



Collections of Nothing

William Davies King

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Nearly everyone collects something, even those who don't think of themselves as collectors. William Davies King, on the other hand, has devoted decades to collecting nothing—and a lot of it. With *Collections of Nothing*, he takes a hard look at this habitual hoarding to see what truths it can reveal about the impulse to accumulate.

Part memoir, part reflection on the mania of acquisition, *Collections of Nothing* begins with the stamp collection that King was given as a boy. In the following years, rather than rarity or pedigree, he found himself searching out the lowly and the lost, the cast-off and the undesired: objects that, merely by gathering and retaining them, he could imbue with meaning, even value. As he relates the story of his burgeoning collections, King also offers a fascinating meditation on the human urge to collect. This wry, funny, even touching appreciation and dissection of the collector's art as seen through the life of a most unusual specimen will appeal to anyone who has ever felt the unappeasable power of that acquisitive fever.

"What makes this book, bred of a midlife crisis, extraordinary is the way King weaves his autobiography into the account of his collection, deftly demonstrating that the two stories are essentially one. . . . His hard-won self-awareness gives his disclosures an intensity that will likely resonate with all readers, even those whose collections of nothing contain nothing at all."—*New Yorker*

"King's extraordinary book is a memoir served up on the backs of all things he collects. . . . His story starts out sounding odd and singular—who *is* this guy?—but by the end, you recognize yourself in a lot of what he does."—Julia Keller, *Chicago Tribune*

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