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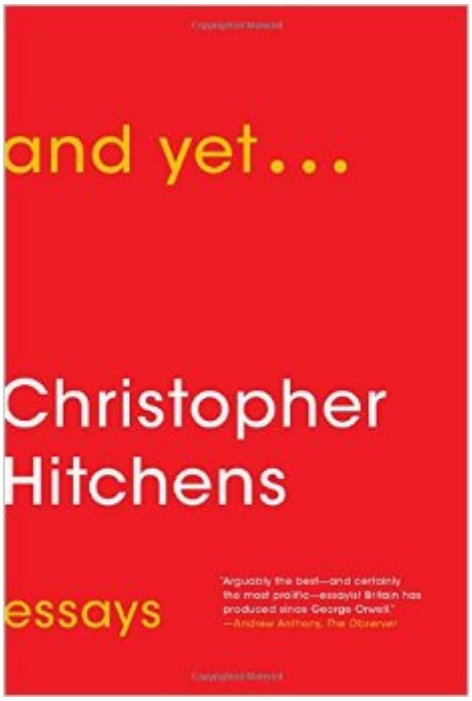
And Yet...: Essays



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Synopsis

â œAmericaâ ™s foremost rhetorical pugilist.â • â ”John Giuffo, The Village VoiceThe death of Christopher Hitchens in December 2011 prematurely silenced a voice that was among the most admired of contemporary writers. For more than forty years, Hitchens delivered to numerous publications on both sides of the Atlantic essays that were astonishingly wide-ranging and provocative. The judges for the PEN/Diamonstein-Spielvogel Award for the Art of the Essay, posthumously bestowed on Hitchens, praised him for the way he wrote â œwith fervor about the books and writers he loved and with unbridled venom about ideas and political figures he loathed.â • He could write, the judges went on to say, with â œundisguised brio, mining the resources of the language as if alert to every possibility of color and inflection.â • He was, as Benjamin Schwarz, his editor at The Atlantic magazine, recalled, â œslashing and lively, biting and funnyâ ”and with a nuanced sensibility and a refined ear that he kept in tune with his encyclopedic knowledge and near photographic memory of English poetry.â • And as Michael Dirda, writing in the Times Literary Supplement, observed, Hitchens â œwas a flail and a scourge, but also a gift to readers everywhere.â • The author of five previous volumes of selected writings, including the international bestseller Arguably, Hitchens left at his death nearly 250,000 words of essays not yet published in book form. And Yetâ | assembles a selection that usefully adds to Hitchensâ ™s oeuvre. It ranges from the literary to the political and is, by turns, a banquet of entertaining and instructive delights, including essays on Orwell, Lermontov, Chesterton, Fleming, Naipaul, Rushdie, Pamuk, and Dickens, among others, as well as his laugh-out-loud self-mocking â œmakeover.â • The range and quality of Hitchensâ ™s essays transcend the particular occasions for which they were originally written. Often prescient, always pugnacious, and formidably learned, Hitchens was a polemicist for the ages. With this posthumous volume, his reputation and his readers will continue to grow. Christopher Hitchens was the cartographer of his own literary and political explorations. He sought assiduously to affirmâ ”and to reaffirmâ ”the ideas of secularism, reason, libertarianism, internationalism, and solidarity, values always under siege and ever in need of defending. Henry James once remarked, â œNothing is my last word on anything.â • For Hitchens, as for James, there was always more to be said.

Book Information

Hardcover: 352 pages
Publisher: Simon & Schuster (November 24, 2015)
Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476772061

ISBN-13: 978-1476772066

Product Dimensions: 6.2 x 1.1 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (54 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

It would be nearly impossible to read in English without at some point coming across an article or quotation by Christopher Hitchens, an American transplanted from England whose life spanned several critical phases in modern history. Hitchens was born for the role of social critic, but so much more --- acerbic yet kind at times, strict yet also forgiving. He suffered fools gladly, as grist for his mill, and the landscape of his writing is littered with fiery phrases like luminous gems. He was a professor, columnist, critic, essayist, editor and award-winning author (HITCH-22, ARGUABLY). AND YETâ | is a posthumous collection drawn from the nearly 250,000 words of sardonic sagacity he left behind.Hitchens was an iconoclast who happily toppled all idols, from Charles Dickens to Hillary Clinton to James Bond to V. S. Naipaul to Christmas. But not always without heart. He can, for example, cite Dickensâ ™ limitations --- his contemptuous anti-Americanism, his annoying gift-card-ization of Christmas --- while lauding his little-known largesse: Dickens revamped Fagin in OLIVER TWIST and later created a kind, helpful Jewish moneylender (Mr. Riah in OUR MUTUAL FRIEND) after receiving an anguished plea from a Jewish lady concerned with the biased characterization of her people.In 2009, Hitchens damned the newly elected President Obama with faint praise, calling him a â œcool catâ • who â œtreads so lightlyâ |that all impressions he has so far made are alarmingly slight.â • He gleefully reported Hillary Clintonâ ™s meeting with Sir Edmund Hillary, at which she recklessly declared that â œher mother had actually named her for this famous and intrepid explorer." Hitchens was pleased to retort that Clinton was born in 1947, six years before Sir Edmund gained worldwide acclaim for his ascent of Mt.

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