, Fever Pitch (sports), Songbook (music), and Polysyllabic Spree (books), High Fidelity and Juliet, Naked (Music and Relationships), the list goes on and on. This is a short collection of articles Hornby wrote for Believer magazine over a period of 14 months, each of which begins with a list each of books Hornby bought and another list of books read during that particular month.

The Polysyllabic Spree accomplishes a few things beyond the obvious of adding to the reader's inevitably already-too-long list of must reads (there's no way a true reader or Hornby fan who picked up this book didn't already have a list, I sure do): he writes on particularly interesting books, and even adds excerpts to some of them, like a literary sample platter; moreover, it compares books to other cultural media and explains why and how literature beats movies and film almost every time. Hornby recounts some amusing anecdotes about his writing career and first glimpses of associated fame. Most importantly, the Spree offers great commentary on the compulsive allure of reading... no, of book purchasing (and then reading... well sometimes), and of the acceptable snobbishness associated with selectively accepting book recommendations, and literary criticism. Hornby is both passionate and very opinionated on the subject, and reveals his personal literary ethic throughout. He treats personal book recommendations with suspicion, hates Amazon reviewers, and seeks to avoid too familiar subject matter (such as autism (he has an autistic son)) and writing styles (just as he prefers others' cooking style to his own).

The book suggestions are fantastic, although there is an emphasis on obscure older British authors. Hornby abided by the Believer's editors' review rules, one of which was emphasizing only the positive in his selected books, so almost every book listed in the Spree comes recommended.

=The book's title comes from Hornby's hilarious send-up of the editorial staff, which he pictures as "twelve rather eerie young men and women, all dressed in white robes and smiling maniacally, like a sort of literary equivalent of the Polyphonic Spree."= I got a good laugh from those references.

I now have a whole lot of book picks that I wouldn't otherwise be aware of, and Hornby really made me want to read David Copperfield.

Lisa Vegan says

By the time I got to page 40, I had emailed 2 friends to recommend this 140 page book; it's a very quick read. Some of those early chapters turned out to be my favorites but I thought the whole book was brilliant.

These are funny and smart and well-written essays: autobiographical and about books. Wonderful concept:

each chapter is an accounting of one month of the author's book buying and book reading and starts with a list of books bought and books read and then goes on to wonderful commentary and tidbits about the books, authors, autobiographical information, etc. Very British.

My favorite quote in the book is on page 125: "I suddenly had a little epiphany: all the books we own, both read and unread, are the fullest expression of self we have at our disposal." I so agree! And I so enjoyed his love of reading & books, and he has very eclectic tastes, as do I.

I had heard of Nick Hornby but never knew what he'd written. When I got this book noticed that 3 of his books have been made into movies I've enjoyed: *Fever Pitch*, *About a Boy*, and *High Fidelity*.

Unfortunately (fortunately?), this book has given me yet more ideas for books to read. More the ones he read and wrote about than his other books.

Oh, and he loved one of my favorite books: *How to Breathe Underwater* by Julie Orringer!

I borrowed this book from the library but it's worth owning, especially because the profits from this book's sales go to 2 charities: 50% to TreeHouse in England, which is school for kids with autism (the author has a son who's autistic) and 50% to 826nyc, a writing program for kids based on a very successful local program in San Francisco started by the author Dave Eggers.

JSou says

How is it that I've never read any Nick Hornby before? I feel like I've been missing out, and now want to thrust this book at everyone I know and [to steal a quote from the book itself] declare, "*This is me!*"

I always thought Hornby would be too dick-lit for my tastes; I did see the film versions of *High Fidelity* and *About a Boy*, but even those were just okay for me. When I saw Kim was reading this, and realized it was a book about books, (those are my weakness), I thought I'd give it a shot. I loved it. Loved it--even though I now have even more books on my to-read list (thanks a lot, Nick). I was amazed at how funny and smart Hornby's writing was, and finished it in one sitting.

Are his novels as good as his nonfiction?

Louisa says

A book about reading and reviewing books? This was tailor-made for Goodreaders!!!111!!

IMO: you'd either develop a passionate hatred for it, or quite the opposite. I bought this two months ago and just waited for the right time to devour it. New Year's Eve/Day seemed appropriate. I've been gorging myself on too much crappy New Adult fiction, anyway.

I'm glad to say that I have an incredible amount of love for *The Polysyllabic Spree*. I found myself laughing out loud at parts. Nick Hornby has a ridiculously compulsive style of narration, perhaps compounded by the fact that the book is comprised of columns he wrote for the *Believer*. It also contains extracts of books he

particularly liked. As someone wary of flimsy recommendations, I immediately began mentally adding to my to-read shelf after the first extract. (And Hornby reads poetry too! POETRY!) He takes us through his journey of "reader conflict", a journey I'm sure everyone here is familiar with. It's just interesting without shoving anything down your throat.

Hornby is also English and alludes to Arsenal Football Club a lot. They happen to be my second favourite English club. As a fan of the EPL, his natterings about abandoning books for the joy of crying over football felt like home to me. I recall him agonising over how Arsenal beat Liverpool (my first favourite club) 2-0 in a fictional book--at the time of writing, Arsenal hadn't beaten us with that scoreline since 1991. It's something I myself would do, should I have read that particular book.

Only one day into the new year and here's one for my 2013 favourites shelf!
