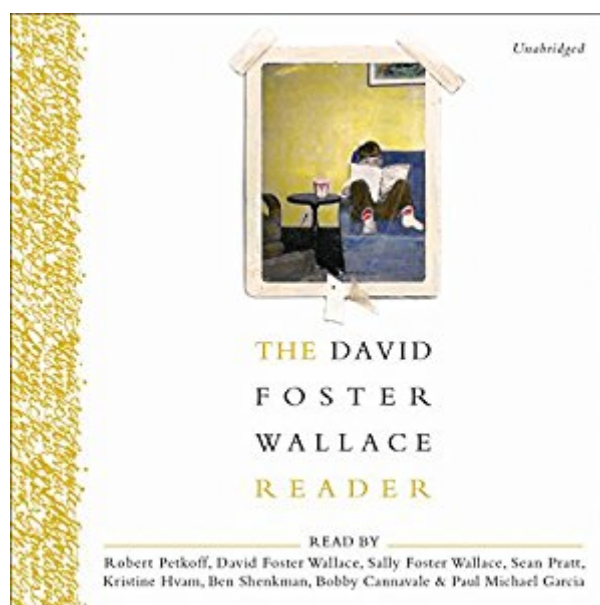


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# The David Foster Wallace Reader



## Synopsis

Where do you begin with a writer as original and brilliant as David Foster Wallace? Here - with a carefully considered selection of his extraordinary body of work, chosen by a range of great writers, critics, and those who worked with him most closely. This volume presents his most dazzling, funniest, and most heartbreaking work - essays like his famous cruise-ship piece, "A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again," excerpts from his novels *The Broom of the System*, *Infinite Jest*, and *The Pale King*, and legendary stories like "The Depressed Person". Wallace's explorations of morality, self-consciousness, addiction, sports, love, and the many other subjects that occupied him are represented here in both fiction and nonfiction. Collected for the first time are Wallace's first published story, "The View from Planet Trillaphon as Seen In Relation to the Bad Thing" and a selection of his work as a writing instructor, including reading lists, grammar guides, and general guidelines for his students. A dozen writers and critics, including Hari Kunzru, Anne Fadiman, and Nam Le, add afterwords to favorite pieces, expanding our appreciation of the unique pleasures of Wallace's writing. The result is an astonishing volume that shows the breadth and range of "one of America's most daring and talented writers" (Los Angeles Times Book Review) whose work was full of humor, insight, and beauty.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David Foster Wallace must have been one strange and wonderful cat. I don't know for sure since I did not know him or even follow his career and personal life till only recently, but my impression of him through his writing and interviews tell me I'm right. He was a writer who shared much of his personal life experience in essays yet he was an introvert (or perhaps rather, not an extrovert) at

heart, literally sweating at times over how he would come across during speeches and interviews. As a professor of English at a number of colleges, he was a real taskmaster, a grammar/usage Nazi of sorts, a peculiarity perhaps passed on through his mom's genes (Sally Foster Wallace is also a professor of English and has written reference books on usage. His father is the Professor Emeritus of Moral Philosophy at the University of Illinois. Those are some high quality genes, academically speaking). Wallace was an admitted Depressive, had been since a young age. His first published piece *The Planet Trillaphon As It Stands In Relation to The Bad Thing* (Amherst Review, 1984), relates the autobiographical tale of a youth on antidepressants (Tofranil which the narrator fittingly renames Trillaphon because the name sounds more like the sonic vibe it induces) which he likens to living on another planet. Sadly those very antidepressants, their inevitable ineffectiveness after twenty years of use, lead to Wallace's demise (suicide by hanging in 2008). I've been listening to the anthology entitled *The David Foster Wallace Reader* on my iPod and have been illuminated by his high beam brilliance.

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