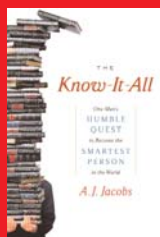




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The Know-It-All
by A. J. Jacobs

33,000 pages
44 million words
10 billion years of history
1 obsessed man

A program about the all-consuming quest for factual knowledge and the gift of hard-won wisdom.

Part memoir and part Cliff's Notes to the universe, *The Know-It-All* chronicles NPR contributor A.J. Jacobs's hilarious, enlightening, and seemingly impossible quest to read the Encyclopaedia Britannica from A to Z.

To fill the ever-widening gaps in his Ivy League education, A.J. Jacobs sets for himself the daunting task of reading all thirty-two volumes of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. His wife, Julie, tells him it's a waste of time, his friends believe he is losing his mind, and his father, a brilliant attorney who had once attempted the same feat and quit somewhere around Borneo, is encouraging but, shall we say, unconvinced.

With self-deprecating wit and a disarming frankness, *The Know-It-All* recounts the unexpected and comically disruptive effects Operation Encyclopedia has on every part of Jacobs's life -- from his newly minted marriage to his complicated relationship with his father and the rest of his charmingly eccentric New York family to his day job as an editor at Esquire. Jacobs's project tests the outer limits of his stamina and forces him to explore the real meaning of intelligence as he endeavors to join Mensa, win a spot on *Jeopardy!* and absorb 33,000 pages of learning. On his journey he stumbles upon some of the strangest, funniest, and most profound facts about every topic under the sun, all while battling fatigue, ridicule, and the paralyzing fear that attends his first real-life responsibility -- the impending birth of his first child.

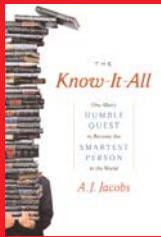
The Know-It-All is an ingenious, mightily entertaining memoir of one man's intellect, neuroses, and obsessions and a soul-searching, ultimately touching struggle between the all-consuming quest for factual knowledge and the undeniable gift of hard-won wisdom.

A. J. Jacobs is the editor of *What it Feels Like* and the author of *The Two Kings: Jesus and Elvis*, *America Off-Line*, and *Fractured Fairy Tales*. He is the senior editor of Esquire and has written for *The New York Times*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *Glamour*, *New York* magazine, *The New York Observer*, and many other publications.

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"*The Know-It-All* is a hilarious book and quite an impressive achievement. I've always said, why doesn't someone put out a less complete version of the encyclopedia? Well done, A.J."

--**Jon Stewart, Host of *The Daily Show***

"*The Know-It-All* is a terrific book. It's a lot shorter than the encyclopedia, and funnier, and you'll remember more of it. Plus, if it falls off the shelf onto your head, you'll live."

--**P.J. O'Rourke, author of *Eat the Rich***

"Tender...Entertaining...This book really does seek a working definition of what it means to be smart."

--**Janet Maslin, *The New York Times***

"A.J. Jacobs turns the act of reading the entire Britannica into a hilarious memoir....It's the stunt of the book itself that allows the funny, touching memoir to be so stuffed with nutritious bits of trivia that you feel smart for reading it." --***Time***

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