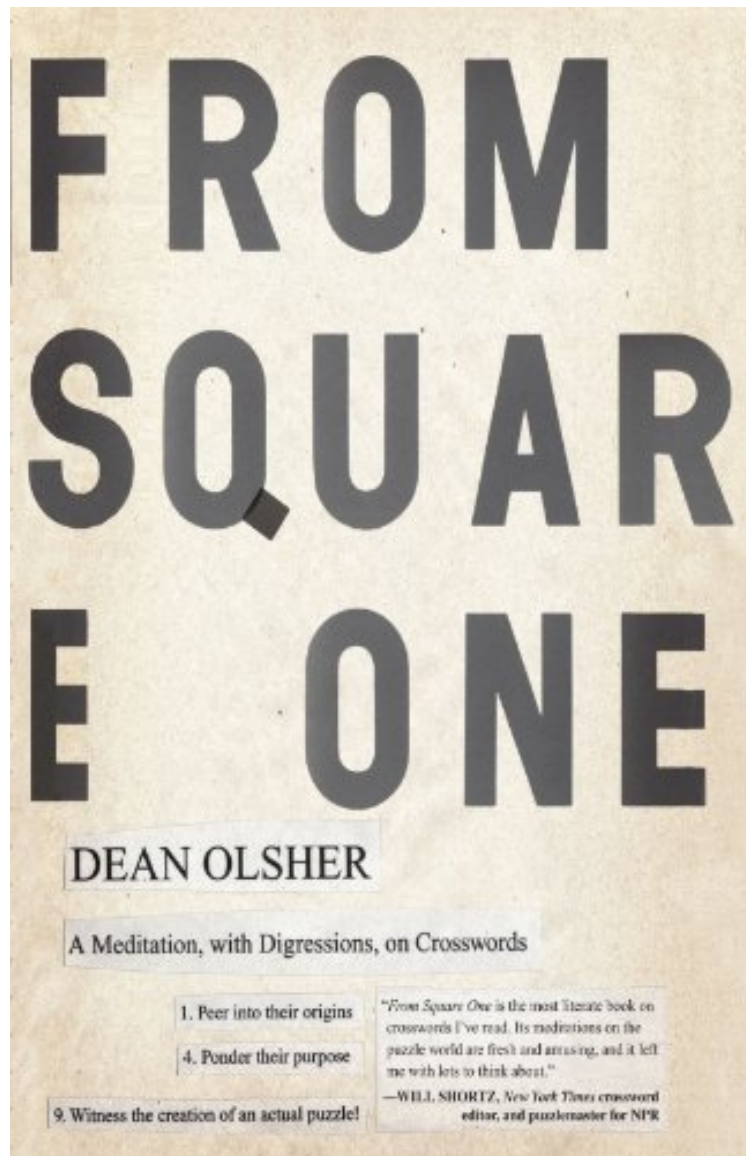


(Free read ebook) From Square One: A Meditation, with Digressions, on Crosswords

From Square One: A Meditation, with Digressions, on Crosswords

Dean Olsher

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Dean Olsher : From Square One: A Meditation, with Digressions, on Crosswords before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised From Square One: A Meditation, with Digressions, on Crosswords:

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. flawed but really interestingBy gerryI loved the amazing information so fluidly presented- a fascinating history of crosswords and the gossip, recollections and stories of puzzlers both famous and unknown. I loved finding out that Meg Wolitzer, author of one of my favorite novels ("The

Wife") is a serious crossword person. I also am a huge fan of cryptics, but don't really care if they take America by storm as long as I can get a few good ones a month from Harpers, The Atlantic and other odd sources. What I really disagree with strenuously is Olsher's idea that solving crosswords is akin to the experience to listening to a great piece of music or viewing a great work of art. This is just plain silly. As a visual artist and crossword fiend I find this ridiculous. Crosswords, especially cryptics, yield intense experiences. So do great works of art, but logic 101 teaches correctly that because two things have something in common it does not follow that they are the same thing. One huge difference is that crosswords have only one solution. Art often has many "solutions" or perhaps more to the point, none at all. One cannot "solve" an art experience. One can analyze it but that may not be the point. This hyperbole about art and crosswords almost ruined an otherwise excellent book. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Terrific, moving. By Barbra Tarkenton I loved this book. What's wonderful about it is the way it seamlessly blends autobiographical details with a solid, well-reported appreciation of crossword puzzles. Yes, you learn about how avid British crossword puzzlers were recruited to help solve the Enigma code during WWII, and yes, you learn what the editors of crossword puzzles think makes a good puzzle ("fresh fill"), but what really lasts in the reader's mind are the scenes between the author and his father. (And also the story of a couple wherein the husband wakes up early to do the puzzle, and then erases all his answers so his wife can do it.) This book is literary in the best sense of the word. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Great Memoir by a Great Personality. By Jillian Igarashi I don't always read non-fiction. But when I do, I read about a topic I love and it's written by a former correspondent for NPR. "From Square One" is a lovely, quick read. It's more an interesting memoir about a personal relationship with crosswords than an historical account or a philosophical explication of crossword puzzles. (Read the rest on my blog! [...])

From Square One is Dean Olsher's captivating and in-depth exploration of the cultural history, psychology, and even metaphysics of crosswords - their promise of a world without chaos and uncertainty. It is often repeated that more than 50 million Americans do crossword puzzles on a regular basis. Skeptical of that claim, Dean Olsher does his own research and finds that the number is nearly dead-on. Filled with lively, original reporting, From Square One disputes the widely held belief that solving crosswords helps prevent Alzheimer's; in fact, the drive to fill in empty spaces is more likely a mental illness than a cure. While "puzzle addiction" is usually meant as a lighthearted metaphor, the term contains more than a nugget of truth. Olsher looks into the origins and traditions of this popular pastime, which made its debut in a New York newspaper in 1913. Or did it? Along the way, he takes readers inside the making of a crossword. He also revives the quest of musical-theater legend and puzzle constructor Stephen Sondheim to find an American audience for a British crossword style that demands a love of verbal playfulness over knowledge of arcane trivia. Informative, engaging, and often surprising, From Square One is a unique and enjoyable read for puzzlers and nonpuzzlers alike.

"Dean Olsher has written a great book that everyone will love, not just crossword people." -- Isaac Mizrahi
"If Dean Olsher wrote a book on the history of plumbing supplies, I would snap it up. He whips the subject in a blender of love, curiosity, elation, mystery, humor, and obsession (plenty of that). Plus, you learn a lot of odd and interesting facts about crossword puzzles -- and human beings." -- Maira Kalman, author of "The Principles of Uncertainty"
"Dean Olsher is the Robert Pirsig of crossword puzzles." -- Jon Delfin, seven-time American Crossword Puzzle Tournament champion
"This is my kind of book. If you like words, and wordplay, and the oddities of the imagination, and the company of an engaging and witty narrator, then it is your kind of book, too." -- Meg Wolitzer, author of "The Ten-Year Nap" and "The Wife"
"From Square One" takes the reader into stranger and more illuminating corners of the world glimpsed in "Wordplay". Dean Olsher shows the wide-ranging and nimble mind you'd expect of someone who loves crosswords." -- Stewart O'Nan, author of "Last Night at the Lobster" and "Songs for the Missing"
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About the Author
Dean Olsher has been a broadcaster for more than thirty years, most of which he has spent in public radio. He was an arts and culture correspondent for NPR News as well as the creator and host of The Next Big Thing, a popular national show. Olsher is currently a visiting professor at New York University's Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute.