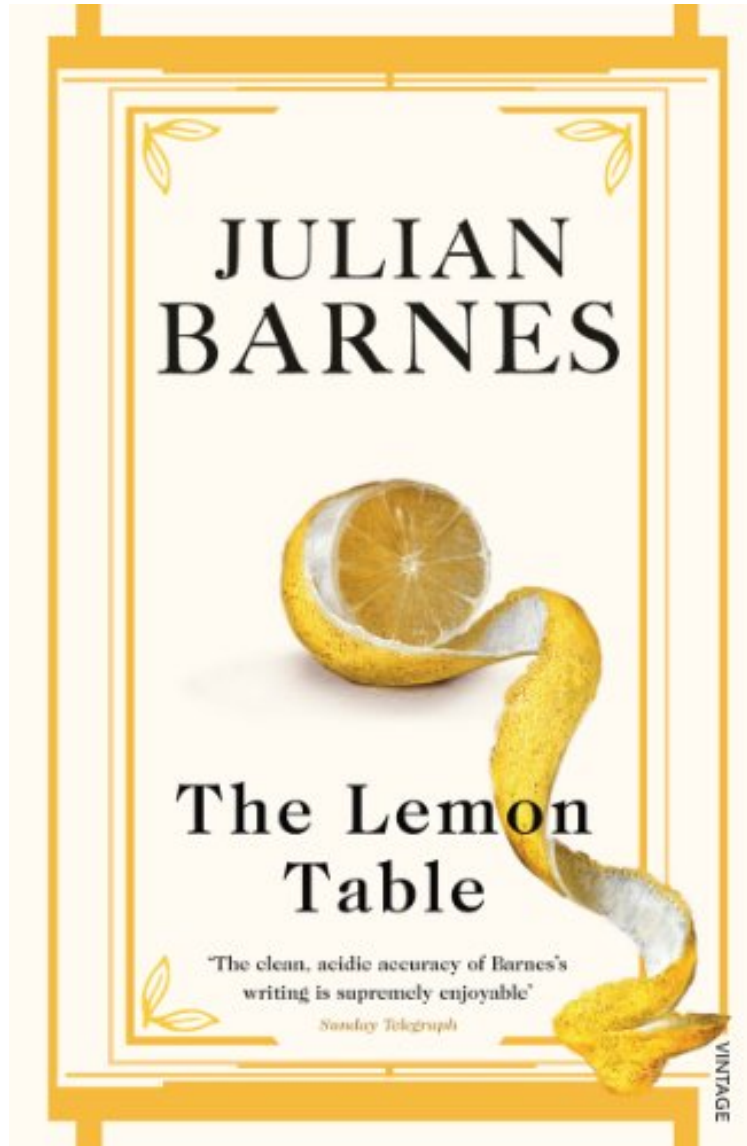


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## The Lemon Table

Von Julian Barnes

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**Von Julian Barnes : The Lemon Table** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lemon Table:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Passing Sixty with Humor and RespectVon Donald Mitchell"And no one, having drunk old wine, immediately desires new; for he says, 'The old is better.'" -- Luke 5:39So what's it like to be over sixty? This collection of stories captures more elements of that experience than any other that I've read. Perhaps because Julian Barnes was aged around that

threshold, he can appreciate and capture the experience better than most. It's a labor of love for him. Reading the stories will be a joy for you. The book opens with "A Short History of Hairdressing" that records the experiences of and reactions to being shorn over a lifetime. There's a self-mocking irony to it that will tickle you. "The Story of Mats Israelson" beautifully captures the regrets and lost opportunities of failing to communicate what's in your heart. "The Things You Know" delicately displays the contradictory elements that make for a good friendship . . . based on a self-justifying sense of superiority. "Hygiene" is a painful search for emotional intimacy in a barren landscape. "The Revival" explores the relationship between those of different generations from the perspective of the older. "Vigilance" plays out the suppressed rage that many music fans have felt at those who make too much noise at concerts. "Bark" is a stunning story of shifting obsessions . . . and how they control us. "Knowing French" is a marvelous series of letters between a fan and the author. "Appetite" brings new meaning to the term "food fantasies." "The Fruit Cage" does an amazing job of exploring the subtleties of perception and self-justification. "The Silence" explains life from a composer's perspective near the final rest. The quality of the stories is uniformly high. I recommend them all. Enjoy!

Kurzbeschreibung From the hairdressing salon where an old man measures out his life in haircuts, to the concert hall where a music lover carries out an obsessive campaign against those who cough in concerts; from the woman reading elaborate recipes to her sick husband as a substitute for sex, to the woman 'incarcerated' in an old people's home beginning a correspondence with an author that enriches both their lives - all Barnes' characters, in their different ways, square up to death and rage against the dying light. From Publishers Weekly Polished and classically structured, the 11 exquisite stories in this collection are as stylish as any of Barnes's creations, while also possessed of a pleasing heft. Told from a dazzling array of viewpoints, each is underpinned with a familiar Barnes concern: death. In "The Revival," the Russian writer Turgenev ruminates on lost love at the end of his life (as Tolstoy looks on), while in "Hygiene" a WWII vet revisits more than just his old mates during an annual trip to London for his regimental dinner. The past is seen from the perspective of the barber's chair in "A Short History of Hairdressing," and from two entirely separate angles in "The Things You Know," about a pair of widows who mentally savage each other over the course of a polite breakfast. Fans of Barnes's conversational novels, such as *Love, Etc.* and *Talking It Over*, may be nonplussed by the Dinesen-like sonority of the prose in "The Story of Mats Israelson" ("When Havlar Berggren succumbed to akvavit, frivolity and atheism, and transferred ownership of the third stall to an itinerant knife-grinder, it was on Berggren, not the knife-grinder, that disapproval fell, and a more suitable appointment was made in exchange for a few riksdaler"), but readers willing to follow Barnes's imagination will not be disappointed. With the exception of the plodding last story, "The Silence" (in which the title phrase is explained: "Among the Chinese, the lemon is the symbol of death"), the author handles his dark subject matter with grace and humor. This is not a morbid trip. Instead, Barnes always has his eye on something unusual, and the reader is taken for a delightful ride. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist In a suite of 11 impeccable short stories as intricate and polished as lacquered Chinese boxes, Barnes examines the peculiarities of age: the baffling amalgam of memories sharp and vague, the recognition that one has clung to fantasies to cushion the rough ride of existence, the strength derived from finally accepting one's self versus the sorrow of watching one's allure and energy fade. Crisp pacing, keen dialogue, and sudden reversals render Barnes' stories playlike, while he finds just the right object, habit, or myth to embody the aging process and allude to death's encroachment. In nineteenth-century Sweden, a man woos a woman by telling her the legend about a young copper miner whose perfectly preserved body was found 49 years after his death. A Russian composer, as famous in his later years for his silence as he once was for his music, remembers that for the Chinese, "the lemon is the symbol of death." And a woman in an old-folks' home writes piquant letters to a writer named Julian Barnes. What Barnes' virtuoso dramas all slyly suggest is that in the final analysis, the stories we tell ourselves about our lives carry more weight than mere facts. Donna Seaman Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved