

Lolita



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Vladimir Nabokov

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Los adjetivos de escandalosa, inmoral, decadente y ultrajante acompanaron largo tiempo a Lolita, hoy ya considerada una obra maestra de la literatura. La historia de la obsesion de Humbert Humbert, un profesor cuarenton, por la doceanera Lolita es una extraordinaria novela de amor en la que intervienen dos componentes explosivos: la atraccion perversa por las ninfulas y el incesto. Un itinerario a traves de la locura y la muerte, que desemboca en una estilizadisima violencia, narrado, a la vez con autoironia y lirismo desenfrenado, por el propio Humbert Humbert. Lolita es tambien un retrato acido y visionario de los Estados Unidos, de los horrores suburbanos y de la cultura del plastico y del motel. Una de las novelas mas cultas (y tambien mas divertidas) de nuestra epoca, una exhibicion deslumbrante de talento y humor.



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392 pages

Amazon Review

Despite its lascivious reputation, the pleasures of Lolita are as much intellectual as erogenous. It is a love story with the power to raise both chuckles and eyebrows. Humbert Humbert is a European intellectual adrift in America, haunted by memories of a lost adolescent love. When he meets his ideal nymphet in the shape of 12-year-old Dolores Haze, he constructs an elaborate plot to seduce her, but first he must get rid of her mother. In spite of his diabolical wit, reality proves to be more slippery than Humbert's feverish fantasies and Lolita refuses to conform to his image of the perfect lover. Playfully perverse in form as well as content, riddled with puns and literary allusions, Nabokov's 1955 novel is a hymn to the Russian-born author's delight in his adopted language. Indeed, readers who want to probe all of its allusive nooks and crannies will need to consult the annotated edition. Lolita is undoubtedly, brazenly erotic, but the eroticism springs less from the "frail honey-hued shoulders ... the silky supple bare back" of little Lo than it does from the wantonly gorgeous prose that Humbert uses to recount his forbidden passion: "She was musical and apple-sweet ... Lola the bobby-soxer, devouring her immemorial fruit, singing through its juice ... and every movement she made, every shuffle and ripple, helped me to conceal and to improve the secret system of tactile correspondence between beast and beauty--between my gagged, bursting beast and the beauty of her dimpled body in its innocent cotton frock." Much has been made of Lolita as metaphor, perhaps because the love affair at its heart is so troubling. Humbert represents the formal, educated Old World of Europe, while Lolita is America: ripening, beautiful, but not too bright and a little vulgar. Nabokov delights in exploring the intercourse between these cultures and the passages where Humbert describes the suburbs and strip malls and motels of post-war America are filled with both attraction and repulsion: "Those restaurants where the holy spirit of Huncan Dines had descended upon the cute paper napkins and cottage-cheese-crested salads." Yet however tempting the novel's symbolism may be, its chief delight--and power--lies in the character of Humbert Humbert. He, at least as he tells it, is no seedy skulker, no twisted destroyer of innocence. Instead, Nabokov's celebrated mouthpiece is erudite and witty, even at his most deprayed. Humbert can't help itlinguistic jouissance is as important to him as the satisfaction of his arrested libido. --Simon Leake Review He did us all an honour by electing to use, and transform, our language. (Anthony Burgess)

Nabokov can move you to laughter in the way that masters can - to laughter that is near to tears. (*The Guardian*)

There's no funnier monster in modern literature than poor, doomed Humbert Humbert. (*The Independent*) From the Inside Flap

With one of the most controversial novels of the twentieth century, Vladimir Nabokov's Lolita is a strange, troubling love story told by the one of the most unreliable narrators in literature. This Penguin Modern Classics edition includes an afterword by Craig Raine. Poet and pervert, Humbert Humbert becomes obsessed by twelve-year-old Lolita and seeks to possess her, first carnally and then artistically, out of love, 'to fix once for all the perilous magic of nymphets'. Is he in love or insane? A silver-tongued poet or a pervert? A tortured soul or a monster? Or is he all of these? Humbert Humbert's seduction is one of many dimensions in Nabokov's dizzying masterpiece, which is suffused with a savage humour and rich, elaborate verbal textures. Filmed by Stanley Kubrick in 1962 starring James Mason and Peter Sellers, and again in 1997 by Adrian Lyne starring Jeremy Irons and Melanie Griffith, Lolita has lost none of its power to shock and awe. "Lolita is comedy, subversive yet divine... You read Lolita sprawling limply in your chair, ravished, overcome, nodding scandalized assent." (Martin Amis, Observer).

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