



New York

Lily Brett

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Jeden Tag komme ich am La Guardia Place an einem Schild vorbei; auf dem Schild steht: Unnötiger Lärm verboten. Jeden Tag frage ich mich, wie unnötig Lärm sein muss, damit er unnötig ist. Ich vermute, dass nur ein Talmudgelehrter dieses Schild zu interpretieren vermag.

«Ein Jahr hat Lily Brett in der renommierten deutschen Wochenzeitung DIE ZEIT über ihr Leben in New York berichtet. Die Texte zeichnen ein Bild der Stadt und ihres Lebensgefühls; sie fügen sich aber gleichzeitig auch zu einem Selbstporträt der Autorin, die es meisterhaft versteht, anhand von scheinbar alltäglichen Situationen über die großen Themen des Lebens nachzudenken.

New York Details

Date : Published 2001 by Suhrkamp (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9783518397916

Author : Lily Brett

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Genre : Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review New York for online ebook

Lakshmi says

I came across this book clearly wanted to read something about New York. After I finished reading, the thought that came across was what was special about this book to read, nothing. Anyone could notice things that she has written about at any Western country. I gave 2 stars only for her wit which got me laughing at certain sections in the book.

Sun says

This is a small volume of short observational pieces in which Brett muses on the perils of living in New York, being American, her own peccadilloes and those of other people. Brett is hugely insightful and pointedly humorous. Her most remarkable achievement is writing with prose that is duplicitously simple. Some pieces are not as acute or as well-structured as others but I wonder if I might be missing some subtle verbal nudge.

This volume is my introduction to Lily Brett but I'll be looking out for more of her work.

Tamara Natalie says

Really nice book full of small stories to fall in love with. I especially liked it because you could leave and come back to it at any point :)

Rachael Wilkins says

I wanted to really like this book...the observances of an Australian woman living in NYC seemed like something that should resonate with me! As I got further into the book, I became bored with her style and felt the observations were somewhat weak, lacking substance.

Leanne Clegg says

Deceptively light and bitingly funny, Brett's writing is a pleasure akin to conversation with a friend. This memoir is a collection of short pieces that present the potential dangers and joys of living in NYC - considerably more than it appears.

Anke says

Overall enjoyable, would have been better to read it in English though since the translation seemed to lack the voice of the author and seemed to be a bit clumsy at times.

Justine Gill says

I absolutely love Lily Brett's writing. This book made me want to jump on the next plane to New York. Brett writes with such personal candour showing her own vulnerabilities. New York however is the main character of each story in this book. It shows so many aspects of the city, its people and the daily events of life in this dynamic city.

Debbie Robson says

This is my first Lily Brett book and I will definitely be reading more of her work. I think I'll tackle *Too Many Men* next although it is pretty big unlike this tiny one. At first it was a little disconcerting how all the essays were just two pages long. I then realised, of course, that they must have been for a regular column or similar but I think it would have been better for the reader if this was stated on the blurb.

After I got used to the length always being the same I really began to enjoy the humour of the pieces. Of course some of them are lightweight but I love her take on New York and more than anything Brett's dry wit. I feel I really have a sense of what it must be like living in New York city. I can safely say I never want to but then I'm not a fan of big cities. I prefer the sound of Shelter Island.

Favourite pieces are "The Country", "Memory", the now poignant "The Hamptons", "Food" - "I stood and stared at the cows. My first thought was that these cows had been brought here for a movie shoot. SoHo, where is live, is awash with film crews. I thought that the cows must have been providing a bucolic backdrop for somebody's story." How delightfully absurd!

Other enjoyable essays are "Leopard-skin Trousers", "Monica", "Distance", "Shorts" which confirms an observation of mine and my favourite - the hilarious but also sad "Father". Recommended.

Magdalena says

Lily Brett's *New York* is a lighthearted, easy to read book which looks at life in New York from the perspective of an Australian who has been living in Manhattan for over ten years. As an ex-New Yorker myself, I enjoyed reading the short and pointed vignettes which were more like a regular newspaper column (and indeed they were originally commissioned and published by *Die Zeit*, a popular German newspaper) than like a cumulative series of stories on life in the Big Apple. Most of the pieces are quietly humorous, and touch on current affair topics such as the fear of germs, the cult of youthfulness, fear of getting fat, life in a Co-Op, visiting the Hamptons during the summer, matchmaking, Monica Lewinsky's impact on acceptable body weight, the cult of busy-ness, Fergie's hair, and other such subjects which would likely find their way into the average New York City dinner party. These stories did give me a feel for the issues affecting the average New Yorker as well a sense of the smell, colours, changes and day to day life in New York City (as an ex-New Yorker myself, they did sometimes provoke homesickness), but as is generally the case with Brett's work, the pieces are personal, and touch on issues which are, at times, particular to her. Her feelings about motherhood, for example, in "Children" are likely to provoke those who feel that the intellectual challenges and rewards of parenting lead to more than a "pumpkin pulp" of brains, or that many people do know how to grow vegetables ("Food"), and get more out of home-grown produce than the earth which hides

inside the celery sticks, even if the average New Yorker would concur. Or even that men are prized and women underrated ("A Man").

I also found myself wanting more out of each essay. Just as I'd been hooked in, the essay would end, sometimes abruptly, and leave me hungry for more detail, more information, more depth on the subject. I kept hoping for something more profound. However, perhaps there was no need to look so hard for profundity. These short pieces are not meant to be profound or to add up to any great meaning. They are just a lighthearted look at some of the mores of a city which, according to Brett, intrudes totally into the lives of its inhabitants, taking on the persona of another person. Taken in the same vein as a read of Dave Barry's weekly column, or a book of Clive James' essays, or something by Peter Mayle, the essays in New York provided a nice break in the intensity of the novels I usually read, and for Lily Brett, perhaps a break in the intensity of the novels she usually writes. A little light humour from someone whose own relationship with the city she now lives in has become the same as the 17.5 million other New Yorkers, a love hate affair which leaves her missing the place as soon as she activates her burglar alarm and double locks her front door.

Claude says

Is it just me or is there no substance to any of these writings?
What is the point of reading these stories?
They are small, sharp and to the point. Easy to read. But you will probably get about the same amount of entertainment should you read a TV guide.

Michelle says

I must admit that I fell upon this book with glee....

A friend had dropped off a bag of book-clubby type books to help me through an extended period at home. Lily Brett, I said to myself, I love Lily Brett!
So this was the one I chose to start that very day.....

The book is a series of anecdotally themed snippets. I fear they are less to do with New York than they are to do with Lily Brett's not inconsiderable neuroses.
Even the length of each chapter reflects this! Each is preciselya half page, followed by a whole page, followed by two thirds of a page..... as if they have been written to fill a newspaper column.

Published in 2001 (very obviously pre 9/11)the book, unfortunately, has a very dated feel to it. It's really not that long ago....but the usual sharp observations of Brett feel worn out.....like a "Dad's joke".

I won't let it put me off reaching for the charming Ms Brett's other offerings..... But I am very glad this was a short book.....and it only got 3 stars for old-times sake.

Sarah says

I say I've read this, even though I only got half way through. Each chapter of this book seemed like a ridiculously staunchly feminist whinge about part of living in New York. Reading this book made me angry, frustrated, and highly desirous to give Brett a slap across the face - wake up and be grateful for what is around you woman, get over yourself!
