



Infinite Jest

By David Foster Wallace

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A gargantuan, mind-altering comedy about the Pursuit of Happiness in America set in an addicts' halfway house and a tennis academy, and featuring the most endearingly screwed-up family to come along in recent fiction, *Infinite Jest* explores essential questions about what entertainment is and why it has come to so dominate our lives; about how our desire for entertainment affects our need to connect with other people; and about what the pleasures we choose say about who we are. Equal parts philosophical quest and screwball comedy, *Infinite Jest* bends every rule of fiction without sacrificing for a moment its own entertainment value. It is an exuberant, uniquely American exploration of the passions that make us human - and one of those rare books that renew the idea of what a novel can do.

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Infinite Jest By David Foster Wallace Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

In a sprawling, wild, super-hyped magnum opus, David Foster Wallace fulfills the promise of his precocious novel *The Broom of the System*. Equal parts philosophical quest and screwball comedy, **Infinite Jest** bends every rule of fiction, features a huge cast and multilevel narrative, and questions essential elements of American culture - our entertainments, our addictions, our relationships, our pleasures, our abilities to define ourselves.

From Publishers Weekly

With its baroque subplots, zany political satire, morbid, cerebral humor and astonishing range of cultural references, Wallace's brilliant but somewhat bloated dirigible of a second novel (after *The Broom in the System*) will appeal to steadfast readers of Pynchon and Gaddis. But few others will have the stamina for it. Set in an absurd yet uncanny near-future, with a cast of hundreds and close to 400 footnotes, Wallace's story weaves between two surprisingly similar locales: Ennet House, a halfway-house in the Boston Suburbs, and the adjacent Enfield Tennis Academy. It is the "Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment" (each calendar year is now subsidized by retail advertising); the U.S. and Canada have been subsumed by the Organization of North American Nations, unleashing a torrent of anti-O.N.A.N.ist terrorism by Quebecois separatists; drug problems are widespread; the Northeastern continent is a giant toxic waste dump; and CD-like "entertainment cartridges" are the prevalent leisure activity. The novel hinges on the dysfunctional family of E.T.A.'s founder, optical-scientist-turned-cult-filmmaker Dr. James Incandenza (aka Himself), who took his life shortly after producing a mysterious film called *Infinite Jest*, which is supposedly so addictively entertaining as to bring about a total neural meltdown in its viewer. As Himself's estranged sons?professional football punter Orin, introverted tennis star Hal and deformed naif Mario?come to terms with his suicide and legacy, they and the residents of Ennet House become enmeshed in the machinations of the wheelchair-bound leader of a Quebecois separatist faction, who hopes to disseminate cartridges of *Infinite Jest* and thus shred the social fabric of O.N.A.N. With its hilarious riffs on themes like addiction, 12-step programs, technology and waste management (in all its scatological implications), this tome is highly engrossing?in small doses. Yet the nebulous, resolutionless ending serves to underscore Wallace's underlying failure to find a suitable novelistic shape for his ingenious and often outrageously funny material.

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From Library Journal

Wallace's second novel is not for the faint-hearted or the weak-wristed. Wallace (*The Girl with Curious Hair*, LJ 7/89) throws everything he knows-and he knows plenty-into this river of stories. If you can stand the extreme length, ignore the footnotes, and have a bed-desk to rest this tome on, this book can be fun. Wallace sandwiches more than you'd ever want to know about a private tennis boarding school, Quebec separatists, a drug-and-alcohol addict's halfway house, potheads, and other topics-both trendy and not-in-between E-mail messages, admissions reports, headlines, and other real-life documents, or pseudo-documents. Too much happens here even to begin to summarize, but the author has a wicked sense of humor and a wonderful eye for capturing the odd juxtapositions of modern life. Besides his lack of conciseness, Wallace's other main weakness is dialog: nobody talks as cleverly as most of his characters do. Distinct, idiomatic, wild, and crazy, this book is destined to have a cult following. Recommended for most fiction collections.

Doris Lynch, Monroe Cty. P.L., Bloomington, Ind.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Ida Torres:

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Kevin Porter:

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Maurice Lamothe:

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Phyllis Wilder:

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