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Joe Meno

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Joe Meno : Office Girl before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Office Girl:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Two totally lost young people stumble into each otherBy PatriciaThis book is about two lost souls who flounder around and find some brief comfort when they stumble into each other. A guy and a girl - they are both good, kind people who have no idea what they want or how to live. They

meander from job to job, pranks, drugs, sex - and find it all unfulfilling. I suspect they represent a lot of people in this world and in that way they break your heart. It is well written but for me it was not a fulfilling book. Somehow reminds me of Samuel Beckett - which I suppose is a great compliment! As a footnote, the girl's name is Odile, which she finds uncommon. I grew up in South Louisiana and that name was fairly common among the older French people. I still remember an "Aunt Odile". 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Alternately Irritating and Entertaining By kucciaEhhh. After finishing this book yesterday I spent a while trying to figure out why I alternated between liking bits of it and being totally irritated by most of it. I liked the idea that life is really about the small moments we experience or create, but was totally annoyed by the characters. Neither Jack nor Odile was particularly likeable or original. They both seemed to act much too young for their age and neither seemed quite believable - they both felt too much like a stereotypical hipster. Their angst was pretty cliched. The writing was blah with a few good bits. The emphasis on color was interesting if you paid attention to it. The illustrations and photos were an interesting idea and sometimes quite entertaining, but it all seemed to be trying a little too hard to be clever. I enjoyed the little acts of art terrorism, but wasn't really moved by it, but rather admired the ideas from a distance. You never really get close to feeling anything real in this book - it's a pretty quick, superficial read. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Cute and quirky, like every indie romantic comedy ever made... By Larry Hoffer "What do you do with the rest of your life when you realize you don't like anything?" This is one of the questions raised by Odile, one of the main characters of Joe Meno's newest book, *Office Girl*. Odile is a 20-something art school dropout working in a series of boring office jobs and dreaming of creating something special, of making people take notice. She finds herself falling into inappropriate relationship after inappropriate relationship, all because she's afraid of not being liked. When she meets Jack, an amateur sound artist whose marriage has ended and who doesn't know what to do with his life, the two forge an immediate connection while trying not to fall into their regular behavior patterns. Odile and Jack start an art revolution, which combines performance art (spontaneously breaking into a scene from a movie while on the subway), graffiti, and creating an imaginary persona, Alphonse F., to whom they attribute their "art." All the while, the two find themselves falling in love, experiencing all of the joy, comfort, insecurity, and doubts that young love brings, with the hopes and fears that come with opening yourself up to another person. And with love often comes self-discovery and the ability to make changes in your life, even if they may not be the right ones. Joe Meno is at his best when he's capturing the angst, insecurity, and eccentricities of 20-somethings or even high school students, as he did in his terrific *Hairstyles of the Damned*. The book honestly feels like an aggregation of every quirky independent movie about a couple ever made. You can totally see this book as a movie, and in fact, I think these characters might even be more vivid on the screen than they were on the page. This was a tremendously quick read, light and enjoyable, with a hazy ending you may or may not like.

"Meno's tender, hip, funny, and imaginative portrayal of two Chicago misfits...dramatizes that anguished and awkward passage between legal age and actual adulthood."--Booklist, "Core Collection: New Adult Fiction" Named "Best New Novel by a Chicagoan" and "Best Book for the Disillusioned Artist in All of Us" by the Chicago Reader Selected by The Believer's readers as a favorite fiction work of 2012 One of DailyCandy's Best Books of 2012 "An off-kilter romance doubles as an art movement in Joe Meno's novel. The novel reads as a parody of art-school types...and as a tribute to their devil-may-care spirit. Meno impressively captures post-adolescent female angst and insecurity. Fresh and funny, the images also encapsulate the mortification, confusion and excitement that define so many 20-something existences."--The New York Times Book Review "Wonderful storytelling panache...Odile is a brash, moody, likable young woman navigating the obstacles of caddish boyfriends and lousy jobs, embarking on the sort of sentimental journey that literary heroines have been making since Fanny Burney's *Evelina* in the 1770s. Tenderhearted Jack is the awkward, quiet sort that the women in Jane Austen's novels overlook until book's end. He is obsessed with tape-recording Chicago's ambient noises so that he can simulate the city in the safety of his bedroom, 'a single town he has invented made of nothing but sound.' Mr. Meno excels at capturing the way that budding love can make two people feel brave and freshly alive to their surroundings...the story of the relationship has a sweet simplicity."--The Wall Street Journal "In Joe Meno's new novel, set in the last year of the 20th century, art school dropout Odile Neff and amateur sound artist Jack Blevins work deadening office jobs; gush about indie rock, French film, and obscure comic book artists; and gradually start a relationship that doubles as an art movement. They are, in other words, the 20-something doyens of pop culture and their tale of promiscuous roommates, on-again/off-again exes, and awkward sex is punctuated on the page by cute little doodles, black and white photographs (of, say, a topless woman in a Stormtrooper mask), and monologues that could easily pass for Belle Sebastian lyrics ("It doesn't pay to be a dreamer because all they really want you to do is answer the phone")."--Publishers Weekly (Pick of the Week) "Meno has constructed a snowflake-delicate inquiry into alienation and longing. Illustrated with drawings and photographs and shaped by tender empathy, buoyant imagination, and bittersweet wit, this wistful, provocative, off-kilter love story affirms the bonds forged by art and story."--Booklist (starred review) No one dies in *Office Girl*. Nobody talks about the international political situation. There is no mention of any economic collapse. Nothing takes place during a World War. Instead, this novel is about young people doing interesting things in the final moments of the last century. Odile is

a lovely twenty-three-year-old art-school dropout, a minor vandal, and a hopeless dreamer. Jack is a twenty-five-year-old shirker who's most happy capturing the endless noises of the city on his out-of-date tape recorder. Together they decide to start their own art movement in defiance of a contemporary culture made dull by both the tedious and the obvious. Set in February 1999—just before the end of one world and the beginning of another—Office Girl is the story of two people caught between the uncertainty of their futures and the all-too-brief moments of modern life. Joe Meno's latest novel also features black-and-white illustrations by renowned artist Cody Hudson and photographs by visionary photographer Todd Baxter.

.com Best Books of the Month, July 2012: Light but not fluffy, spare but not small, this novel from the Chicago-based playwright and novelist is a love letter to youth, art, and, well, love. It is 1999, and 23-year-old Odile (think the actress from *Amélie* or *The Entertainer*, except she's American; ever self-aware, Meno concludes the book with a note expecting a movie version) and Jack, a 25-year-old semi-slacker, meet through their excruciatingly dull cubicle jobs and decide to start their own unboring art movement. Along the way, they talk, ride bicycles, and do graffiti. But the plot here is not the thing. Meno's style is charmingly simple: He writes in short chapters mercifully light on irony and peppered with black-and-white illustrations and photographs that stop just this side of cute, raising this tale of frustrated Gen-Xers way above the clichéd boy-meets-girl, boy-loses-girl story of any era. --Sara Nelson Earphones Award Winner. "[Julia] Whelan's impeccable timing, pacing, and command of the different characters make for a beguiling listening experience. Whelan emphasizes the ordinary and unique qualities of the characters and accentuates the freshness of this quixotic and unconventional story." - AudioFile Magazine Starred . "Meno has constructed a snow-flake delicate inquiry into alienation and longing. Illustrated with drawings and photographs and shaped by tender empathy, buoyant imagination, and bittersweet wit, this wistful, provocative, off-kilter love story affirms the bonds forged by art and story." - Booklist "High on quirk and hipster cred, the novel is light as air, surprisingly unpretentious, and extremely kind to its larky, irony-addled protagonists...endearing." - Publishers Weekly, "Pick of the Week" "A Best Fiction Book of 2012. "...a gorgeous little indie romance, circa 1999... But when things Get Weird as things do when we're young, Meno is refreshingly honest in portraying the lowest lows and not just the innocent highs. A sweetheart of a novel, complete with a hazy ending." - Kirkus "Along with PBRs, flannels, and thick-framed glasses, this Millennial Franny and Zooey is an instant hipster staple." - Marie Claire One of the "Most Anticipated: The Great Second-Half 2012 Book Preview" titles. - The Millions "...Meno has written the book he's been wanting to write for years, combining all of those classic elements of his previous work... Gorgeously packaged, it's like a Meno box set 15 years in the making." - Time Out Chicago "In this geeky-elegant novel, Meno transforms wintery Chicago into a wondrous crystallization of countless dreams and tragedies, while telling the stories of two derailed young artists, two wounded souls, in cinematic vignettes that range from lushly atmospheric visions to crack-shot volleys of poignant and funny dialogue." - Kansas City Star "Meno supplies an off-kilter, slightly inappropriate answer to the Hollywood rom-com. Meno is a deft writer. The dialogue in *Office Girl* is often funny, the pacing quirky, and some of its quick, affecting similes remind me of Lorrie Moore." - Chicago Reader "...an honest look at the isolation of being a creative person in your 20s living in a city." - Daily Beast, "3 Must-Read Offbeat Novels" "Fresh and sharply observed, *Office Girl* is a love story on bicycles, capturing the beauty of individual moments and the magic hidden in everyday objects and people. Joe Meno will make you stop and notice the world. And he will make you wonder." - Hannah Tinti, author of *The Good Thief*