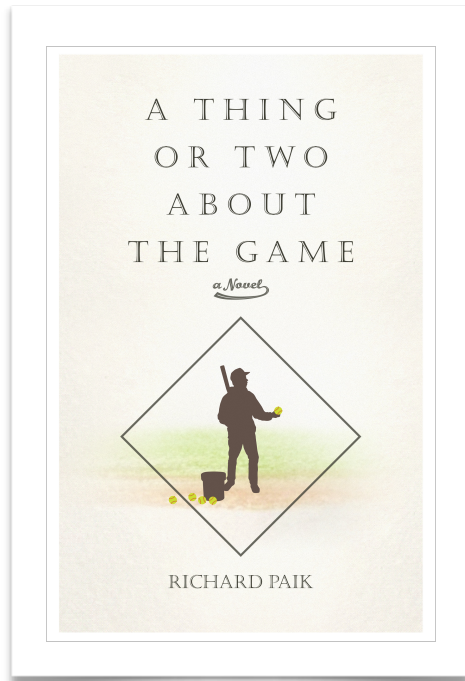




“Book Review: *A Thing or Two About the Game*”

Reviewed by Alexandra Barbush



A fun and engaging sports novel about giving your all for the love of a team

Brad is an out of work biotech scientist who, months after being fired/resigning from his big time job, who still can't seem to plant his feet firmly on the ground.

He's still a little sore from his divorce from his ex (Stephanie) and an unfair forced resignation from a good job. Instead of job hunting or dating, he pours his energy into seemingly small tasks, like gardening around the house.



But even relaxing leisure activities seem to remind him of his former life; he needs everything to be just perfect. His highly executed life takes a turn though, when Stephanie's new boyfriend Connor drops out of his coaching job for their town's preteen girl's softball team.

She wouldn't normally ask, but since he played when he was younger, maybe it would be good for him.

Going back and forth briefly in his mind, Brad takes the gig, only temporarily, until Connor can get back from his overseas business. Brad's immediately thrust into the lives of "his girls" and the competitive world of 12 year old softball.

Some of the girls have real skill, others are just there to have fun and maybe learn about the game. His perfectionism kicks in quickly, and while he's calm and cool with the girls, he has to reel himself in and remember—it's just a game.

His team, the Marlins, aren't good, and they aren't really contenders for the championship. Slowly but surely, the girls improve and they start winning games, just in time for Connor to return.

Brad convinces himself he's glad to give it up: Dealing with pretentious coaches, angry parents and moody preteens isn't his ideal time anyway. Buckling down and concentrating on the team has given him a new form of concentration, and he starts talks with other biotech scientists about starting up their own firm, one that will concentrate on results and not just the bottom line.

When Connor's business takes him out of town again, Brad's thrown right back into the thick of girls' softball. He'll have to juggle this responsibility with his newly budding business, and together, he learns more about himself than he thought.

I'd recommend this book to those interested in coming of age stories involving teamwork and growth. It has plenty of sports, but it focuses much more on Brad's character development, with the help of a few friends, his ex wife's perspective and of course his team.



In the beginning of the novel, we get the sense that Brad's a little self-centered: he refused to have children with his wife, likes his routines, and has a rigid value system. None of that seems to matter when he starts teaching his team the ins and outs of softball, dealing with the emotions and pressures of young preteen girls and their families. It's an enlightening wake-up call for Brad, and he realizes he has a lot to give. Throughout the season, his relationships, confidence and sense of self all improve, right along with the skills of the girls.

A Thing or Two About the Game is a fun and quick read, a wholesome experience that follows an engaging softball storyline. As Brad gets more involved with his community, that's when you'll get to see what all this is really about.