



When You Are Engulfed in Flames

By David Sedaris

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When You Are Engulfed in Flames By David Sedaris

"David Sedaris's ability to transform the mortification of everyday life into wildly entertaining art," (*The Christian Science Monitor*) is elevated to wilder and more entertaining heights than ever in this remarkable new book.

Trying to make coffee when the water is shut off, David considers using the water in a vase of flowers and his chain of associations takes him from the French countryside to a hilariously uncomfortable memory of buying drugs in a mobile home in rural North Carolina. In essay after essay, Sedaris proceeds from bizarre conundrums of daily life—having a lozenge fall from your mouth into the lap of a fellow passenger on a plane or armoring the windows with LP covers to protect the house from neurotic songbirds—to the most deeply resonant human truths. Culminating in a brilliant account of his venture to Tokyo in order to quit smoking, David Sedaris's sixth essay collection is a new masterpiece of comic writing from "a writer worth treasuring" (*Seattle Times*).

Praise for *When You Are Engulfed in Flames*:

"Older, wiser, smarter and meaner, Sedaris...defies the odds once again by delivering an intelligent take on the banalities of an absurd life." --*Kirkus Reviews*

This latest collection proves that not only does Sedaris still have it, but he's also getting better....Sedaris's best stuff will still--after all this time--move, surprise, and entertain." --*Booklist*

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Crybaby
Old Faithful
The Smoking Section

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Sedaris's sparkling essays always shimmer more brightly when read aloud by the author. And his expert timing, mimicry and droll asides are never more polished than during live performances in front of an audience. Happily, four of the 22 pieces are live recordings, and listeners can hear Sedaris's energy increase from the roaring, rolling laughter of the appreciative audience. Sedaris's studio recording of his 10-page *Of Mice and Men* runs 16 minutes, while the live recording of *Town and Country*, which runs the same length in print, expands to 22 minutes thanks to an audience that often doesn't let him finish a sentence without making him pause for laughter to subside. The studio recordings usually begin with an acoustic bass and brief sound effect (a buzzing fly, the lighting of a cigarette, the clinking of ice in a drink, etc.). Sedaris's brilliant magnum opus, *The Smoking Section* (about his successful trip to Tokyo is quit smoking) stretches across the final two CDs. *A Little, Brown hardcover (Reviews, Apr. 28). (June)*
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From [Booklist](#)

With essay collections such as *Naked* (1997) and *Me Talk Pretty One Day* (2000), Sedaris kicked the door down for the “quirky memoir” genre and left it open for writers like Augusten Burroughs and Jeannette Walls to mosey on through. Sometimes the originators of a certain trend in literature are surpassed by their own disciples—but, this is Sedaris we’re talking about. When it comes to fashioning the sardonic wisecrack, the humiliating circumstance, and the absurdist fantasy, there’s nobody better. Unfortunately, being in a league of your own often means competing with yourself. This latest collection of 22 essays proves that not only does Sedaris still have it, but he’s also getting better. True, the terrain is familiar. The essays “Old Faithful” and “That’s Amore” again feature Sedaris’ overly competent boyfriend, Hugh. And nutty sister Amy can be found leafing through bestial pornography in “Town and Country.” Present also are Sedaris’ favored topics: death, compulsion, unwanted sexual advances, corporal decay, and more death. Nevertheless, Sedaris’ best stuff will still—after all this time—move, surprise, and entertain. --Jerry Eberle

Review

"It's not just that Sedaris's crisp prose is humorous. What makes his work a consistent joy to read is his deliciously skewed vision of the world, and his deadpan delivery." **Christopher Muther, *Boston Globe***

"The Sedaris genius is to be incredibly particular, not to mention peculiar, and yet take fantastic and rapid leaps to the universal. . . . He'll be telling some weird story, and all of a sudden, just at the end, it turns out not only to be about him, but also about you. He's a master at evoking fellow feeling." **Nancy Dalva, *New York Observer***

"David Sedaris is horribly observant. He sees things as they are.... He'll be telling some weird story, and all of a sudden, just at the end, it turns out not only to be about him, but also about you." **Nancy Dalva, *New York Observer***

"What makes Sedaris's work transcendent is its humanity: He adores some truly awful people, yet he invests them with dignity and even grace.... He's the best there is." **Judith Newman, *People***

"The preeminent humorist of his generation...His reluctant charm and talent for observing every inch of the human condition remain intact." **Whitney Pastorek, *Entertainment Weekly***

"Sedaris is certainly worthy of hero worship-he so breezily translates the landscape through his bent, prismatic view that he makes you forget what a skillful narrator he is."?Mark Washburn, *Charlotte Observer*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Richard Rhone:

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David Rivera:

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