

People  
PICK



# Books

## More Absurdity from a Master

WHEN YOU ARE ENGULFED IN FLAMES

by David Sedaris | ★★★★★

REVIEWED BY JUDITH NEWMAN

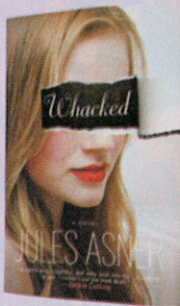
### ESSAYS

In Sedaris's sixth collection of essays, we are in familiar and glorious territory: his family; his life in France with his aggravatingly capable boyfriend, Hugh; his observations on fashion ("I like to think I'm beyond the reach of trends, but my recent infatuation with the man-purse suggests otherwise").

But what makes Sedaris's work transcendent is its humanity: He adores some truly awful people, yet he invests them with dignity and even grace. There is Rosemary, who is Blanche DuBois if Blanche ran a boardinghouse; there's Mrs. Peacock, the slatternly babysitter who turns the Sedaris children into her personal slaves; and then there's Helen, the malevolent Sicilian neighbor who wishes everyone dead and, worse, foists her terrible cooking off on Sedaris and Hugh. It's a wonder they don't move. And yet Sedaris not only befriends her; in the end he makes us weep for her. And that is why he's the best there is.

*I've been around for nearly half a century, yet still I'm afraid of everything and everyone*

### GREAT READS



**WHACKED**  
by Jules Asner  
In her debut novel, director Steven Soderbergh's wife takes a chilling and fiercely funny look at dating in Tinseltown.



**CHASING HARRY WINSTON**  
by Lauren Weisberger  
Another glitzy Manhattan romp from the author of *The Devil Wears Prada*.



**LOVEHAMPTON**  
by Sherri Rifkin  
Appealing heroine, heart-sick and unemployed, rediscovers herself in a Hamptons house share. Improbable but fun.

INSET: ANNE FISHER