



The Fermata

By Nicholson Baker

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The Fermata By Nicholson Baker Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

The Fermata is the most risky of Nicholson Baker's emotional histories. His narrator, Arno Strine, is a 35-year-old office temp who is writing his autobiography. "It's harder than I thought!" he admits. His "Fold-powers" are easier; he can stop the world and use it as his own pleasure ground. Arno uses this gift not for evil or material gain (he would feel guilty about stealing), though he does undress a good number of women and momentarily place them in compromising positions--always, in his view, with respect and love. Anyone who can stop time and refer in self-delight to his "chronanisms" can't be all bad! Like Baker's other books, *The Fermata* gains little from synopsis. The pleasure is literally in the text. What's memorable is less the sex and the sex toys (including the "Monasticon," in the shape of a monk holding a vibrating manuscript) than Arno's wistful recollections of intimacy: the noise, for instance, of his ex-girlfriend's nail clipper, "which I listened to in bed as some listen to real birdsong."

From Publishers Weekly

Baker's ingenious fifth novel, about a 35-year-old temp worker who stops time to act out elaborate sexual fantasies, was a PW bestseller.

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From Library Journal

What would you do, Arno Stein asks, if you had "a pause button that stopped life rather than VCR tapes?" The 35-year-old Bostonian moves about freely, frequently inserting "some novelty into the lives of women" by undressing them, getting them aroused, and then pressing the play button again and watching what happens. Helped by Will Patton's sensitive narration, this comic novel transports listeners into that private world where men's fantasies about women (in the workplace, in the library, in the classroom) come true. And, in what amounts to a soft-porn variation on *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty*, we watch Arno becoming engulfed in the fantasies to the point where he loses control. There is literary value in this recording of Baker's well-written novel, but that appreciation will depend upon the listener's ability to laugh at the fantasies Arno creates instead of becoming a voyeur. Recommended for most adult collections.

- Rochelle Ratner, formerly Poetry Editor, "Soho Weekly News," New York

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Users Review

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Victoria Williams:

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Kevin Nixon:

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