



Sedaris

Kevin Kopelson

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“When you're laughing aloud at David Sedaris's every sentence, it's easy to miss the more serious side of what he's up to. Fortunately, Kevin Kopelson has come along to guide readers through the work of the best and most subversive social satirist in America.” —Stephen McCauley, author of *The Object of My Affection*

"Charting a course from Marcel Proust to Tony Danza, Kevin artfully captures the exquisite pleasure and pain of reading David Sedaris. A witty, thoughtful, intimate encounter." —David Hyde Pierce

"If I were to read a book on David Sedaris it might be this one." —Paul Reubens

David Sedaris is nothing less than a literary phenomenon. His readings and live performances sell out within hours, while his books—*Barrel Fever*, *Holidays on Ice*, *Naked*, *Me Talk Pretty One Day*, and *Dress Your Family in Corduroy and Denim*—have each been best-sellers. Sedaris became an almost overnight sensation in 1992 when he recounted his surreal experiences working as a Macy's department store elf named Crumpet on NPR's *Morning Edition*. The sardonic wit displayed in his “*SantaLand Diaries*” has since made him America's preeminent satirist—brutally honest, often painfully sad, and above all, truly hilarious.

In *Sedaris*, Kevin Kopelson engages with the most difficult, uncomfortable, and often most humorous aspects of Sedaris's writing—shame and public humiliation, dysfunctional families and destructive relationships, misanthropy and self-loathing—to reveal what makes Sedaris such an effective and affecting satirist, and to show why so many readers and listeners identify with him. For Kopelson, the key to understanding Sedaris lies in recognizing the importance of relationships to his comedy. Drawing extensively on both his nonfiction essays and short stories, Kopelson maps out Sedaris's relationships in more or less chronological order—grandparents, parents, siblings, teachers, friends, coworkers, strangers,

children, and lovers—and identifies the misunderstandings, betrayals, and cruelties that we all experience, but which in Sedaris's voice are brilliantly and grotesquely magnified.

Written for everyone who loves David Sedaris and has wondered why they find him so relevant to their own lives, Sedaris succeeds in taking seriously this sublimely caustic, riotously funny, and ultimately important writer. And for anyone unfamiliar with Sedaris, this book is the perfect introduction.

Kevin Kopelson is professor of English at the University of Iowa. His previous books include *Neatness Counts: Essays on the Writer's Desk* (Minnesota, 2004).

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