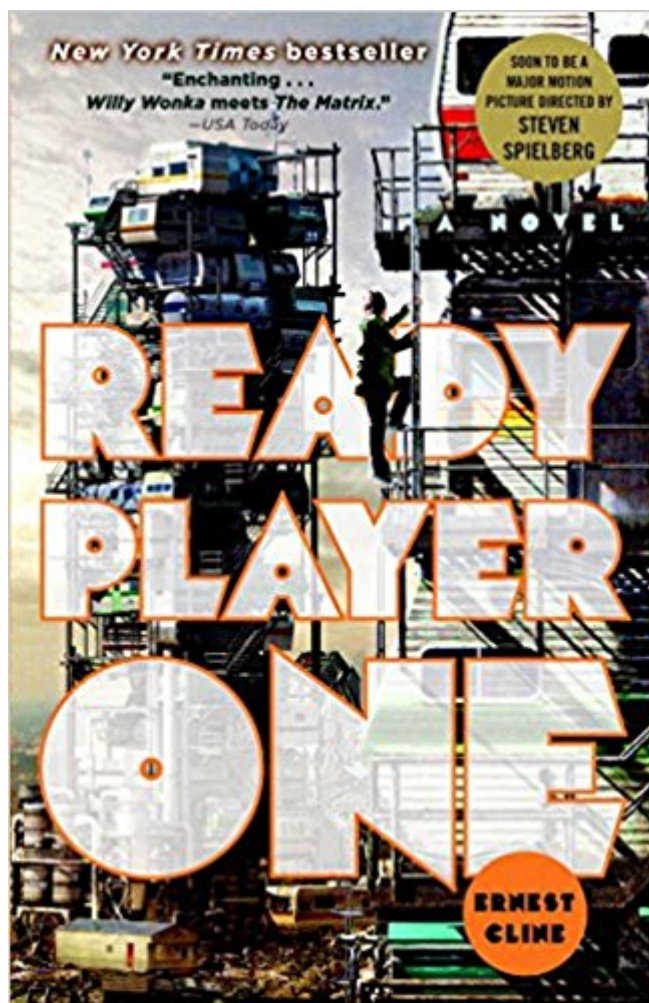


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Ready Player One: A Novel



Synopsis

The bestselling cult classic *Ready Player One* is soon to be a major motion picture directed by Steven Spielberg. In the year 2044, reality is an ugly place. The only time teenage Wade Watts really feels alive is when he's jacked into the virtual utopia known as the *OASIS*. Wade's devoted his life to studying the puzzles hidden within this world's digital confines—puzzles that are based on their creator's obsession with the pop culture of decades past and that promise massive power and fortune to whoever can unlock them. But when Wade stumbles upon the first clue, he finds himself beset by players willing to kill to take this ultimate prize. The race is on, and if Wade's going to survive, he'll have to win—and confront the real world he's always been so desperate to escape.

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Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month, August 2011: *Ready Player One* takes place in the not-so-distant future--the world has turned into a very bleak place, but luckily there is *OASIS*, a virtual reality world that is a vast online utopia. People can plug into *OASIS* to play, go to school, earn money, and even meet other people (or at least they can meet their avatars), and for protagonist Wade Watts it certainly beats passing the time in his grim, poverty-stricken real life. Along with millions of other world-wide citizens, Wade dreams of finding three keys left behind by James Halliday, the now-deceased creator of *OASIS* and the richest man to have ever lived. The keys are rumored to be hidden inside *OASIS*, and whoever finds them will inherit Halliday's fortune. But Halliday has not made it easy. And there are real dangers in this virtual world. Stuffed to the gills

with action, puzzles, nerdy romance, and 80s nostalgia, this high energy cyber-quest will make geeks everywhere feel like they were separated at birth from author Ernest Cline.--Chris Schluep

Guest Reviewer: Daniel H. Wilson on Ready Player One by Earnest Cline Daniel H. Wilson is the New York Times best-selling author of Robopocalypse. I dare you not to fall in love with Ready Player One. And I mean head over heels in love--the way you fall for someone who is smart, feisty, and who can effortlessly finish your favorite movie lines, music lyrics, or literature quotes before they come out of your mouth. Ready Player One expertly mines a copious vein of 1980s pop culture, catapulting the reader on a light-speed adventure in an advanced but backward-looking future. The story is set in a near-term future in which the new, new form of the Internet is a realistic virtual multi-verse called the OASIS. Most human interaction takes place via goggles and gloves in millions of unique worlds, including the boring (and free) "public education" world from which our teenage protagonist must escape. Our unlikely hero is an overweight trailer park kid who goes by Wade Watts in real life, and "Parzival" to his best friends and mortal enemies--all of whom he interacts with virtually. Just like the Arthurian knight that is his namesake, young Wade is on a quest for an incredible treasure guarded by mythical creatures. Specifically, the creator of the OASIS and richest man on the planet, James Halliday, stipulated in his will that his fortune be given to the first person who can find an "Easter egg" hidden somewhere in the OASIS. The catch? Every devilishly complex clue on this treasure hunt is rooted in an intimate knowledge of 1980s pop culture. This leaves the people of the future hilariously obsessed with every aspect of the 1980s. The setup is particularly brilliant, because Ernie Cline seems to have a laser-beam knowledge of (and warm, fuzzy love for) every pop song, arcade game, and giant robot produced in the last thirty years. Seriously, this is a guy who owns and regularly drives a 1982 DeLorean that has been mocked up to look exactly like the time-traveling car in Back to the Future, complete with a glowing flux capacitor. But Ready Player One isn't just a fanboy's wet dream. Real villains are lurking, threatening our hero with death in their ruthless hunt for the treasure. Worse, these corporate baddies are posers with no love for the game as they have movie dialogue piped in via radio earpieces, use bots to cheat at arcade games like JOUST, and don't hesitate to terrorize or murder people in the real world to achieve their aims inside the OASIS. As the book climaxes, a mega-battle unfolds with sobering life-or-death stakes, yet soldiered entirely by exciting and downright fun pop-culture icons. The bad guys are piloting a ferocious Mechagodzilla. Our good guy has to leave his X-Wing fighter aboard his private flotilla so that he can pilot an authentic Ultraman recreation. And how do you not grin when someone dons a pair of virtual Chuck Taylor All Stars that bestow the power of flight? Cline is fearless and he lets his

imagination soar, yet this pop scenery could easily come off as so much fluff. Instead, Cline keeps the stakes high throughout, and the epic treasure hunt structure (complete with an evolving high-score list) keeps the action intense. The plot unfolds with constant acceleration, never slowing down or sagging in the middle, to create a thrilling ride with a fulfilling ending. Best of all, the book captures the aura of the manifold worlds it depicts. If Ready Player One were a living room, it would be wood-paneled. If it were shoes, it would be high-tops. And if it were a song, well, it would have to be Eye of the Tiger. I really, really loved it. -- Daniel H. Wilson

Questions for Ernest Cline, Author of Ready Player One

Q) So it seems you're a bit of a pop-culture buff. In your debut novel Ready Player One you incorporate literally hundreds of pop culture references, many of them in ways that are integral to the book's plot. What's the first thing you remember geeking out over? A) Sesame Street and the Muppets. I thought Jim Henson ruled the universe. I even thought it was pretty cool that I shared my first name with a muppet. Until the first day of kindergarten, when I quickly learned that "Ernie" was not a cool name to have. That was about the time I segued into my next childhood obsession, Star Wars.

Q) Like the book's hero, you possess a horrifyingly deep knowledge of a terrifyingly broad swathe of culture, ranging from John Hughes movies to super-obscure Japanese animation to 8-bit videogames to science-fiction and fantasy literature to role-playing games like Dungeons & Dragons. What the heck is wrong with you?! How do you have so much time on your hands? A) Well, I'm raising a toddler now, so I don't have as much time to geek out as I used to. I think I amassed a lot of that knowledge during my youth. Like most geeks, I was a sponge for all kinds of movies, TV shows, cartoons, and video games. Then as an adult, I worked at a long series of low paying tech support jobs that allowed me to surf the Internet all day, and I spent a lot of my cubicle time looking up obscure pop culture minutiae from my childhood while I waited for people to reboot their PCs. Of course, I spent most of my off hours geeking out, too. Luckily, all those hours can now be classified as "research" for my novel.

Q) You're stranded on an island and you can only take one movie with you. What is it? A) Easy! The Lord of the Rings Extended Edition. (Can I take all of the DVD Extras and Making of Documentaries, too?)

Q) You're given free tickets and back stage passes to one concert (artist can be living or dead)- who is it and why? A) Are we talking about time travel back to a specific concert in the past here? Because it would be pretty cool to stand on the roof of Apple Records and watch the Beatles jam up there. But my favorite rock band that's still together is RUSH, and I just bought tickets to see them this June!

Q) Favorite book of all time. A) That's an impossible question! I could maybe give you three favorites: Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson, Galapagos by Kurt Vonnegut, and The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams.

Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams. Q) Best failed TV show pilot available on Youtube? A) The unaired Batgirl pilot starring Yvonne Craig. Q) Favorite episode of Cowboy Bebop? A) "Ganymede Elegy." Or maybe "Boogie Woogie Feng Shui." Q) What's the first arcade game you ever played? What's your favorite? A) I was deflowered by Space Invaders. My all time favorite coin-op game was probably Black Tiger. Q) Your idea of the perfect day... A) Play Black Tiger. Then go see Big Trouble in Little China at the Alamo Drafthouse with Kurt Russell and John Carpenter doing a live Q&A afterwards. When I get home that night, I accidentally invent a cheap abundant clean energy source that saves human civilization. I celebrate by staying up late to watch old Ultraman episodes with my daughter (who loves Ultraman even more than I do). Q) True or False. We hear you own a DeLorean and that you plan on tricking it out to be a time-travelling, Ghostbusting, Knight-Rider car. A) False. I actually plan on tricking it out to be a time-traveling Ghostbusting Knight Riding Jet Car. It's going to have both a Flux Capacitor and an Oscillation Overthruster in it, so that my DeLorean can travel through time AND solid matter. My personalized plates are ECTO88, just like a DeLorean that appears in my book. (I'm so glad that you asked this question, because now I can justify buying the car as a "promotional tool" for my book. Everyone reading this is a witness! My DeLorean is helping me promote my book! The fact that I've wanted one since I was ten years old is totally irrelevant!) Q) Speaking of DeLoreans: biggest plot hole in the Back to The Future Films? A) The Back to The Future Trilogy is perfect and contains no plot holes! Except for the plot hole inherent in nearly all time travel films: The planet Earth is moving through space at an immense speed at all times. So if you travel back in time, you are traveling to a time when the Earth was in a different location, and you and your time machine would appear somewhere out in deep space. For a time machine to be useful, it also needs to be able to teleport you to wherever the Earth was/is at your destination time. Q) But there are two DeLoreans in 1885--why doesn't Doc dig out the one he buried in a cave for Marty to find in 1955 and use the gasoline from it to get the other DeLorean up to 88mph? A) Doc would have drained the gas tank before he stored a car for 80 years, so there wouldn't have been any gas. And tampering with the DeLorean in the cave at all could conceivably create a universe-ending paradox, because it has to be in the cave for Marty to get back to 1885 in the first place. Totally not a plot hole! --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER "The science-fiction writer John Scalzi has aptly referred to READY PLAYER ONE as a 'nerdgasm' [and] there can be no better one-word

description of this ardent fantasy artifact about fantasy culture. But Mr. Cline is able to incorporate his favorite toys and games into a perfectly accessible narrative. Janet Maslin, The New York Times "Triggers memories and emotions embedded in the psyche of a generation...[Cline crafts] a fresh and imaginative world from our old toy box, and finds significance in there among the collectibles. Entertainment Weekly "A most excellent ride the conceit is a smart one, and we happily root for [the heroes] on their quest fully satisfying. Boston Globe "Enchanting Willy Wonka meets the Matrix. This novel undoubtedly qualifies Cline as the hottest geek on the planet right now. [But] you don't have to be a geek to get it. USA

Today "An addictive read...part intergalactic scavenger hunt, part romance and all heart. CNN.com "An action-packed, highly entertaining, nostalgic thrill ride through the past combined with the danger and excitement of a not-too-distant future. It marries the fantastical world of Harry Potter with a touch of Orson Scott Card where fantasy is reality, geeks are cool, and the possibilities are endless. New York Journal of Books "Ridiculously fun and large-hearted, and you don't have to remember the Reagan administration to love it [Cline] takes a far-out premise and engages the reader instantly You'll wish you could make it go on and on. NPR.org "A delirious, crypto-nerd fantasia...Crammed with 80s nostalgia and sugar-high prose, it's ridiculous and addictive and full of toy surprises. Village Voice "A smart, funny thriller that both celebrates and critiques online culture...Layered with inside jokes and sly references. San Francisco Chronicle "A fun, funny and fabulously entertaining first novel This novel's large dose of 1980s trivia is a delight [but] even readers who need Google to identify Commodore 64 or Inky, Blinky, Pinky and Clyde, will enjoy this memorabilian feast. Cleveland Plain Dealer "The grown-up's 'Harry Potter' the mystery and fantasy in this novel weaves itself in the most delightful way, and the details that make up Mr. Cline's world are simply astounding. READY PLAYER ONE has it all. Huffington Post "If you identify yourself as a nerd, geek, gamer, 1980s history buff, a fan of science, fantasy, or dystopian fiction, otaku, 1980s movie fan, romantic, someone who grew up in the 1980s, or a human with emotions you will enjoy Ready Player One. If you identify with two or more of the above, it's a guaranteed new favorite novel. Sacramento News & Review "A modern-day fairy tale...so self-assured and enthralling that it's hard to believe this is his first novel. Long Island Press "Incredibly entertaining Drawing on

everything from "Back to the Future" to Roald Dahl to Neal Stephenson's groundbreaking "Snow Crash," Cline has made *READY PLAYER ONE* a geek fantasia, '80s culture memoir and commentary on the future of online behavior all at once.

American-Statesman "An exhilarating, unpredictable trip...Part Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and part The Da Vinci Code with a healthy dose of Tron.

Press "READY PLAYER ONE is the ultimate lottery ticket.
Daily News "[Picture] the adventure comedy of Mike Judge
meets South Park
with a dash of Willy Wonka, except all of the cynicism has been replaced by sheer geeky love. Grade: A.

AVClub.com "A preposterously great read and a richly imagined science-fiction world that uses the very idea of nostalgia as a thematic jumping-off point...One of the true geek events of the year.
HitFix.com "This non-gamer loved every page of READY PLAYER ONE.
Charlaine Harris, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Sookie Stackhouse series "A treasure for anyone already nostalgic for the late 20th century. . . But it's also a great read for anyone who likes a good book.
Wired.com "A gunshot of fun with a wicked sense of timing and a cast of characters that you're pumping your fist in the air with whenever they succeed. I haven't been this much on the edge of my seat for an ending in years.
Chicago Reader "A rollicking, surprise-laden, potboiling, thrilling adventure story. I loved every sentence of this book.
Mark Frauenfelder, BoingBoing "A 'frakking' good read [featuring] incredible creative detail. I grinned at the sheer audacity of Cline's imagination.
Milwaukee Journal Sentinel "[A] fantastic page-turner.
READY PLAYER ONE may be science fiction, but it's also written for people who have never picked up an SF novel in their lives.
Annalee Newitz, io9.com "Intriguing and thrilling. Gamers and fans of '80s pop culture will find many familiar references throughout the story...Definitely an enjoyable read and one that can be appreciated by fans of many different genres.
Examiner.com "Gorgeously geeky, superbly entertaining, this really is a spectacularly successful debut.
Daily Mail (UK) "Fascinating and imaginative. It's non-stop action when gamers must navigate clever puzzles and outwit determined enemies in a virtual world in order to save a real one. Readers are in for a wild ride.
Terry Brooks, #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Shannara series "I was blown away by this book. A book of ideas, a potboiler, a game-within-a-novel, a serious science-fiction epic, a comic pop culture mash-up. I call this

novel what you will, but **READY PLAYER ONE** will defy every label you try to put on it. Here, finally, is this generation's **Neuromancer**.
• Will Lavender, New York Times bestselling author of *Dominance* "I really, really loved **READY PLAYER ONE** | Cline expertly mines a copious vein of 1980s pop culture, catapulting the reader on a light-speed adventure in an advanced but backward-looking future."
• Daniel H. Wilson, New York Times bestselling author of *Robopocalypse* "A nerdgasm | imagine *Dungeons and Dragons* and an 80s video arcade made hot, sweet love, and their child was raised in *Azeroth*."
• John Scalzi, New York Times bestselling author of *Old Man War* "Completely fricking awesome... This book pleased every geeky bone in my geeky body. I felt like it was written just for me."
• Patrick Rothfuss, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *The Wise Man's Fear* "An exuberantly realized, exciting, and sweet-natured cyber-quest. Cline's imaginative and rollicking coming-of-age geek saga has a smash-hit vibe."
• Booklist (starred review) "This adrenaline shot of uncut geekdom, a quest through a virtual world, is loaded with enough 1980s nostalgia to please even the most devoted John Hughes fans | sweet, self-deprecating Wade, whose universe is an odd mix of the real past and the virtual present, is the perfect lovable/unlikely hero."
• Publishers Weekly (Pick of the Week)

This isn't your typical book. It's a rpg game book with a great story. It's set in a dystopian world in the future. Everyone pretty much lives in a virtual world thru their computers. They work, go to school, ect all in the oasis (virtual world). The creator of the oasis has died and left a quest in his will. The winner gets the oasis. He was an 80s lover so there is a lot of 80s reference that brings back nostalgia. You should definitely read this book is a book that's great for any one. I read it with my 14yr old son and he's never read a book so fast he didn't want to put it down. My husband also read and loved it!

Ready Player One fulfills the dreams of nerds throughout the world. The reader can fly around in an X-wing, or play their favorite video game from the first person. The plot focuses on a new type of multiplayer game, which begins to blend with real life, called the **OASIS**. Users wear goggles and gloves to enter the virtual reality world that has real currency along with all of its unreal fantasies and physics. The characters in the book are all searching for a prize
"egg," left behind by the late creator of the **OASIS**, which gives the victor control of the **OASIS** and massive wealth. All of the cryptic hints left behind to find the egg are

pop culture references from the 1980s. The entire book is filled with nods to Star Wars, Dungeons and Dragons, the band Rush, and so much more. Our protagonist Wade Watts, or *“Parzival”* as he is called in the OASIS, is a chubby poor boy from the Midwest that is obsessed with the culture of the 80s and the hunt for the egg. He spends most of his days online, escaping his circumstances, and is oddly relatable through his awkwardness and self-deprecating humor. Although this story takes place in a videogame, there are very real consequences. A large corporation is fighting to take over the OASIS through finding the egg, and will do anything that is necessary. There are many moments of life or death that are very sobering compared to the constant jokes and nods to 80s pop culture. Christopher Farnsworth said it best in his quote, *“Pure geek heaven. Ernest Cline’s hero competes in a virtual world with life-and-death stakes which is only fitting, because he’s fighting to make his dreams into reality. Cline blends a dystopic future with meticulously detailed nostalgia to create a story that will resonate in the heart of every true nerd.”* Somehow, Cline balances the fun and comical references to 80s culture with a serious plot that feels important. A memorable moment, from the climax of the book, is captured in the quote, *“On cue, the ten Sixer avatars standing behind Sorrento pulled out their toy robots and activated them, too. Five of them had the huge robotic lions that could form Voltron. The other five had giant mechs from Robotech and Neon Genesis Evangelion.”* (Cline 332). In a quite serious moment, I laughed to myself about the fear felt by the protagonist from seeing the bad guys pull out toy robots; I felt this way at many points throughout the book. For all of the fun I had reading this book about the dystopic future, while also getting a blast from the past, I cannot say it was a favorite for me. After my initial excitement reading about a world that fulfilled my inner-nerd’s dreams, I began to get tired of the plot to find the egg, and the love interest of two teenagers that are caught up in this hunt. To read this book, one must be a nerd at heart and take a light approach to the book. If it is taken too seriously, the reader will end up confused by the strangeness of the OASIS world and they will be left wondering how a corporation can take over the world by owning a videogame. Perhaps I simply was not getting lost within the book, as I once did reading geeky science fiction books, but after a while it got old. If you are looking for similar books, a few are *Ender’s Game* by Orson Scott Card, *A Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy* by Douglas Adams, or any other sci-fi book of a dystopian future.

Discussion Questions:

- Are the characters within the book similar to kids today that play videogames? How are they similar/different?
- Could you relate to the pop culture that surrounded the story?
- Was Wade a relatable

protagonist? Why/why not?

This is a clever, well thought out journey down memory lane. Cline wraps his characters in an obsessively researched world with a plot driven by an epic quest. It all works. It's enjoyable and engaging and had me stealing time away from other things just so I could stay immersed in that world. It was fun to relive everything from Atari to Family Ties to Monty Python. He doesn't miss many touchstones of 1980's geekdom. That being said, while the 1980's are a fun place to visit, I wouldn't want to spend too much time there. The music has too many synthesizers, the movies were kind of cheesy and I don't miss the Cold War that gave us War Games. Ready Player One is perfect for slipping into a little nostalgia without getting too caught up in the past. By the time I was finished with the book it felt like the end of the night and the reunion was over, which is to say it lasted just long enough. I'm looking forward to more books from this author.

This book was so much fun. I'm sure many readers grew up in the 80s as I did and I loved all the references to that era. Stuff like D&D and comics, games. It's like he was describing my life. War Games is even the movie that made me want to mess around with computers (my job now). The vibe reminded me of the almost punk ethos of the early bbs days. And with so many people growing up during this almost mythical type period I can see why this book is so well liked. It's very well written and has realistic and relatable characters. It sometimes felt a little on the YA side for my taste but I think that's more the age of the main characters. I can't put my finger on it but it felt like the end was missing something. But it was still an enjoyable ending to a very, very fun story. I would love to see more in this world and I highly recommend this book.

I really enjoyed listening to this book via Audible. Very good book. However one important note, this may not be that interesting for new generation who don't understand old computer games. If you grew up in 1980s you'll love this book otherwise if you younger then it may not be as interesting.

I truly enjoyed reading Ready Player One. As a gamer myself, I think many of us are excited about the possibilities that lie within virtual reality. This story, however, explores the impact that capitalism will inevitably have on any such system that would be introduced as well as the social and personal ramifications of a world with very little actual human contact. I loved the fact that Cline explored these ideas without simply presenting technology as this big bad thing that was only reducing humanity to obsessed hermits who don't know how to interact in person. This is a trope I am all too

sick of seeing. The plot was well done and fairly steady. The only part that got slow to me completely made sense, since things were slow for the protagonist as well. I definitely recommend this for people who were fans of .hack//sign and/or Sword Art Online, since it explores similar issues in a slightly different way.

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