



Plus One

Christopher Noxon

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"*Plus One* is a smart and funny novel about Hollywood, but where it truly shines is in Noxon's stunning and painfully accurate depiction of the complex rhythms and growing pains of a marriage." — Jonathan Tropper, author of *This Is Where I Leave You* and *One Last Thing Before I Go*

"Well observed, honest, and laugh-out-loud funny, *Plus One* tells a story from the inside of show business about being on the outside." — Matthew Weiner, creator of *Mad Men*

Christopher Noxon's debut novel *Plus One* is a comedic take on bread-winning women and caretaking men in contemporary Los Angeles. Alex Sherman-Zicklin is a mid-level marketing executive whose wife's fourteenth attempt at a TV pilot is produced, ordered to series, and awarded an Emmy. Overnight, she's sucked into a mad show-business vortex and he's tasked with managing their new high-profile Hollywood lifestyle. He falls in with a posse of Plus Ones, men who are married to women whose success, income, and public recognition far surpasses their own. What will it take for him to regain the foreground in his own life?

Christopher Noxon is an accomplished journalist who has written for such publications as the *New Yorker*, *Details*, *Los Angeles Magazine*, *Salon*, and the *New York Times Magazine*; his first book, *Rejuvenile: Kickball, Cartoons, Cupcakes, and the Reinvention of the American Grown-Up* (Crown), earned him interviews on such shows as the *Colbert Report* and *Good Morning America* and generated features in *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and *Talk of the Nation*; Ira Glass of *This American Life* called the book "an eye-opener." Noxon happens to be married to a top TV writer/producer and does the school chauffeuring for their three children, so he knows whereof he speaks regarding Plus Ones. He lives in Los Angeles, California.

Plus One Details

Date : Published January 20th 2015 by Prospect Park Books (first published December 22nd 2014)

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Author : Christopher Noxon

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From Reader Review Plus One for online ebook

Lisa says

I know it's not really fair to judge a book's quality by its price or availability, but in this case I think it needs to be factored in. This was one of those that sounded good to me when I read reviews of it back in 2015, but my library didn't have it available as an ebook on Overdrive, so I recommended it. (These past few years my eyesight has gotten along with ebooks so much better than hard copies that I have to *really* be hellbent on reading a book to make a trip to the library or buy it.) It never did become available as a library ebook, but available of course from amazon for around 9.99 (as it is now 1/4/19). I read a free sample and while I didn't think it sucked, I was not chomping at the bit to read more, especially not for 10 bucks.

So my verdict is: if it ever becomes available for free or dirt cheap (like around 1.99?) I might give it another shot, but for now it will have to remain DNFed.

Mizloo says

Started well, but couldn't hold my interest. I quit a third of the way through.

Betsy Kipnis says

“Plus One” by Christopher Noxon

There is utopia, dystopia and living-breathing-now. “Plus One,” authored by Christopher Noxon offers a hysterical peek into gender and role reversals nestled in marriage situated in Hollywood and LA.

Enter into the marital life of Figgy, Alex and their two children Sam and Sylvie. Their story begins on the red carpet when Alex discovers he is no longer captain of the family ship. Alex is a “Plus One,” a person representing less significance than a chair filler.

The red carpet transitions readers onto the yellow brick road in the land of domestic responsibility where Alex abandons work deadlines and misplaced kudos and discovers French skinny jeans, female butcher-bloggers, Real Estate upgrades, tanning beds, hollywood households, and his own self worth.

Alex and Figgy go through honest and unique versions of what all married couples go through: Financial equity and dependency, shared decision-making, uniting different socio-cultural backgrounds, parenting, and the stolen moments when one tries to reinvent oneself to earn society’s respect toward stay-at-home persons. While many of us undergo this, most of us lack the ability to laugh at ourselves as we foil and toil away on this course.

What makes Noxon’s work devourable is his ability to create caricatures voices and dialogue in an absolutely hysterical fashion. I have not laughed out loud during reading in YEARS until I spent time with this book. “Plus One” will shove over the marriage takes a beating books on my shelf because rather than beat up marriage he takes some shots and leaves us knowing that in spite of mistakes and misconceptions our

relationships are always repairable if we love one another.

Amy says

This, faithful readers, is a hilarious book. There were times when I laughed so hard, I thought I pulled a stomach muscle.

Alex Sherman-Zicklin and wife Figgy started their union somewhat unconventionally and they continue in that strain. Figgy's maiden name is not Sherman, it's Zicklin, so the hyphenation gives her last name the emphasis, not her husband's. The same goes for their careers. Alex has a job, but his is of little to no consequence in Hollywood. What does matter? Figgy. She's a writer, and after a string of failed scripts, she sold one. It was made into a series, and she and the show win an Emmy.

(This sequence, by the way, will have you LOL'ing with such force that you might frighten friends and loved ones. Let's just say that the dress shoes Figgy gets for her husband to wear are somewhat unconventional.)

What happens next is that Figgy and Alex must deal with her new-found fame. Alex becomes the house-husband. The responsibility of the day-to-day care of their home and children falls to him, as Figgy increasingly becomes immersed in the show and the lifestyle of a successful Hollywood screenwriter.

While there is a general plot, this at times feels like a string of vignettes culled together. Very, very funny vignettes, mind you. I'm so accustomed to reading overwrought dramas that I was convinced Christopher Noxon would make this about the dissolution of a marriage, set against the miasma of a shallow, celebrity-obsessed culture.

It isn't.

I mean, it somewhat is, in that Noxon certainly skewers our shallow, celebrity-obsessed culture. But he isn't trying to make a soap opera out of Alex's life. He's out to entertain us, and that he does.

Alex has worked for an ad agency that aligns itself with do-good causes rather than big name clients, a place that let him take six months of paternity leave. He's established, somewhat, that Figgy's career takes precedence over his. Even when he sets out to write a memoir about his days in a punk rock band, you know that Alex will never eclipse his wife.

What Alex does have to do is figure out how to run the household, and herein lies comedy gold. Noxon is too smart to make Alex a bumbling fool; instead, Alex is someone we can understand, someone we can relate to, someone in whom we can see ourselves. Even when his escapades are highly comedic, they are still rooted in reality. Perhaps this is because Noxon himself is married to a successful Hollywood writer and producer. As his bio states, Noxon does the "school chauffeuring for their three children, so he knows whereof he speaks regarding Plus One."

Noxon lives the life, and he respects it too much to denigrate it by making Alex - or Figgy - appear like a caricature. This isn't to say that others in the story avoid such a plight. Some of the wives with whom Alex is forced to spend time while the group cheers on their spouses come across like stereotypes. Stock characters are as much a part of literature as the Elizabeth Bennets and Jewel Bundrens. (And if you have no idea who those people are, I suggest you hie thee to copies of *Pride and Prejudice* and *As I Lay Dying*, and fix that

character flaw as soon as possible.) What differentiates dull stock characters from the purposeful is the craft of the writer, and in this case, Noxon's respect for the man and women behind the famous woman and men makes those stereotypes feel fun and even a little fresh.

I read a lot of chick lit, a lot of smut, and a lot of naughty books. And I LOVE THEM. But I need to mix it up some with books that make me laugh or think or both. Plus One is one heck of a funny book, and I enjoyed it from start to finish.

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Naomi Zener says

I devoured this novel. Witty, hilarious, and keen observations, I loved this book from beginning to end. The pacing was excellent, the characters full of complexity, foibles and loveable traits, and the world beguiling, there is not one negative thing I could write about it. Read this book!

Larry H says

Alex Sherman-Zicklin, a mid-level marketing executive, has always been tremendously supportive of his writer wife, Figgy, as she works on script idea after script idea, pilot after pilot. Something's bound to work out eventually, isn't it?

But when Figgy's 14th pilot, *Tricks*, actually gets picked up by a cable network, they're both unprepared for how their lives will change. Despite challenges with its star, *Tricks* becomes a critical and commercial success, and wins the Best Comedy Series Emmy in its first year. Figgy is finally able to reap the benefits of her success, putting them in a better financial place, but exponentially increasing the pressure on her to sustain the show's momentum.

Given their newfound financial freedom, Alex agrees to quit his job and focus on managing their lives full-time, including caring for the couple's two young children. Alex sees this as an opportunity to do more cooking (he's quite the foodie), finding their new house and supervising the renovations, and perhaps even working on the memoir he's always been thinking about. It's not long before he finds himself drawn into the world of Plus Ones, the men whose wives are more successful and influential than they are. It's fun at first, but that sort of lifestyle starts to take its toll.

"Women married to successful men have a place. But guys in the same position? No one knows what to do with them. He could hear the interior dialogue: boy scored; must be hard on him; must make up for it in other ways."

Christopher Noxon's *Plus One* is an amusing twist on the more familiar scenario of the wife who finds herself adrift when her husband becomes a huge success. Alex not only must struggle with the mundane—making sure the kids get their homework done, trying to figure out his relationship with his children, and making sure the contractors don't rip him off—to more extreme feelings of inadequacy,

jealousy of Figgy's long hours with her handsome coworkers, and wondering what's next for him professionally.

This was a fun book, one which touched on many of the stereotypical behaviors and activities you'd expect of the rich and famous. It's an interesting look at a man adrift, trying desperately to regain a little of his mojo, but also regain the attention and respect of his wife. I can't identify with many of Alex's struggles but I think many people struggle with some of the same issues he is, regardless of how much money their spouse or partner makes.

While I didn't think this was as laugh-out-loud as some reviewers have said, I enjoyed it. It's a light, quick read, and probably would make a fun movie.

See all of my reviews (and other stuff) at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoriablog...>

John Blumenthal says

Great first chapter, hooked me right away. But the rest of the book? Disappointing. Noxon's main character, Alex, is a stay-at-home Dad; his wife Figgy is a successful TV writer/creator/producer who brings home the bacon. While Alex's decision to mind the fort is admirable, he is simply too... well... pathetic. I'm guessing here, but the premise may be derived, at least somewhat, from personal experience -- Noxon is married to Jenji Kohan, the fabulously successful creator/writer/producer of "Weeds" and "Orange Is the New Black." The book also seemed overwritten, almost padded, as if Noxon was trying to thicken a thin plot. In spite of the plethora of great reviews, I'm going thumbs down on this one.

Kimberly says

Disclaimer: I was gifted a copy of this book in audio form through Audiobook Jukebox in exchange for an honest review.

Not hilarious or even "laugh-out-loud" as other reviewers claim (6 on Amazon and 7 on Goodreads). For me, it was more of a lift-the-corners-of-your-smile book. While not without humor, the story did not provide for me a vested interest in the characters. At no point in time did I feel compelled to continue listening. Another reviewer describes this story as falling flat and I agree.

Alex Sherman-Zicklin (nee Sherman) and his wife Figgie Sherman-Zicklin (nee Zicklin) are 30- to 40-something parents in Hollywood. He has an unglorious, thankless job in an ad agency from which he resigns after she, the lead screenwriter of a comedy series which has just won an Emmy and has sold 23 episodes, becomes the breadwinner of the family. He becomes the house-husband... From this story line, the book reads like 30-minute episodes of their lives with this new celebrity status and the changes her new salary allows. Perfect episode-length chapters for a Helen Hunt/Paul Riser duo to recreate in a Mad About You series!

That's it!! That's the humor! (BTW, I loved, loved, loved Mad About You!) This is filled with I'm-laughing-on-the-inside moments. I can easily see this book transferred to episodic, vignette form played by the likes of Helen Hunt and Paul Riser -- actors who know how to use timing to draw out humor from the audience even

as their faces show nothing but the seriousness of comedic situations of life -- man-jeggings, catching a rat in the house.

This might serve as a good fit between discussion- or thought-provoking books if you want a breather. Or, if you are stuck in a genre rut, this might be a good fit. Those giving this book a 5-star rating are likely to mislead most -- they need to take off their rose-colored glasses.

Michelle Jung says

2.5 stars. It was ok, there were some funny parts. I probably won't remember it in a year.

Darlene Quinn says

Although this is not the type book I am generally drawn to, after meeting the delightful author and learning the back story, I downloaded his audio book and was not disappointed. As the husband of a very successful TV writer, his tale of being the +1 provided an amusing story. His candor and humor kept me entertained during my morning walks. He is a talented writer who is giving his readers his very best. Wishing him much success.

Sandie says

Alex Sherman-Zicklin and his wife Figgy married in Los Angeles and have been living a comfortable life with their two children. Alex works in advertising for a nonprofit and Figgy has written treatments for several proposed series. Then everything changes. Figgy's latest idea is scooped up, made into a TV series, then against all odds, actually wins the Emmy. The family is catapulted into a new lifestyle of riches and everything changes.

Suddenly, Figgy is working all the time, coming home only to collapse and rest up enough to go back. Alex is left with all the tasks necessary to run a family and household and soon it just doesn't make sense for him to also work. He joins the fellowship of the Plus Ones; those men whose successful wives make the money and who they rotate around like a moon around the earth.

The novel is written with a light hand, and there are many laugh out loud moments. The Hollywood lifestyle is skewered with its depiction of an ultimate consumer culture and the liberal sensibilities that only the rich can afford. Yet, Noxon is not just going for a cheap laugh. His book details the ebb and flow of a long-term marriage and the constant rebalancing that any successful relationship takes to maintain.

This is a debut novel. Christopher Noxon is not a debut author though. He has written for publications such as Salon, GQ and the New Yorker. He is also married to a top Hollywood writer/producer so he knows the territory he writes so entertainingly about. The reader will be charmed by Alex and spend the novel rooting for him to win out and have a happy life. This book is recommended for readers of literary fiction and humorous takes on life.

Mary Montgomery hornback says

I was sent an advanced copy of this book. The subject of a Hollywood marriage would never be within the pages of a book that I would choose for myself. However, I was pleasantly taken off guard by how much I enjoyed Noxon's writing. Witty with authentic dialogue and believable situations. The story relays the honest struggle that exists in all walks of life between husbands and wives when one is successful...and the other must redefine their role to accommodate their spouse's success. Laughed out loud at times.

Kimberly Belle says

Hilarious!

Jordana Horn Gordon says

Beach read perfect for freezing winter nights. Fun.

Charlene says

4.0 out of 5 stars Plus One for Laughs and Tenderness, February 19, 2015

By Charlene Diane Jones

This review is from: Plus One (Hardcover)

Funny is tough and Noxon pulls it off with aplomb. From the first laugh out loud incident concerning a Hollywood Awards Gala, a stranger and duck tape, to the scenes on the beach involving his son, a sea creature and several would-be firemen squirting their hoses in competition, this book rocks. Noxon's take on modern marriage, on his modern marriage concerns every reader because he handles the subject with warmth, a disarming amount of personal internal monologue, and a deep tenderness. We know what he yearns for with his wife, his two children, and his increasingly abundant lifestyle. His yearnings match and echo our own, a sign of a true story teller. I was given a hard copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. This is an honest review. The book is funny and intelligent. Honestly.

Charlene Diane Jones author of The Stain
