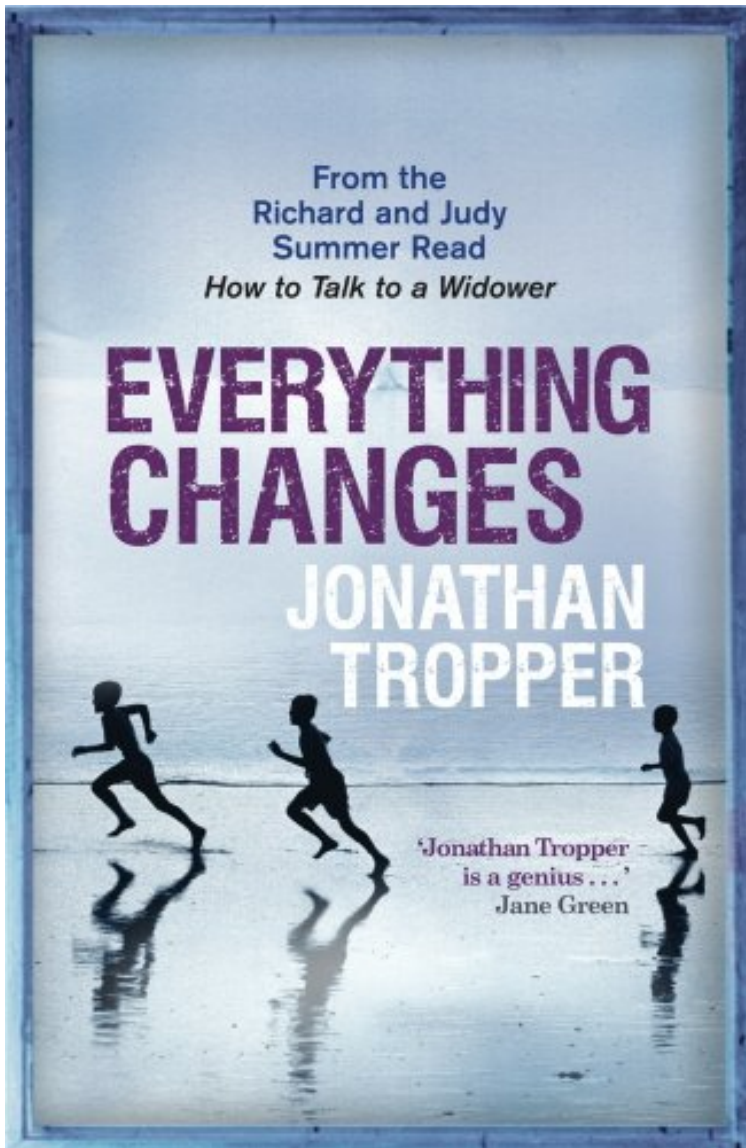


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# Everything Changes (English Edition)



Par Jonathan Tropper  
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## Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurA moving, funny novel of romance and horrible mistakes... from the bestselling author of ONE LAST THING BEFORE I GO.To all appearances, Zachary King is a man with luck on his side. A steady, well-paying job, a rent-free Manhattan apartment, and Hope, his stunning, blue-blooded fiance: smart, sexy, and completely out of his league. But as the wedding day looms, Zack finds himself haunted by the memory of his best friend, Rael, killed in a car wreck two years earlier - and by his increasingly complicated feelings for Tamara, the beautiful widow Rael left behind. Then Norm - Zack's freewheeling, Viagra-popping father - resurfaces after a twenty-year absence, looking to make amends. Norm's overbearing, often outrageous efforts to re-establish ties with his sons infuriate Zack, and yet, despite twenty

years of bad blood, he finds something compelling in his father's maniacal determination to transform his own life. Inspired by Norm, Zack boldly attempts to make some changes of his own, and the results are instantly calamitous. Soon fists are flying, his love life is a shambles, and his once carefully structured existence is spinning hopelessly out of control.

Chapter One The night before everything changes, an earthquake jolts me out of my sleep and I instinctively reach over for Tamara, but it isn't Tamara, of course, it's Hope. There was never even a time when it might have been Tamara. And yet, lately, whenever I wake up, my first, dazed instinct, before real life comes back into focus, is to assume it's Tamara in the bed beside me. I suppose that in my dreams, not the one or two that I can recall, but the millions that vanish into oblivion like flies when you've barely even begun to move your cupped, ready hand in their direction, in those dreams, she must be mine, over and over again. So there's always this vaguely troubling notion when I wake up like this, this sense that I've somehow been transported to an alternate universe where my life took a left instead of a right because of some seemingly insignificant yet cosmically crucial choice I made, about a girl or a kiss or a date or a job or which Starbucks I went into . . . something.

Meanwhile, back in real life, the Upper West Side of Manhattan trembles like a subway platform, rattling windows and uprooting corner trash cans, the shrill wail of multiple car alarms rising up over Broadway, piercing the night at its stillest, in the hour just preceding dawn. Zack! Hope shouts, reaching out urgently for me, the volume of her voice almost as startling as the quake, her manicured nails slicing painfully into my shoulder. Hope, not Tamara. That's right. Beautiful Hope. I open my eyes and say, What the hell? It's the best I can manage under the circumstances. We look up at the ceiling as the bed shimmies lightly under us, and then quickly climb out of bed. My trusty Felix the Cat boxers and her satin Brooks Brothers pajamas belie the postcoital nature of our broken slumber. The tremors have stopped by the time we run downstairs to the living room, where we find Jed, my roommate, standing naked and peering out the window with mild curiosity. What happened? I say. I don't know, Jed says, rubbing his toned abdomen absently. I think it was an earthquake. He turns from the window and moves lazily toward the couch. Oh my God! Hope cries, simultaneously spinning around and covering her eyes. Oh, Jed says, first noticing her. Hi, Hope. Can you put that thing away for a minute? I say on Hope's behalf. I didn't know she was here, Jed says, making no move to conceal his kinetic nakedness. Well, you do now, Hope says in that high, aristocratic whine that never fails to bug me. I love Jed, but he's been pulling this naked shit more and more lately. I can't recall the last time I saw him wearing a shirt. One of the few downsides to living with an unemployed millionaire is that he has nothing to do but watch television and cultivate eccentricities. On the other hand, I live in a newly renovated brownstone on the Upper West Side and haven't paid rent in over three years. In Manhattan, this makes me nothing less than fortune's son. When you do the math, I am being highly compensated to tolerate the occasional flapping phallus. I grab a pillow off the giant leather sectional that runs the perimeter of our ridiculously large living room in a wide crescent, and throw it at him. Cover yourself, Jed. For the sake of the nation. Jed sits down on the couch and wipes the crust out of his eyes while I gag inwardly at the thought of his naked ass on the mushroom-colored Italian leather. He crosses his legs and perches the pillow comically over his genitals, flashing me his trademark laid-back grin. Hope sniffs, audibly and with great inflection, before walking over to the window. Jed has made a lot of money, but Hope comes from money, which carries with it a distinctly different flavor. Having done neither, all I can do is sigh a this-is-my-life kind of sigh, resigned, but not without some trace of contentment. Jed is my best friend, and sometimes a bit of an asshole. Hope is my fiancée, and while I don't think she's a snob, I can see why Jed might. They are polar opposites, triangulated by my central presence between them. Physically, though, they could be siblings. Both are effortlessly beautiful, tall and lean, with thick hair and chiseled features. Jed's prominent forehead and thick nose lend him a vaguely European look, like a Calvin Klein model, and he cuts his hair short so he doesn't have to brush it. Hope's hair is thick, obedient, and often suspiciously similar to Gwyneth Paltrow's latest style, although she would never admit to such pedestrian influences. I stand between these two attractive people as something of an oddity, like the guy taking the light readings at a photo shoot, miraculously connected to both of them, conspicuously average; the man in the middle. Jed and I met in Columbia and became roommates after we graduated, in a run-down junior four on 108th and Amsterdam. At the time, he was working as an analyst at Merrill Lynch and I was writing long, boring press releases full of disclaimers for a PR firm specializing in pharmaceuticals. Then Jed quit his job to join a hedge fund investing in Internet start-ups and, like everyone else except me, became a millionaire on stock options by the year 2000. By the time the bubble had burst, he'd already bought the brownstone, inviting me to move in with him, and sold enough stock before the fall to bank a healthy few million to boot. For a while he talked about going back to work in

the financial sector or maybe starting his own hedge fund, but then our buddy Rael got killed and Jed pretty much forgot about all that, and announced that he was going to just stay home and watch television for a while. That was almost two years ago, and as far I can tell, he seems to have found his true calling. The nudity is more of a hobby. Rael, my best friend since the third grade, lost control of his BMW on his way home from a night of gambling in Atlantic City. The car swerved up an embankment on the Garden State Parkway and crashed through the woods before flipping over into a gully. It was two in the morning and the parkway was empty when it happened, so it took a while for help to show up, and by then he was dead. I doubt they could have saved him anyway, since his internal organs were pretty much crushed on impact when he was impaled on the steering wheel. It would be comforting to think he died instantly, but it actually took a while. I know, because I was sitting next to him. Did we really have an earthquake? Hope says, sounding like a little girl as she peers out at Eighty-fifth and Broadway. Her whine is gone, and I love her again. So it would seem, Jed says. He turns the television to one of the local channels while we gaze out the window, considering the possibility of terrorist actions. Since 9/11, we take nothing for granted. The din of the car alarms is starting to lessen, and a few hardy souls have ventured out onto the street to assess the situation. They're showing an old Clint Eastwood film on channel 55 Urban Clint, as opposed to grizzled Western Clint and after another minute, the crawl appears at the bottom of the screen confirming that yes, in fact, we did have a minor earthquake. No injuries or damages have been reported. Since when does Manhattan have earthquakes? Hope says in a tone that suggests she's inclined to write a letter to someone's supervisor about this. I've lived here my whole life, and I don't recall there ever being one before. Maybe not on the East Side, Jed says. Here in the West, we get them all the time. He never misses a chance to needle Hope about her privileged roots. Teach you to go slumming. He winks at me, a quick, effortless wink that I have fruitlessly tried to cultivate from time to time. My facial muscles apparently lack the required flexibility, and my cheek always manages to get dragged into the fray, lending the gesture a ticlike quality guaranteed not to impress. Hope looks down her perfect nose at Jed. You are an ass, she declares sincerely. No, he says, standing up briefly to bend over and flash her some moon. This is an ass. Oh, for God's sake, she squeals exasperatedly, turning to me like it's my fault and flashing me her what-lovely-friends-you-have smirk. Her genteel origins did not prepare her for guys like Jed, or me for that matter, and I have to say that she's adjusted rather admirably in the name of love. Let's go back to bed, I say, taking her hand. Jed plops back down on the couch, the leather farting as it scrapes against his skin, or else he's actually let one rip, which would hardly be out of character. We won't wait around to find out. He flips on the television, surfing aimlessly through the vast desert of late-night programming. Night, Jed, I call to him from the stairs, but he's already gone, swallowed up in the numbing blue-green glow of the fifty-two-inch plasma screen, his true home for the last two years. X-Files, he announces exuberantly. Damn. I saw this one. Hell sit there until morning, watching reruns and infomercials, effectively doubling his odds of encountering Chuck Norris. At some point he'll take a nap and a shower, order in some breakfast, and, thus replenished, resume his mindless vigil. Back in my room, I try to capitalize on our unscheduled wakefulness and extract Hope from her pajamas, but although she lets my hands roam blissfully under her shirt, she obstinately refuses to relinquish it. I have to be at work early, she says. I gently rub her left breast in what's intended to be a seductive motion, running my hand across her nipple and down to where the softness disappears into her ribs and then back up again, her breast filling my palm, overflowing against my fingers like a rising cake when I press inward. Hope has the greatest body of anyone I've ever been allowed to touch. Her long, toned torso is crowned with two remarkably pert, grapefruit-size breasts whose tall, barrel-shaped nipples jump to attention at the slightest manipulation. Her legs are lean and toned from her thrice-weekly spinning workouts at the Reebok Club, and above them sits a Magritte apple of an ass, firm but deliciously yielding. Come on, I say, already popping out of my Felix the Cat fly. Earthquake sex. From Publishers Weekly The arrival of a long-lost absent father forces a Manhattan man to come to terms with an ongoing romantic triangle in Tropper's latest, a funny, sensitive and occasionally over-the-top comic novel that revolves around the calamitous life of 32-year-old Zack King. King's a horrible job as a corporate drone for a supply company is balanced by his impending marriage to Hope, his gorgeous, successful fiancée. But chaos comes with the arrival of his wacky divorced father, Norm, who left Zack and his two brothers after his wife used graphic pictures of his infidelity as the backdrop for the family Christmas cards. Norm makes himself an unwelcome guest as Zack tries to deal with a potentially devastating health problem and a job crisis that makes him realize how much he hates his life. But the real problem is Zack's growing attraction to Tamara, the beautiful, recently widowed single mother who was married to Zack's friend Rael until a car accident took Rael's life and left

Zack alive during an ill-fated road trip to Atlantic City. Viagra-popping Norm becomes increasingly cartoonish as the novel unfolds, and the triangle material is boilerplate, but pithy observations on love, marriage and corporate life give the book a graceful charm. Tropper continues to display a fine feel for romantic comedy in this enjoyable follow-up to *The Book of Joe*. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.