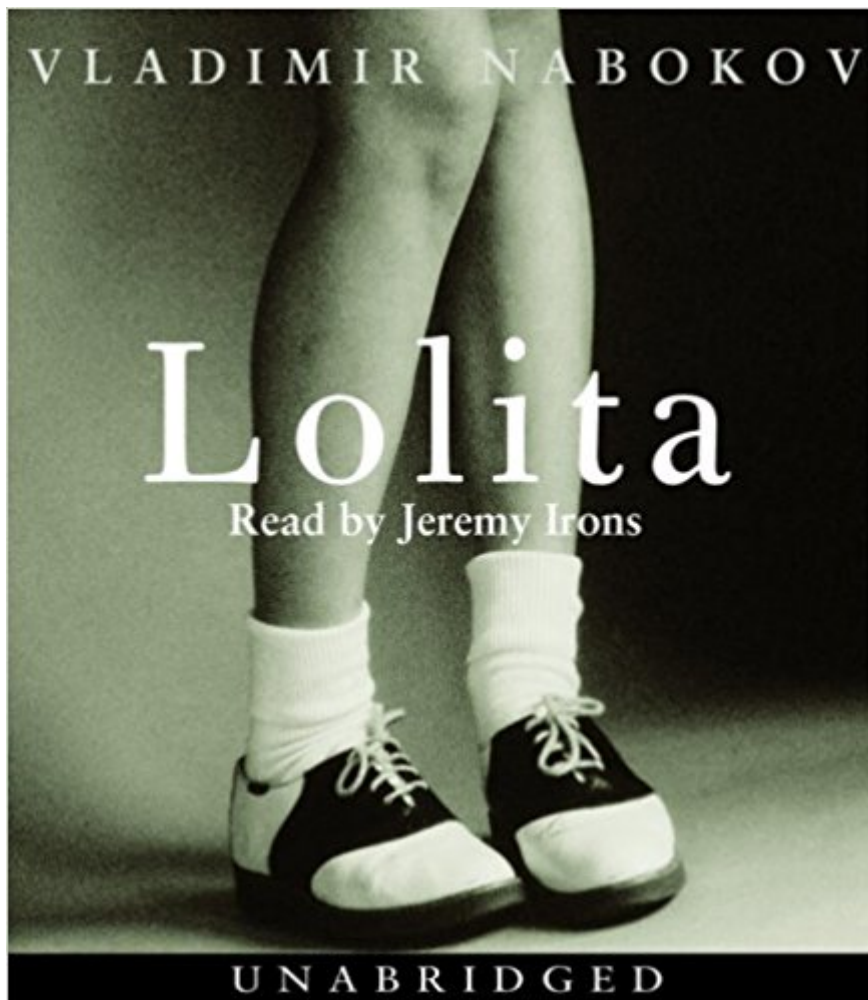


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# Lolita



## Synopsis

When it was published in 1955, *Lolita* immediately became a cause célèbre because of the freedom and sophistication with which it handled the unusual erotic predilections of its protagonist. But Vladimir Nabokov's wise, ironic, elegant masterpiece owes its stature as one of the twentieth century's novels of record not to the controversy its material aroused but to its author's use of that material to tell a love story almost shocking in its beauty and tenderness. Awe and exhilaration—along with heartbreak and mordant wit—abound in this account of the aging Humbert Humbert's obsessive, devouring, and doomed passion for the nymphet Dolores Haze. *Lolita* is also the story of a hypercivilized European colliding with the cheerful barbarism of postwar America, but most of all, it is a meditation on love—love as outrage and hallucination, madness and transformation. With an introduction by Martin Amis. (Book Jacket Status: Jacketed) From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita* triggers a deep conflict within the American psyche about crossing the line between love and the perverse lust for a child. In the bestselling audiobook, Jeremy Irons delivers a smooth, calculating presentation of Humbert Humbert, the middle-aged man obsessed with a 13-year-old girl named Lolita. Following a failed marriage to a "large, puffy, short-legged, big-breasted and practically brainless baba," Humbert decides to move to America to work as a tutor. Much to his dismay, his plans change and he moves into a boarding house in Ramsdale, New Hampshire. But his disappointment quickly fades after he realizes he lives next door to the "light of

my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul Lo-li-ta." The relationship blossoms between the man "with a cesspool of rotting monsters behind his slow boyish smile" and the sassy, vivacious young girl. The Russian-born author has amazing control of the English language--his jaw-dropping prose comes through powerfully on this audiotape (though some scholars believe the novel symbolizes Nabokov's internal struggle with the English language). Regardless of whether you condemn or condone the classic, listening to this audio rendition is a must. --Gina Kaysen (Running time: 11.5 hours) --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

This unabridged edition of Nabokov's classic story about a middle-aged, expatriate European man's obsessive love for a 12-year-old girl?which is being released to coincide with director Adrian Lyne's new film version?is a beautifully produced recording that pushes the boundaries of the audio medium. While Lolita continues to raise the hackles of would-be censors even today, most listeners will marvel at the restraint and playful humor with which Nabokov limns his tale. Narrator Jeremy Irons, who plays Humbert Humbert in Lyne's film, is an uncompromising audiobook reader whose performances on cassette are as laudatory as his Academy AwardR-winning work on the silver screen. This landmark release is highly recommended for all library collections.?Mark Annichiarico, "Library Journal"Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

As close as we dare come into walking in the shoes of a degenerate creep. An amazing feat for the Nabokov to get inside the head of a true monster. Very different from the Kubrick film by the way. A must read/see combo to compare.

I had to read this for school, so I chose to listen to the audiobook, and I'll review that over on Audible when I can. This is an absolutely wonderful epic that MADE MY SKIN CRAWL. Ew. Um, I'd recommend it if you can stand the subject matter, about an old perverted schoolteacher who falls for a 13-year-old girl and marries her Mom so he can be close to her. But there is so much detail on the world that Nabokov builds, it's frustrating that we have to view it through the eyes of Humbert H. Humbert.

It's a classic and certainly well written and provocative. It's basically about a child molester, told from his own self-justifying point of view. It does not glamorize the narrator at all and it is easy to see through his self-justification, but it's a pretty intense topic and not everyone's cup of tea.

Nabokov is one of the greatest writers in history. He deals with sex in a frank way without resorting to titillation. His diction is unmatched, without being obnoxious; each word is precisely what he means and would require twenty words to replace it. He somehow can make a pedophile engaging without pandering to your pity, or attempting revulsion.

I am re-reading this novel and finding it even more enjoyable this time around as I discover new meanings and twists in the narrative. It's been thirty-five years. This time around I am noticing that Nabokov's technique of narrative via memoir, diary, letters, and other scraps and fragments of remembrance signal a discomfort with traditional narratives and their all encompassing scope and focus, a focus that often seals up the story, characters, and the action into a translucent jar where no new elements or possibilities can be introduced or even imagined. Hamlet will still only find Yorick but a skeletal remembrance, another lost father figure; Anna will forever fling herself with each reading into the path of a locomotive and out of the hope of renewal. Nabokov wants Humbert Humbert and Lolita to not only double up and morph into the vagaries of composition, he wants them to evolve into a multitude of possibilities, ever seeking new tangential lives outside their first encounters with the text and its readings. Nabokov's narrative is based on a Dostoyevskian mode, the unreliable narrator. A narrator whose diary is destroyed and one that he remembers verbatim, according to him. It is a story told from the confines of a mental hospital/prison inhabited for 56 days. The narrative style is best mirrored in the letter Charlotte leaves Humbert, a letter that he loses and yet offers up to the reader as an exact remembrance, one that he recalls verbatim. And yet this letter has the rhythm and sound of Humbert with its prompt to throw it into the "vortex of a toilet" (which he offhandedly admits to). Even the news of Humbert to Charlotte union in the society column of the Ramsdale Journal finds purposeful missteps. Her name is incorrectly rendered as Mrs. Hazer, Humbert claims his name as Mr. Edgar H. Humbert, and later he tells her that "society columns should contain a shimmer of errors", as do all narratives, shaped and formed with the care of a true story-teller. And thus deception and revelation work hand in hand to tell this story, reveal the truest impulses and foibles which haunt both the reader and its characters. Nabokov lets his narrative loose among this chaos of form for he believes that narratives, true ones, materialize exactly in this manner; that our lives are but fragments that we piece together and negotiate alongside and in concordance with a multitude of other narratives.

As we all should know, reading and enjoying a book is largely about interpretation. People are not

the same and we all view things differently, one individual might see a relationship in a book as "passionate" while another could see it as "damaging". When characters make bad decisions, some will view it as stupidity and others will view it as an accurate representation of humanity's imperfections. Not only that, but time often changes the way one person sees things. A teenager does not usually have the same outlook on life and relationships that someone of thirty does, and neither of them have the same outlook as someone of seventy does. The book is full of murders, obsessions, madness, and abuse. Ridiculously readable, so much so that the only complaint can be that it was not 200 or 300k words, as perfectly placed as only Nabokov can. There is a narrative irony, but that does not mean anything.

This book was difficult for me to start and it shouldn't have been. I am informed of the subject matter and assumed this to be a lurid tale about pedophilia - it is not. Pedophilia is an element of the story, but not the plot of it all. True, Lolita (Deloris) is a child of 12 when the story begins, but herein, her age is naught but a back drop. This, in all its desperate beauty, is a tragic love story. A supreme tale of forbidden love, obsession, fear, jealousy, unrequited love, hate, and revenge. Humbert Humbert is a broken man even from his first love. The one thing he desires most, he can't have - no matter how tight he holds. For HH, true love is an illusion. His dark, tortured soul is torn by obsession and he will go to any length to save his fantasy of love, but fate is a cruel master. Nabokov's style of writing is rather difficult to accustom oneself to, especially interspersing fragments of French throughout the story. But he manages to bring the story and the characters to life. And he succeeds in making the reader care about a man who at first glance, is revolting. I ended up feeling pity for poor Humbert while acknowledging that justice prevails. I would recommend this book to mature readers that can look beyond the unsavory aspect of pedophilia and read this as a love tragedy....

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