

How to Be Alone Essays

The author's brilliant and often hilarious essays are full of wit and insight, and are a must-read for anyone who loves to read. The author's essays are a mix of personal and political, and are always thought-provoking and entertaining.

JONATHAN FRANZEN



BOOK DETAILS

- Author : Jonathan Franzen
- Pages : 320 Pages
- Publisher : Picador
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BOOK SYNOPSIS

Passionate, strong-minded nonfiction from the National Book Award-winning author of *The Corrections* Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections* was the best-loved and most-written-about novel of 2001. Nearly every in-depth review of it discussed what became known as "The Harpers Essay," Franzen's controversial 1996 investigation of the fate of the American novel. This essay is reprinted for the first time in *How to Be Alone*, along with the personal essays and the dead-on reportage that earned Franzen a wide readership before the success of *The Corrections*. Although his subjects range from the sex-advice industry to the way a supermax prison works, each piece wrestles with familiar themes of Franzen's writing: the erosion of civic life and private dignity and the hidden persistence of loneliness in postmodern, imperial America. Recent pieces include a moving essay on his father's struggle with Alzheimer's disease (which has already been reprinted around the world) and a rueful account of Franzen's brief tenure as an Oprah Winfrey author. As a collection, these essays record what Franzen calls "a movement away from an angry and frightened isolation toward an acceptance—even a celebration—of being a reader and a writer." At the same time they show the wary distrust of the claims of technology and psychology, the love-hate relationship with consumerism, and the subversive belief in the tragic shape of the individual life that help make Franzen one of our sharpest, toughest, and most entertaining social critics.

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