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**MAIN SELECTION**



## Unputdownable.

**T**his word is not in every dictionary, but it is one that booksellers often use—and the one we use to describe our Barnes & Noble Recommends selections. Nothing gives us more pleasure than recommending books that we have read and loved, and finding unputdownable books gives us the greatest pleasure of all.

Barnes & Noble Recommends provides us with the opportunity to share such books with you. Each is chosen by a group of our discriminating and independent-minded booksellers from across the country, and all are riveting reads that are sure to provoke stimulating discussion. Every one of these novels is a book we're sure you'll want to recommend to another reader, including our newest selection: *Dog On It* by Spencer Quinn.

### PREVIOUS SELECTIONS INCLUDE:

- The Thirteenth Tale* ∞ by Diane Setterfield
- The Double Bind* ∞ by Chris Bohjalian
- The Reluctant Fundamentalist* ∞ Mohsin Hamid
- Stormy Weather* ∞ Paulette Jiles
- Garden Spells* ∞ Sarah Addison Allen
- The Vanishing Act of Esme Lennox* ∞ Maggie O'Farrell
- Belong to Me* ∞ Marisa de los Santos
- Child 44* ∞ Tom Rob Smith
- America America* ∞ Ethan Canin
- The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society*  
∞ by Mary Ann Shaffer and Annie Barrows
- The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* ∞ by Stieg Larsson

## Marley Stole Your Heart, But Chet Will Make You Howl.

As sidekicks, Maxwell Smart and Agent 99 have nothing on Chet and Bernie. This charming detective duo makes its debut in *Dog On It*, the first volume in Spencer Quinn's new mystery series. The fast-paced and funny tale is narrated by the inimitable Chet, Bernie's best friend and canine partner, whose personality and preferences are never in

doubt: "I liked to sleep at the foot of Bernie's bed, but my favorite napping spot was in the breakfast nook, under the table with my back against the wall, all cool and shady, plus there was often good snacking around Bernie's chair."

Bernie's enterprise, the Little Detective Agency limps along, waiting for the next job to arrive. While Chet freely admits that he doesn't always understand the humans around him, the mutt who failed to graduate from the police academy quickly establishes that he's got a nose made for sniffing out trouble—as well as the tasty morsel.

When the story begins, Chet and Bernie are settled into the companionable routine they established when Bernie got divorced and lost custody of his son. Riding shotgun for stake outs in Bernie's beat up convertible (and snarfing up doughnuts and beef jerky) is the perfect life for Chet, though he knows Bernie's worried about cash flow.



But their luck is about to change. During a nighttime stroll through the neighborhood—an older enclave in the Southwestern desert that Bernie fears will soon be eclipsed by new development—the pair encounters a panicked neighbor, Cynthia Chambliss. Waving a wad of bills, she beseeches Bernie to find her daughter Madison, a fifteen-year-old who has been missing for several hours.

Bernie heeds the call of cash and the urgency of parental concern, but Madison soon returns home on her own, only to disappear again in short order—this time for several days. Cynthia frantically rehires Bernie, but her ex, Damon Keefer, refuses to cooperate, insisting that Bernie be taken off the investigation. Nevertheless, intrigued by the young girl's apparent connections to a group of Russian thugs, Bernie and Chet follow a trail of clues that leads them into more danger than they'd bargained for.

As Chet and Bernie race across the desert toward Las Vegas in their sandblasted Porsche, Quinn's narrative unfolds with mounting suspense. At every stage of their journey, readers will warm to Chet's loyalty and courage—to say nothing of his delightfully doggy digressions—and be captivated by Spencer Quinn's deft blend of humor and thrills in this enormously entertaining tale, bound to be the first of many adventures.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The pseudonymous Spencer Quinn lives with his dog, Audrey, in Cape Cod, where he is hard at work on the next Chet and Bernie adventure.



## An Excerpt from *Dog On It*

I had some kind of good dream that all of a sudden went bad. It startled me. I opened my eyes and there, standing right by the car, stood a very big guy, taller and broader than Bernie. He had light hair, maybe even white, but he wasn't old, had no lines on his face. I didn't like that face at all, something about the massive cheekbones and the tiny ears. Then I was up on the seat and barking, my loudest bark, probably on account of being startled.

That made the man jump and step back, no surprise. But now, when most people would have kept backing away, he did not. Instead, his face got distorted and angry, teeth bared, and he said something I didn't understand—maybe in a language I didn't know—but I knew it was nasty. And then, from inside his shirt, he pulled a knife, a long one with a gleaming blade. Very quick, he bent down and stabbed at one of our tires. The air hissed out, and before I could move, he stepped forward and stabbed another.

Then I was airborne, my own teeth bared, you'd better believe it. One of my paws caught him on the shoulder. It spun him a little, and he kept spinning all the way around and slashed at me with the knife. I felt the blade skim my coat, but I got past it and sank my teeth into his leg. He grunted and lost the knife. It clattered to the pavement, bounced, and fell through one of those storm grates. I twisted around, tried to bring him down. He reached into his pocket, and when his hand came out, it wore something metal. The metal flashed down at me. Then everything got wobbly.

The next thing I knew he was running, farther down the row of cars. He jumped into one. I raced after it. The car rolled forward. I sprinted alongside, barking and barking, in a hot rage. He glanced out the window, turned the wheel sharply. I felt a tremendous blow and went flying.





## Get the most out of *Dog On It* with these reading group discussion questions.

1. Chet is a thoroughly endearing dog. What devices did the author use to make his canine character so convincing?
2. Private investigators build their career on careful observation. How does Chet's canine perspective reveal the true personalities of the various characters, despite—or because of—their outward appearance?
3. Bernie often trails Chet throughout their adventure. How much of Bernie's story do you know by the end of the book? Did it leave you wanting to learn more?
4. Suspense is an integral part of this story. Which scene did you find the most exciting and why?
5. What moves Bernie to ignore his initial dismissal from the case and to stick with the investigation?
6. Suzie Sanchez, the local reporter, gets pretty close to Bernie during the course of the investigation. Does Chet feel threatened by this?
7. How successfully does Quinn develop Madison's relationship with her parents? Is there anything about them that helps shed light on her behavior?
8. Which character's duplicity or innocence did you find the most unexpected? Which one emerged as your favorite?
9. Have you read other books with animal narrators? How does Chet measure up to them?

### FURTHER READING

*Three Bags Full: A Sheep Detective Story* by Leonie Swann

*The Art of Racing in the Rain* by Garth Stein

## Praise for *Dog On It*

### FROM OUR BOOKSELLERS

"There is nothing like seeing the world from a dog's point of view."

*Kat Marchand, Ellicott City, MD*

"Chet's sweetness, honesty, and spot-on assessment of the idiosyncrasies of human behavior won me over. *Dog On It* was not only unputdownable, it was 'stay-up-all-night-reading, but-save-the-last-few-chapters-for-the-next-day-because-you-don't-want-it-to-be-over' good."

*Angela Corpus, Washington, DC*

"In his character Chet, Spencer Quinn has created a 21st-century Lassie, with a heart of gold, a sense of humor, and a mind of his own."

*Patricia Sanders, Towson, MD*

"Hilarious and refreshing. I haven't giggled this much while reading since I first discovered *My Family and Other Animals* by Gerald Durrell. I look forward to reading more of Chet's adventures!"

*Elayne Carringer, Devon, PA*

### FROM WRITERS

"Spencer Quinn speaks two languages—suspense and dog—fluently. Sometimes funny, sometimes touching, and in a few places terrifying. My sincere advice to you is to rush to your nearest bookstore and put your paws on this enchanting one-of-a-kind novel."

*Stephen King*

"I love this book. I devoured it in one night. It is like Philip Marlow working for Mma Ramotswe from *The No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* spun out by Charlotte on her beautiful web."

*Cathleen Schine*

"Sit and stay! You're going to love *w* as much as I did, because it confirms what every dog fan has long suspected—that our dogs are not only more fun than we are, they're smarter!"

*Lisa Scottoline*

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***Dog On It***

Publisher Price \$34.99

**B&N Price \$26.24**

**Member Price \$23.61**



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