What is the difference between choking and panicking? Why are there dozens of varieties of mustard—but only one variety of ketchup? What do football players teach us about how to hire teachers? What does hair dye tell us about the history of the 20th century?

In the past decade, Malcolm Gladwell has written three books that have radically changed how we understand our world and ourselves: The Tipping Point; Blink; and Outliers. Now, in What the Dog Saw, he brings together, for the first time, the best of his writing from The New Yorker over the same period.

Here is the bittersweet tale of the inventor of the birth control pill, and the dazzling inventions of the pasta sauce pioneer Howard Moscowitz. Gladwell sits with Ron Popeil, the king of the American kitchen, as he sells rotisserie ovens, and divines the secrets of Cesar Millan, the dog whisperer who can calm savage animals with the touch of his hand. He explores intelligence tests and ethnic profiling and hindsight bias and why it was that everyone in Silicon Valley once tripped over themselves to hire the same college graduate.

Good writing, Gladwell says in his preface, does not succeed or fail on the strength of its ability to persuade. It succeeds or fails on the strength of its ability to engage you, to make you think, to give you a glimpse into someone else’s head. What the Dog Saw is yet another example of the buoyant spirit and unflagging curiosity that have made Malcolm Gladwell our most brilliant investigator of the hidden extraordinary.

My Personal Review:
Malcolm Gladwell’s What the Dog Saw and Other Adventures is a compilation of the authors favorite work from The New Yorker, where he has been a staff writer since 1996. This book is divided into three parts 1. Obsessives, Pioneers, and Other Varieties of Minor Genius 2. Theories,
Predictions, and Diagnoses 3. Personality, Character, and Intelligence. In the first part, Gladwell includes portraits of a pitchman for kitchen gadgets who is so persuasive that he could sell clothing to a nudist. In addition, he discusses three female advertising pioneers, a canny investment strategist, and a dog whisperer who is able to tame even the most intransigent canine. What these people have in common is an understanding of how human beings (and four-legged creatures) think and feel, supreme self-confidence, and the ability to promote themselves and their ideas. The second part deals with the art of thinking and seeing clearly. Gladwell describes the series of events that led to the Challenger explosion and the collapse of Enron. Could these catastrophic events have been foreseen and prevented? In part three, the author discusses various aspects of genius and talent, and whether it is possible to profile criminal behavior or predict how a prospective employee will fare on the job.

What the Dog Saw has some intriguing passages that will impel readers to say, I never thought of this subject in quite that way before. The provocative Gladwell enjoys toying with conventional wisdom and challenging our preconceived notions. For instance, in one article, he defends certain forms of plagiarism, a transgression that many would consider indefensible. In another, he states that tragedies such as the Challenger disaster are unavoidable, since for a variety of reasons, we dont really want the safest of all possible worlds. This water-cooler book will have people arguing vehemently that Malcolm Gladwell is either out of his mind or, conversely, that he is a courageously honest writer who dares to tell it like it is.

Unfortunately, there are several dreary chapters, including one that analyzes why one particular brand of ketchup is so popular and another that explores the poor judgment of John Rock, the inventor of the birth control pill. In addition, Gladwell occasionally indulges in hair-splitting: Do most of us really care about the fine distinctions between panicking and choking? On the other hand, there is a fascinating section that explains why mammograms, as a diagnostic tool, are inexact and hard to interpret. In addition, Gladwell makes a good case for the notion that intelligence failures, such as the ones that preceded 9/11, are easy to condemn in hindsight but may be more understandable when viewed in context. Malcolm Gladwells strength has always been his ability to tell an original and entertaining story and connect it to our everyday experiences. He does just that in his best pieces, but there are others that probably should not have made the cut.

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What the Dog Saw: And Other Adventures by Malcolm Gladwell - 5 Star Customer Reviews and Lowest Price!