

FICTION

A Back Bay Book

"A SUPERSONIC DELIGHT, A FULL-SCALE HARASSMENT OF THE SHORT STORY FORM....DAVID FOSTER WALLACE IS ONE BADASS FICTION WRITER."

—Benjamin Weissman, *LA Weekly*

David Foster Wallace has made an art of taking readers into places no other writer even gets near. In this exuberantly acclaimed collection he combines hilarity and an escalating disquiet in stories that astonish, entertain, and expand our ideas of the pleasures that fiction can afford.

"At just about the time this reviewer was putting on a black suit to attend the funeral of American fiction, David Foster Wallace showed up....Wallace, like Nabokov, the writer whom he most resembles, has a seemingly inexhaustible bag of literary tricks."

—Andrei Codrescu, *Chicago Tribune*

"Wallace can make you laugh out loud with his devilish wit."

—George Gurley, *Kansas City Star*

"A prodigiously inventive, hugely funny writer whose best work challenges and reinvents the art of fiction."

—Greg Johnson, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

"In his eccentric obsessions and his sinister experiments, Wallace is beginning to resemble another mad scientist of American literature: Edgar Allan Poe. And his hideous men, like Poe's, are vexed by demons that haunt us all."

—Adam Goodheart, *New York Times Book Review*



DAVID FOSTER WALLACE is the author of two novels, *Infinite Jest* and *The Broom of the System*; a book of essays and arguments, *A Supposedly Fun Thing I'll Never Do Again*; and one previous story collection, *Girl with Curious Hair*. His short fiction has appeared in *Esquire*, *Harper's*, *The New Yorker*, and other magazines. He is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship and numerous other awards.

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DAVID
FOSTER
WALLACE

BRIEF
INTERVIEWS
WITH
HIDEOUS
MEN

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WITH
HIDEOUS
MEN

NATIONAL BESTSELLER

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE
AUTHOR OF INFINITE JEST

... FUNNY...

850
KRF

Extraordinary acclaim for David Foster Wallace's
BRIEF INTERVIEWS WITH HIDEOUS MEN

"A brilliant book. . . . One of the most ambitious and talented writers of his generation. Wallace's work is biting funny and remarkably, even wildly, imaginative; at the same time he aims for very large psychological, emotional, and social issues, issues of how we live or fail to live, love and fail to love, survive or destroy ourselves. . . . Wallace has planted himself firmly as the American writer of his generation to watch, to match, and, most urgently, to read." — Vince Passaro, *Salon*

"A strikingly original collection. . . . *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* is meant to interrogate the reader, to elicit fresh responses to horrors that have lost their edge in the age of information overload. . . . It displays a range of intellect and talent that is unseemly for any one writer to have, let alone show off." — R. Z. Sheppard, *Time*

"An astonishing collection. . . . A brutally magnificent book. . . . Not least among David Foster Wallace's many accomplishments is his almost single-handed rehabilitation of the footnote as a literary device." — Will Blythe, *Spin*

"Often funny and very often hugely impressive. . . . Now we know Mr. Wallace can write short. Let's just hope he writes for a long, long time." — Adam Begley, *New York Observer*

"Evocative and challenging. . . . A virtuoso performance of voice, imagination, footnotes, and black humor, showing once again that Wallace is the dark prince of contemporary American fiction." — Rob Spillman, *Details*

"A demonstration of ironic virtuosity. . . . Savaging and redeeming this culture is what Wallace does, with the authority of a perfect master." — Andrei Codrescu, *Chicago Tribune*

"Wallace's command of various vernacular systems is deft, his creation of fantastical counter-worlds is sublime, and his skill at following the dialectical contortions of human thought through to their endless series of non-conclusions is unparalleled." — Jim Hanas, *Memphis Flyer*

"Wallace has a sensibility that is anarchistic and kaleidoscopic. . . . He makes you feel really smart without in any way flattering you. . . . He creates verbal ecosystems that, if you are patient with them for just long enough, pull you into their own self-contained universe and make you so happy to be there you're reluctant to leave."

— Thomas Beller, *BookForum*

"Darkly funny entertainment. Wallace has an astonishing repertoire of voices, an endless array of characters brilliantly rendered."

— Karen Sandstrom, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"Wallace is outrageously funny, ironically dissecting the psychological distortions that pass for normal turn-of-the-century mainstream America. . . . The humor and disturbance that dominate his prose are rendered so skillfully that anyone interested in cutting-edge American fiction should give this book a careful reading. . . . Wallace shows that he is a writer to be reckoned with."

— Stephen-Paul Martin, *San Diego Union-tribune*

"Page by page he's more fun to read than anyone. . . . It's as if Wallace's mission is to combine the audacity of metafiction with the moral passions of classic fiction and to offer, as well, the entertainment value of the best of pop culture. His verbal brio, the glittering joy of his writing, brings Nabokov to mind."

— Damaris Moore, *Express Books*

"Something at once marvelous and fearful: a writer of great power and intelligence grappling with the very act of his writing and your reading."

— Duane Davis, *Denver Rocky Mountain News*

"A joy to read. . . . David Foster Wallace is one of the few contemporary authors who actually sounds like he's writing in the present. . . . *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* is not only a state-of-the-art demonstration of the short-story form, but a rebuke to almost every other short-story writer to *move* on, to try something new."

— Steven Moore, *Rain Taxi* (Minneapolis)

"Wallace proves that he is still an expert ethnographer of contemporary America. . . . At times you are awed by his audacity. . . . Even when his post-modernist chemistry projects simply fizzle out, there is always at least a whiff of genius to make you savor the attempt."

— Adam Goodheart, *New York Times Book Review*

"The fun of the collection — and it is fun, and often very funny — is partly the thrill of watching Wallace do his stuff as an inventor of character, voice, and situation, and partly the weird pleasure of watching the moralist in him burn all this extravagance to ashes."

— Lorin Stein, *Newsday*

"All [of these stories] display an intelligence and a swagger that make them hard to put down." — Jeffrey A. Trachtenberg, *Wall Street Journal*

"Wallace is, for my money, the most exciting fiction writer out there at the moment, right on top of the Zeitgeist and more attuned to the formal possibilities of fiction than anyone else. What's more, he's naming the secrets of the generation that is now to inherit America's cultural legacy."

— Cornel Bonca, *OC Weekly*

"Wallace, the alarmingly talented author of the brilliant magnum opus of American novels in 1995, *Infinite Jest*, has set himself an admirable goal this time: a blistering series of satires on the intellectual vacuity and self-serving character of the contemporary culture of therapy."

— Greg Burkman, *Seattle Times*

"*Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* boosts Wallace's reputation as the finest young inventor in American fiction. . . . No other American writer seems as boldly impatient with the old or as daringly willing to fail so spectacularly trying to make it new."

— Eric Hanson, *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*

"Spellbinding. . . . At his best, Wallace rivals Vladimir Nabokov in his ability to observe and describe. His ear for contemporary double-talk and his eye for the telltale visual icons of our culture are unerring."

— George Gurley, *Kansas City Star*

"Damn funny stuff. . . . Wallace is America's best articulator of the comedy and tragedy of just about any living moment."

— Celia Farber, *Gear*

"A wild ride through a deranged, brilliant cortex (and 800 pages shorter than *Infinite Jest*)."

— *Entertainment Weekly*

"At his best . . . Wallace is thrilling to read. . . . You feel challenged and entertained and somewhat intellectually violated, but you know you like it, you know Wallace is brilliant, and you ask yourself days later what other writer makes you so frustrated in such a wonderfully weird way. . . . It is ripping good fun."

— Eric Celeste, *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram*

"Dazzling. . . . David Foster Wallace is a brilliant guy . . . funny, daring . . . ceaseless in his determination to subvert literary convention . . . capable of passages of inspired lyricism. . . . *Brief Interviews with Hideous Men* left me perversely hungry for more."

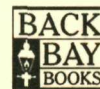
— Dan DeLuca, *Philadelphia Inquirer*

{ BRIEF INTERVIEWS
WITH HIDEOUS MEN }

ALSO BY
DAVID FOSTER WALLACE
THE BROOM OF THE SYSTEM
GIRL WITH CURIOUS HAIR
INFINITE JEST
A SUPPOSEDLY FUN THING
I'LL NEVER DO AGAIN

{ BRIEF INTERVIEWS }
WITH HIDEOUS MEN }

DAVID FOSTER WALLACE



LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY
BOSTON NEW YORK LONDON

For Beth-Ellen Siciliano and Alice Dall, hideous ears *sine pari*

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{ BRIEF INTERVIEWS }
{ WITH HIDEOUS MEN }

A RADICALLY CONDENSED HISTORY
OF POSTINDUSTRIAL LIFE

When they were introduced, he made a witticism, hoping to be liked. She laughed extremely hard, hoping to be liked. Then each drove home alone, staring straight ahead, with the very same twist to their faces.

The man who'd introduced them didn't much like either of them, though he acted as if he did, anxious as he was to preserve good relations at all times. One never knew, after all, now did one now did one now did one.