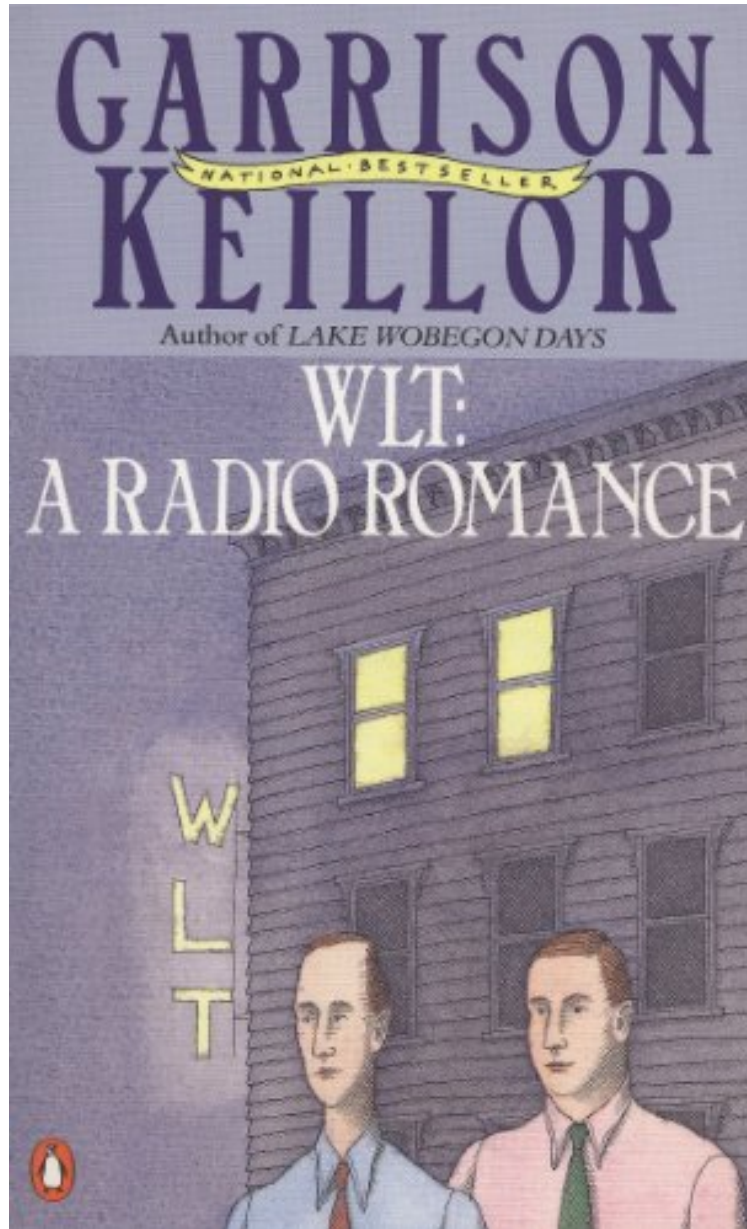


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## WLT: A Radio Romance

*Garrison Keillor*

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**Garrison Keillor : WLT: A Radio Romance** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised WLT: A Radio Romance:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Like TV, radio will never 'catch on'...By lebard9Typical Keillor. As is usually the case, Mr. Keillor shows that he is an excellent student of the human condition. Made me wonder just how many of the episodes/instances in the book actually happened in radio studios during the early years of radio.1 of

1 people found the following review helpful. I like the romantic story telling of a small radio station ...By Bob LefeverI like the romantic story telling of a small radio station through the lives of several people. It is not a sappy good times type of story. All the characters have problems and quirks and not all are likable. It is a story of a time that I can only imagine.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Garrison Keillor True to FormBy bglThis is exactly the kind of novel I like reading by Garrison Keillor. No one can tell a story of small town America like he can! From the first page to the last, I was "hooked." An additional bonus was insight into a changing America as radio became mainstream in everyday life, even in small towns and hamlets.

In the spring of 1926, the Soderbjerg brothers, Ray and Roy, plunge into radio and launch station WLT (With Lettuce and Tomato) to rescuer their failing restaurant and become the Sandwich Kings of South Minneapolis. For the next quarter century, the Friendly Neighbor station produces a dazzling array of shows and stars, including Leo LaValley, Dad Benson, Wingo Beals, Slim Graves and Little Buddy, chain-smoking child star Marjery Moore, and blind baseball announcer Buck Steller.Francis With, a shy young man from North Dakota, entranced by radio, gets into WLT through his uncle Art and quickly becomes the Soderbjerg's right hand. Soon Francis is a budding announcer adored by Lily Dale, the crippled nightingale of WLT kept hidden from her fans, whose firing contributes to the downfall of the station. And then comes television.

From Publishers WeeklyOn the air and in print, Keillor has been telling wonderful stories for years, but this is his first novel. It is, as you might expect, brimful of characters, full of northwoods angst, spiced with a little sex, and cynicism and sentiment have been neatly interwoven. It is the story of a Minneapolis radio station from its launch by the Soderbjerg brothers, Ray and Roy, who hope to attract attention to their foundering sandwich shop (the call sign translates to "with lettuce and tomato"), to the time, 30 years later, when it begins to founder under the onslaught of television. Dozens of innocent and not-so-innocent girls and scheming, heavy-drinking men live out their lives among its studios and microphones: one of Keillor's most cunning strokes is to saunter back and forth between the realm of the radio and the real world of his performers, including boozy gospel singers, saintly Dad Benson and his horrendous radio daughter, and smart young Frank White, who alone makes the transition to TV. Episodic, often absurd, frequently uproarious, it is a poignant reminder of a time that never was but probably should have been. 250,000 first printing; \$300,000 ad/promo; first serial to the New Yorker; BOMC featured alternate. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Kirkus sThe glory days of Midwest radio prove the ideal subject for old radio-hand Keillor, now writing at the height of his awesome power, which could make a homesick cat laugh. Brothers Ray and Roy Soderbjerg set up station WLT (With Lettuce and Tomato) in Minneapolis in 1926 to draw crowds to their wilting sandwich restaurant. The station proves a gold mine after the two reluctantly agree to allow commercials, and the brothers turn their somewhat divided attention (Ray's chief vocation is sex, Roy's inventing the unnecessary) to the new medium. The novel takes off on a sustained joyride as a hilarious bunch of characters are hired to fill the air with the cornball, pseudo-pious, pseudo-populist fare that held the Midwest in thrall until television offered a superior snow job. Keillor continually contrasts the smutty, lust-filled lives of the cast and crew in the studio with the wholesome, homespun drivel they broadcast. On air, for example, Little Becky is a winsome angel, but look out--the chain-smoking child star will perform the crudest of practical jokes on the unwary. A blind sports announcer, a crushingly cheerful songstress confined to her wheelchair by polio and fat, and a dissolute group of gospel singers are just some of the superb oddities that people Keillor's pages. A straight man to these comic figures and the novel's hero is young Francis With, who comes of age at the station and goes on to great things. The comedy is as broad as it comes, but it also has a depth that includes poignancy, particularly as it records the station's downhill slide. Humor and insight into the heart of raunchy America don't get any better than this. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. Mr. Keillor is at his best. Every bit of his huge storytelling talent is here, The Washington PostIrresistibly deliciousa satisfying romp with a yarnmaster who can make you howl. The Los Angeles Times Book