



## The Throwback Special: A Novel

Chris Bachelder

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A slyly profound and startlingly original novel about the psyche of the American male, *The Throwback Special* marks the return of one of the most acclaimed literary voices of his generation.

Winner of the *Paris Review*'s Terry Southern Prize for Humor.

Here is the absorbing story of twenty-two men who gather every fall to painstakingly reenact what ESPN called "the most shocking play in NFL history" and the Washington Redskins dubbed the "Throwback Special": the November 1985 play in which the Redskins' Joe Theismann had his leg horribly broken by Lawrence Taylor of the New York Giants live on *Monday Night Football*.

With wit and great empathy, Chris Bachelder introduces us to Charles, a psychologist whose expertise is in high demand; George, a garrulous public librarian; Fat Michael, envied and despised by the others for being exquisitely fit; Jeff, a recently divorced man who has become a theorist of marriage; and many more. Over the course of a weekend, the men reveal their secret hopes, fears, and passions as they choose roles, spend a long night of the soul preparing for the play, and finally enact their bizarre ritual for what may be the last time. Along the way, mishaps, misunderstandings, and grievances pile up, and the comforting traditions holding the group together threaten to give way.

The Throwback Special is a moving and comic tale filled with pitch-perfect observations about manhood, marriage, middle age, and the rituals we all enact as part of being alive.



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