

The Next Thing on My List

Contributed by Editor
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The Next Thing on My List: A Novel
by Jill Smolinski
Shaye Areheart Books (2007)
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I think readers will agree with me that "The Next Thing on My List" is a wonderfully written heartwarming story about a woman's self-discovery that will have you hooked from the very first page. Jill Smolinski knows and understands her audience and delivers a winner with her second novel.

The story centers around a 34-year-old woman, June Parker, who is living aimlessly and without passion. Her life completely changes when she attends a Weight Watchers meeting and offers one of the other members, Marissa a ride home. Marissa is upbeat and celebrating her 100-lb weight loss. As she is reaching into the back seat to get June her favorite taco soup recipe, the truck in front of them suddenly loses a dresser off the back. To avoid a collision with the dresser, June swerves and flips the car over. June is banged up, but okay. Marissa is not so lucky; she does not survive the car crash. After the accident, June finds a list with 20 things on it that Marissa wanted to accomplish before her 25th birthday. Only two items are crossed off – lose 100 lbs, and wear sexy shoes. June finds purpose in her life as she works on completing the other 18 items in Marissa's honor. The list includes simple things like kiss a stranger and eat ice cream in public, to more complicated items like change someone's life and pitch an idea at work.

As June works on accomplishing the tasks, she finds that her life has new purpose and meaning. She realizes that she wants more from her work as a writer for a not-for-profit and works toward a promotion. Her relationships with friends and co-workers evolve as they develop a new respect for her as she completes the list. She also takes on the role of a Big Sister to Deedee who desperately needs her help through a crisis and begins to form a bond with Marissa's sexy brother Troy.

The author develops the characters in a very human way that will make you fall in love with them and cheer June's progress as she works towards completing her list. Woman and teenage girls would enjoy reading "The Next Thing on My List";

Reviewed by Cherie Fisher

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