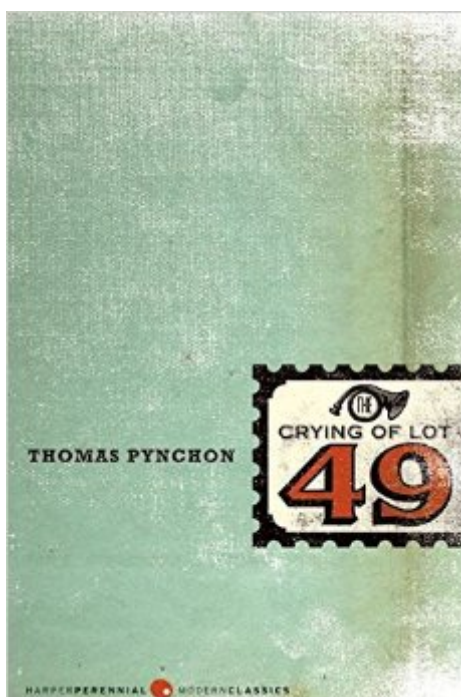


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The Crying Of Lot 49 (Perennial Fiction Library)



Synopsis

The highly original satire about Oedipa Maas, a woman who finds herself enmeshed in a worldwide conspiracy, meets some extremely interesting characters, and attains a not inconsiderable amount of self knowledge.

Book Information

Series: Perennial Fiction Library

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Average Customer Review: 3.8 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (313 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

Conspiracy buffs, look no further than "The Crying of Lot 49" -- a book that indulges in paranoia so much, you almost expect to see your own name mentioned somewhere in the text. There is an incredible amount of narrative inventiveness on every page, employing a wild concoction of dry humor, non sequiturs, bizarre characters with puns for names, and an endless barrage of references to a wide variety of pop culture, science, and technology. This is the first novel I've read that has introduced the concept of entropy as a narrative device. The protagonist is a woman named Oedipa Maas who, when the novel begins, learns that her former boyfriend, the wealthy Pierce Inverarity, has died and designated her to be the executor of his enormous estate. Inverarity's assets include vast stretches of property, a significant stamp collection, and many shares in an aerospace corporation called Yoyodyne. As Oedipa goes through her late boyfriend's will, aided by a lawyer named Metzger who works for Inverarity's law firm, she learns about a series of secret societies and strange groups of people involved in a sort of renegade postal system called Tristero. She starts seeing ubiquitous cryptic diagrams of a simple horn, a symbol with a seemingly infinite number of meanings. Every clue she uncovers about Tristero and the horn leads haphazardly to

another, like a brainstorm, or a free association of ideas. This is a novel that demands analysis but defies explanation. My initial interpretation was that it's an anarchistic satire of the military-industrial-government complex, but it's deeper than that.

Okay it's not his best novel (that'd be Gravity's Rainbow) and it's not his worst novel (that'd be Vineland, which is still darn good, actually) but it is his shortest novel, so if you could say one definite thing about it, that might be it. The length is actually a good thing because is an easy book to hook people on Pynchon by giving them something short and say "Hey look he's great!". Because this is classic Pynchon, as good as anything he's ever done, a great big step forward from V. In these one hundred and eighty pages he manages to cram more prose and ideas and paranoia (because it wouldn't be a Pynchon book otherwise) than most authors can do in twice the space. Simply put, it's a fun book, and for all the trappings of "post-modernism" you can easily enjoy this book without camping out in your local library near the reference section if you just take everything on faith and read it. The story concerns Ms Oedipa Maas, who is executing the will of her late boyfriend and stumbles upon (she thinks) a conspiracy involving either the US Postal System, the Mob and just about everything else, a conspiracy that might stretch back hundreds of years. Or it might not. Pynchon proceeds then to play with Ms. Maas and the reader for the rest of the novel, throwing out obscure fact after obscure fact, toying with her perception of things (are things just happening randomly or is there a guiding force behind them?) and basically having a crackling good time doing so.

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