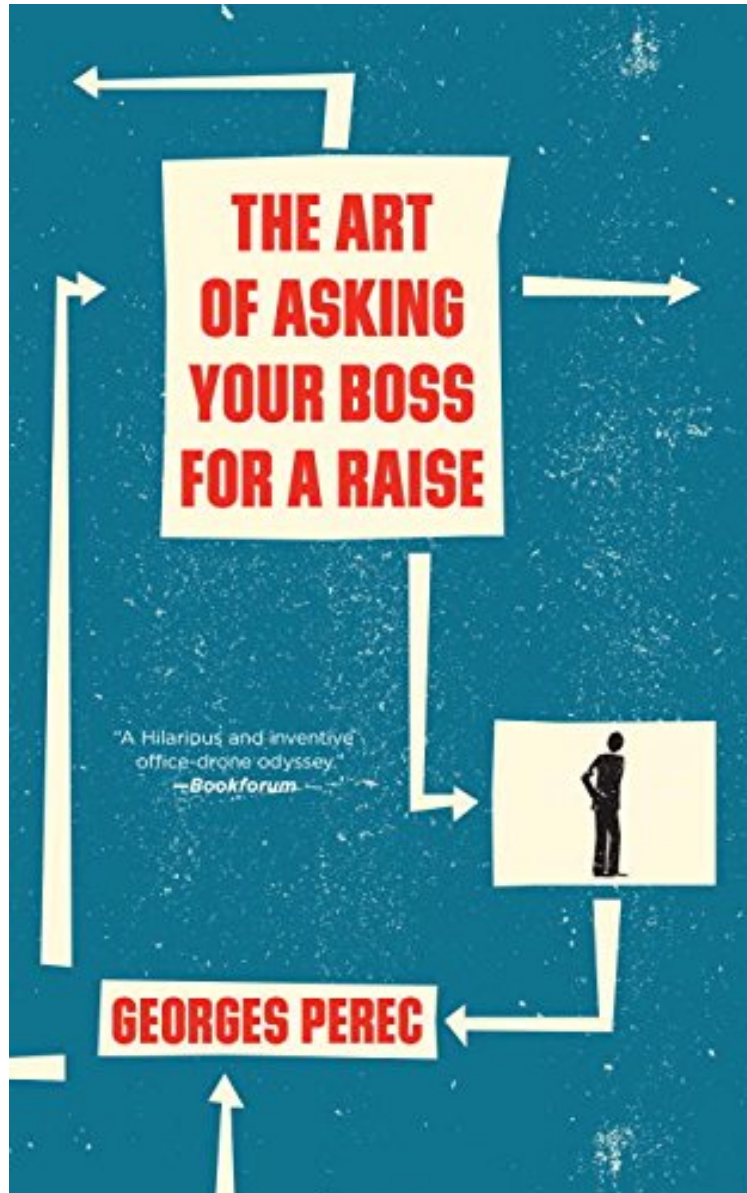


The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise

Georges Perec

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#2019866 in Books Perec Georges 2017-01-17 2017-01-17 Original language: English PDF # 1 7.10 x .30 x 4.40l, .81 #File Name: 178478656X96 pages The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise | File size: 74.Mb

Georges Perec : The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise:

15 of 15 people found the following review helpful. "the dizziness of life not to mention the rubicons of existence" By Michael J. Ettner It would be helpful if the publisher (Verso) would supply the material necessary for to install the

"Click to LOOK INSIDE!" feature for Georges Perec's "The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise," for then potential readers would be able to see the busy flow-chart that is reprinted on the book's endpapers. The flow-chart diagrams a slew of Yes/No events -- obstacles that cleave and re-cleave the path leading to the elusive goal of a salary boost. Fortunately, Verso has posted online an animated, interactive version of the flow chart. It's worth a test drive. (You can find a link to it by Googling the book's title with no spaces between the words: [theartofaskingyourbossforaraise](#).)

These multiple pathways toward a hoped-for raise, pursued seriatim by a minor functionary in a large corporation, are the basis for the plot of Perec's inventive, comic novella, written in 1968. The story is told in the second person singular voice ("you") and, yes, "you" are an employee at "one of the biggest firms in one of the key sectors of the nation's most national industries." It is a corporation "which pays you a pittance while grinding away the best years of your life." All you seek is a meeting with your enigmatic line supervisor who, you fear, has a "disinclination to listen to your squalid concerns over pay". For 78 pages and 15,000 words, author Perec, and his fine translator David Bellos (who also provides a helpful Introduction), follow you from the start of your campaign all the way through to "your two hundred and fifty-fifth bid" for a raise. Be forewarned, however, that Perec poses challenges to the general reader's ready embrace of his game plan. The book qualifies as a piece of experimental writing, and, make no mistake, it is demanding of the reader. The primary challenge is Perec's decision to dispense with punctuation. The text contains no commas, no question marks, no quotation marks to indicate dialog, no capitalization, and no periods (until the final page). Essentially, you must be prepared to launch into a very long run-on sentence, and then hold on tight. Only after you are acclimated to the author's experimental style will you begin to notice subtle shifts in "your" attitude. Rising above the everyday tedium are slyly humorous touches and some serious philosophical implications. What, then, is it like to read a novel that's based on a flow chart, a story delivered in prose that matches the book's hermetic character and its recursive rhythm? I've never encountered anything else like this in literature. The associations that came to my mind reside, instead, in myth, philosophy, the movies, and music. There's Sisyphus's fate of repeated, forced returns to square one (the "recursion" part of the flow chart). There's Zeno's paradox of never reaching a goal, thanks to endless intermediate steps. There's a "Groundhog Day"-like enslavement by time's drudgery that can be overcome, if at all, only through persistence and luck. And, even closer in feel, there is the experimental minimalist music of Steve Reich and Philip Glass, among others. I am thinking of what composer and writer Tom Johnson described as "music that moves in endless circles" (in the novella, the word "circumperambulate" recurs two dozen times); and "pieces that take a very long time to move from one kind of music to another" (it is such a relief when, after what seems an eternity, you finally enter your boss's office for the first time).

"The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise" is a short book with a high threshold of entry, but once inside, an adventurous reader's diligence is likely to pay off handsomely. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting Oulipo Novel

By las cosas Georges Perec was a younger member of the Paris Oulipo group of writers exploring the possibilities of writing within constraints. Perec's most famous Oulipollian work is the novel *The Void*, written without the letter e. David Belloc, Perec's biographer and translator for several of his works into English, including this novel, provides a helpful introduction to what is undoubtedly the most minor work in Perec's oeuvre. Around 1968 a french computer company wanted to enlist artists to use their computers, transforming the limitations of a binary computer code into art. In this case the computer task was to determine the steps potentially required to request a raise. Reproduced on the book's endpapers is the flow-chart with the decision tree leading to the request for a raise. Somehow this odd 'art' project came to the attention of a young Perec, who accepted the challenge of turning a flowchart into literature. The largest limitation Perec set for himself on this assignment isn't the flowchart, it is the lack of punctuation and capital letters. The result is one of those one sentence novels, though in this case the novel is more a short story or novella in length. I found this a very enjoyable romp of a read. Very funny, and very well translated. There are wonderfully evocative made-up words like circumperambulate, chinwag, bananabrain and ingurgitating. In describing his employer he uses ever shifting phrases, such as "the organization which toys with you." On the flowchart the decisions are each yes/no. In the narrative these are "it's one or t'other." And what is described is the fluctuating confidence of the narrator within the endlessly large corporate structure. While the US title is given as *The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise*, the actual translated title, and the title used on the title page of the US edition, is the much more accurate *The Art and Craft of Approaching Your Head of Department to Submit a Request for a Raise*. The narrator is worried that it isn't the right time to request the raise. Why? Mostly because his boss may have just swallowed a fish bone, eaten a bad egg or caught measles. While ludicrously unlikely events, their repetition by the narrator sounds convincing. Or at least as convincing as any of the other reasons why this might not be the best time to request a raise. Our narrator is a lone and helpless person (actually more a thing than a person within the corporation) and his insecurities peek out at us, and him, throughout the book. And how big exactly is this organization? The narrator doesn't know. He only knows that the boss of his boss has the title assistant deputy deputy director. His position? He's assistant technical staff category 3 step 11 with a cost of living index rating of 247. Hard to believe Perec nailed life in a big organization so perfectly without apparently experiencing one up close and unfriendly. Here is a typical example of the novel's use of language, and why I found it so funny. If your boss asks you if you're on good terms with the engineer "answer as honestly as you can if you are on good terms with your engineer say yes if you are

not on good terms with your engineer say er."0 of 10 people found the following review helpful. disappointingBy Mauricio Britvadon't bother unless you are in to complicated non sense books, very weird, i was expecting something else, not for me sorry

Darkly funny account of the office worker's mindset by the celebrated French novelistA long-suffering employee in a big corporation has summoned up the courage to ask for a raise. But as he runs through the looming encounter in his mind, his neuroses come to the surface: What is the best day to see the boss? What if he doesn't offer you a seat when you go into his office?The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise is a hilarious account of an employee losing his identity—and possibly his sanity—as he tries to put on the most acceptable face for the corporate world,with its rigid hierarchies and hostility to new ideas. If he follows a certain course of action, so this logic goes, he will succeed—but, in accepting these conditions, are his attempts to challenge his world of work doomed from the outset?Neurotic and pessimistic, yet endearing, comic and never less than entertaining, Perec's Woody Allen-esque underling presents an acute and penetrating vision of the world of office work, as pertinent today as it was when it was written in 1968.

“A hilarious and inventive office-drone odyssey.”—Bookforum“Its wit and comedy encourage compulsive consumption.”—David O'Neill, Barnes and Noble “We readers will have to deal with the fortunate burden of clearing shelf-space for another novel by Perec this spring, with the first English translation of *The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise*.”—Most Anticipated Books of 2011, *The Millions*“As a witty indictment of corporate culture and an artifact from one of the 20th century's most bizarre literary movements, *The Art of Asking Your Boss for a Raise*—as with all the works of Georges Perec—is a puzzle too absurd not to explore ... [it] will interest any reader who has ever worked in a large bureaucracy and considered himself underpaid.”—James K. McAuley, *Harvard Crimson*“Perec's novels are games, each different. They are played for real stakes and in some cases breathtakingly large ones. As games should be, and as literary games often are not, they are fun.”—*Los Angeles Times*“We defy you to walk by this book and not pick it up. Perfectly packaged and immediately intriguing!”—*A Largehearted WORD Book of the Week*“A brilliant ... conceptual, comedic novella from the writer who wrote the postmodern masterpiece *Life: A User's Manual*.”—*City Arts*“An acute and penetrating vision of the world of office work.”—Arthur“Perec's knack for absurdity and circumlocution ensures that each iteration is novel and urgent.”—*Full Stop*“[A] fun read for someone who enjoys computer programming and corporate irony, and would make a perfect gift for the office mate with a good sense of humor.”—*bestdamncreativewritingblog*“[A] terribly compelling work, one that does a great deal with very little. With his use of repetition, which also evokes a pre-set mechanism, Perec establishes a rhythm of sorts, while his subtle deviations from the pattern serve as moments of dark comedy.”—*Slant Magazine*“Certainly something different, and quite enjoyable.”—*Complete About the Author*Georges Perec (1936–82) won the Prix Renaudot in 1965 for his first novel *Things: A Story of the Sixties*, and went on to exercise his unrivalled mastery of language in almost every imaginable kind of writing, from the apparently trivial to the deeply personal. He composed acrostics, anagrams, autobiography, criticism, crosswords, descriptions of dreams, film scripts, heterograms, lipograms, memories, palindromes, plays, poetry, radio plays, recipes, riddles, stories short and long, travel notes, univocalics, and, of course, novels. *Life A User's Manual*, which draws on many of Perec's other works, appeared in 1978 after nine years in the making and was acclaimed a masterpiece to put beside Joyce's *Ulysses*. It won the Prix Médicis and established Perec's international reputation.David Bellos is Professor of French and Comparative Literature and Director of the Program in Translation and Intercultural Communication at Princeton University. In 2005 Bellos was awarded the Man Booker International Translator's Prize for his many translations of the novels of the distinguished Albanian writer Ismail Kadare. He is the author of several works on Balzac, the prize-winning biography *Georges Perec: A Life in Words*, and a biography of Romain Gary, published in 2010.