

Infinite Jest Study Guide

Infinite Jest by David Foster Wallace

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Plot Summary

Infinite Jest is a novel written by David Foster Wallace. The novel is a interconnected sequence of events, told out of timeline order, that focuses on addiction in all its forms. Whether its drugs, sex, or fame, the novel's primary goal is to examine the need for these addictions and show that it is possible to addicted to addiction itself. To hammer this point home, Wallace continues a running discussion between two of the characters. Remy Marathe and Hugh and Helen Steeply spend much of the novel discussing the nature of addiction throughout American and foreign cultures. The two are secret agents for opposing sides, The Organization of North American Nations and the Wheelchair Assassins, a Quebec separatist group, although they are friendly to each other. Their discussions frame the actions throughout the rest of the novel. The majority of the action takes place in the Year of the Depends Adult Undergarment. In this future society, years ceased to be designated chronologically, but began being named for well-known products on the market.

The novel begins with Hal Incandenza, a student at the Enfield Tennis Academy. Hal has had a nervous breakdown and the rest of the novel is told in flashback with two groups at interconnected places. The first, the Enfield Tennis Academy, is the school where Hal and his brother, Mario, attend and their mother, Avril Incandenza, works. The second location is the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, where many addicts introduced through the novel are sent for treatment. The mindsets and predilections of the characters are analyzed throughout the novel to get a sense of their feelings of isolation. Meanwhile, several parties are searching for The Entertainment, also known as the Infinite Jest, which is a film so funny that anyone who views it becomes lifeless and only wants to continue viewing the tape. James Incandenza created the film, which stars Joelle Van Dyne, before he committed suicide. Hal Incandenza is kidnapped and tortured for information as to its location.

One of the groups who wants to obtain the film is the Wheelchair Assassins, a group of Quebec separatists, to use in terrorism against the United States. In the future society, Canada and the United States are now one, so the separatists begin to focus their attention on being anti-American, since the Americans still control most of the government. The United States Office of Unspecified Services also seeks to find the tape to prevent this. Eventually both sides succeed in obtaining a copy of the tape. Whether or not they use it as a weapon of war is left to be seen by the conclusion of the novel.



Chapter 1, Year of Glad, and Chapter 2, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 1, Year of Glad, and Chapter 2, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Hal Incandenza, 18, is at the administration building of a university, where he is being interviewed by several deans and the school's tennis coach. Hal's Uncle Charlie has brought him to hopefully be admitted because of his skill playing tennis. The Deans are interested and appreciative of Hal's accomplishments, but seem to sense that something is off with the boy. The dean brings up that Hal submitted nine separate applications, all which were judged stellar by a reviewer. However, his verbal test scores were abysmal. They ask Hal to defend himself and he opens his mouth to tell them although he had some trouble, his earlier grades are valid. He tells the men he loves to study. As he speaks, he remembers a time when he was young, and he ate a piece of mold he found in his basement. When he opens his eyes, he sees the men panicking. It is clear the sounds coming out of Hal's mouth are not words; but gibberish and animalistic sounds. The men take him to the bathroom, where they discuss how he is unfit to attend the academy. The athletic director says he had only seen Hal play, and had no idea he was so disturbed. Hal is taken to the emergency room.

In Chapter 2, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Ken Erdedy is waiting for a woman to come, who has promised to bring him marijuana. Erdedy is a drug addict, who keeps trying to quit but ends up finding a new dealer each time he starts again. He tries to call her, but only gets her answering machine. While he is waiting, he watches an insect climbing on his shelf. In preparation for getting high, Erdedy has thrown out all the beer in the house, gone grocery shopping, and bought a new bong. He thinks about the last woman he bought marijuana from: an artist whom he slept with. He pretended to leave town and never contacted the woman again. This is a cycle he continues to undergo as part of his addiction.

Chapter 1, Year of Glad, and Chapter 2, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

The novel, *Infinite Jest*, starts at a point far into the story. Hal Incandenza, a stellar tennis player, is ready to enter college. His Uncle Charlie, who is really his mother's lover, is hoping to get Hal into college based on his tennis skills. However, Hal has obviously suffered severe mental problems and is no longer able to articulate, although it seems he is cognitively aware of what is going on. The deans are completely disturbed by Hal's behavior. They cannot believe Charlie would try to have Hal admitted to the school. A man named Ken Erdedy is a drug addict, although he does not use marijuana constantly. Instead, Erdedy embarks on binges, where he finds someone to



obtain a large amount of marijuana for him, which he will smoke until it is gone. Then, Erdedy cuts off all ties with the person who gave him the drugs, and rids himself of the pariphenalia. By doing this, Erdedy is able to convince himself that he doesn't have a serious problem. However, it is clear that he is unable to stop using marijuana; although he appears to be functional in his regular life despite his addiction.



Chapter 3, 1 April - Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, Chapter 4, 9 May - Year of the Depent Adult Undergarment, Chapter 5, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 6, Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar

Chapter 3, 1 April - Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, Chapter 4, 9 May - Year of the Depent Adult Undergarment, Chapter 5, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 6, Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar Summary

Hal Incandenza, age 10, goes to see a man who calls himself a professional conversationalist. The man establishes that Hal is advanced for his age, who can recite parts of the dictionary at will and is a superb tennis player. The man tries to talk to Hal about esoteric subjects, but Hal calls out the man as his father, saying that James Incandenza has rented a new office and face for this, but left his trademark sweater vest on. He tells his father he has a challenge match and doesn't have time for this. The man continues to question him, but when Hal doesn't respond, the man calls him 'son.'

In Chapter 4, 9 May - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hal Incandenza is in his room at the Enfield Tennis Academy. He is getting ready to leave for the day, when his brother Orin calls. Orin says his head is filled with things to say. Hal says he can wait; Orin replies that's what he thinks, and hangs up. Hal's brother, Mario, wakes up at the sound of the phone, but Hal tells him to go back to bed. He says it was no one Mario knows.

In Chapter 5, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, a medical attache for Saudi Arabia is in the northeastern United States to cut a deal with an entertainment company. While he is home, he enjoys sitting and eating while watching entertainment cartridges. He finds a mysterious cartridge, in a plain brown envelope, and settles in to watch it.

In Chapter 6, Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar, a girl named Wardine complains about her mother to her friend, Reginald. Wardine shows Reginald that her mother had beaten her with a hangar. Her mom's boyfriend, Roy Tony, has been making advances at Wardine. The children are frightened of Roy Tony because he once killed a man. A man named Bruce Green falls in love with a woman named Mildred Bonk, the most beautiful girl in



his eighth-grade class. Mildred falls in with a bad crowd and spends most of her time high. The two eventually get married and have a child.

Chapter 3, 1 April - Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, Chapter 4, 9 May - Year of the Depent Adult Undergarment, Chapter 5, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 6, Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar Analysis

As the novel continues, the author jumps around in time. Most of the events in the novel will occur in the Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment. However, a few years earlier, Hal Incandenza, at age 10, is able to speak and think clearly, which indicates his condition in the first chapter happened sometime in the future. He goes to see a man who calls himself a professional conversationalist, but is actually his father in disguise. It appears that this is an attempt for James Incandenza to learn more about his son. They do not seem to have a close relationship. Orin Incandenza, a football player, also does not seem to have much of a relationship with his family. It appears Orin only wants to talk to Hal, and Orin is very unsettled about his life. A medical attache finds a entertainment cartridge, probably similar to a videotape or a dvd. He enjoys watching such cartridges, so he immediately pops the tape in to watch it. Other characters are also introduced, such as Roy Tony and Bruce Green, who will likely return later in the novel.



Chapter 7, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 8, October - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 10, Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland

Chapter 7, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 8, October - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 10, Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland Summary

Mario Incandenza wakes up his brother, Hal, in the middle of the night because he wants to talk. Mario mentions that Hal did well in the tennis match he played that day. Hal tries to get his brother to go back to sleep. However, Mario won't listen. He talks about their mom, Avril Incandenza. Mario asks his brother if he thinks Avril was happier after their father, James Incandenza, killed himself. Mario thinks she did. He says their mother is now a workaholic at the Enfield Tennis Academy, where they are enrolled. Hal said their mother was sad after their father's death, but shows it in her own way. The medical attache is still watching the mysterious tape, after about 45 minutes.

In Chapter 8, October - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Orin Incandenza wakes up in his condo. A woman has left a note with her phone number on the pillow next to him. Orin is a placekicker for the Arizona Cardinals. He has inherited his mother's distaste for bugs, especially roaches. Orin is a serial womanizer, frequently getting involved with many women.

In Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hal Incandenza likes to smoke marijuana in secret. He uses a one-hitter pipe, which allows him to smoke quickly to the maximum effect. Although he likes the secrecy, most of his friends know he gets high. His mother, Avril Incandenza, and the headmaster, Charles Tavis, both know Hal likes to get drunk. She allows this because Avril is terrified that at the idea that her sons may be hiding something from her. Much of the campus has underground tunnels, which Hal uses to find secret places to smoke marijuana. The medical attache has not been watching the tape over and over for several hours, and has wet his pants.



In Chapter 10, Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland, Don Gately is a prescription pill addict, and a professional burglar. He is a hard man to deal with, and always gets revenge on those who wrong him. While he is robbing a home, he realizes the man who lives there is still home, and ties him to a chair. They clean out the house and leave, but the man suffocates from his gag. The man is a Canadian and had ties to the Organization of North American Nations.

Chapter 7, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 8, October - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 10, Year of Dairy Products from the American Heartland Analysis

Mario Incandenza seems obviously younger than his brother, Hal, although he is older. He looks to Hal for guidance and reassurance, especially regarding their mother, Avril Incandenza. Mario thinks that his mother was not bothered by her husband's death, but Hal explains that she has a different way of dealing with grief than they do. Hal and Mario seem to have a strained relationship with their mother. Avril's biggest fear is that her sons would hide something for her, which makes Hal enjoy hiding the fact that he smokes marijuana even more. Orin, the other Incandenza brother, has inherited his mother's fear of bugs. This suggests that Avril is a woman who is rather skittish and worried most of the time. Orin's inability to stay with a single woman indicates that he does not regard women well; he has possibly been hurt by one woman in the past. As for the medical attache, he's still watching the same tape. He has now been watching for several hours, and the fact that the man has soiled himself indicates there is something captivating about this tape. It appears that the man cannot tear himself away from watching the video.



Chapter 11, 3 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 12, As of Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 13, Denver Co, 1 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 14, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chap

Chapter 11, 3 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 12, As of Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 13, Denver Co, 1 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 14, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 15, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Jim Troeltsch is a student at the Enfield Tennis Academy who is very ill. His dreams are vague and vibrant.

In Chapter 12, As of Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, The Enfield Tennis Academy had been operating for about 11 years, founded by James Incandenza. James was a tennis player, who went on to get his doctorate in optical physics. He was a celebrated scientist, but committed suicide at age 54 by sticking his head in a microwave.

In Chapter 13, Denver Co, 1 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Orin Incandenza is at a football game, playing for the Arizona Cardinals. He connects their name with his fear of flying. He asks God to spare his leg in between plays. Michael Pemulis tells his younger customers about drugs. Hal is smoking pot and talks about dreaming about tennis. He is standing on a court while the crowd watches. He never sees his opponent.

In Chapter 14, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Kate Gompert goes to see a doctor. She has been placed on suicide watch. Kate seems out of it, the doctor notices. She has been hospitalized for depression several times before. She has also tried to commit suicide three times, the latest being the reason she is in the hospital. She says



she doesn't want to hurt herself, she just doesn't want to play anymore. She talks about her addiction to marijuana. She tries to quit but it is the only thing that makes her feel better. The wife of the medical attache finally returns home, and finds her husband in a stupor. She tries to awake him, but the Entertainment catches her attention. Mario Incandenza talks about tennis theory with the academy's head coach.

In Chapter 15, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Tiny Ewell is travelling to the The Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. They take away his pills when he arrives, and he goes through withdrawal. Several people have come looking for the medical attache, and all have been drawn in to watching the Entertainment.

Chapter 11, 3 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 12, As of Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 13, Denver Co, 1 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 14, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 15, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

James Incandenza, the father of Hal, Mario, and Orin Incandenza, is the founder of the Enfield Tennis Academy. In his professional life, he seem sto have been deemed a very successful man. He was very involved in the school and his pursuit of knowledge. He has a degree in optical physics; indicating that he may be involved with the creation of the Entertainment cartridge and why it is so compelling. He is also a very good tennis player, and his son, Hal, seems to have followed in his footsteps in this case. Orin Incandenza, however, is a football player. He playing of a different sport, as well as being the only son not to attend the tennis academy, shows that he is distant from the rest of his family members and his father's legacy. Mario, who is deformed, was never in the running to compete with his brothers, and seems to be the most stable in his personality. He is, however, interested in tennis and life at the academy. The second main setting of the novel, the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, is introduced. Many of the characters who have been seemingly randomly-introduced will end up at this location. Several more people have been drawn into the Entertainment, indicating there is something addictive about it. Anyone who views the tape is unable to stop watching it.



Chapter 16, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 17, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 18, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 19, Mario Incandenza's First and Only Even Remotely Romantic Experience, Thus Far, Chapter 20, 30 April - Year o

Chapter 16, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 17, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 18, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 19, Mario Incandenza's First and Only Even Remotely Romantic Experience, Thus Far, Chapter 20, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Remy Marathe, a member of the Wheelchair Assassins, a Quebec separatist group, meets with Hugh Steeply, a secret agent. Steeply is dressed in drag, acting as Helen Steeply. They discuss how the medical attaché has received the Entertainment through the mail. About 20 people were rendered catatonic by the Entertainment. Steeply knows that Marathe is a triple, or perhaps quadruple agent.

In Chapter 17, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, the students at Enfield Tennis Academy are hanging out in the locker room. Hal and his friends talk about how tired they are, and how it would be better to be high. Marathe and Steeply talk of love, and how a woman can launch a war, much like Helen of Troy. They discuss the idea of slavery, and Marathe said the most pathetic form of bondage is the slave who believes he is free. (Chapter 18, Y.D.A.U) Hal speaks to the younger students. He says their coaches know the boys complain after practices, and they encourage it, because suffering in part of being a good athlete. Most of the students won't play tennis professionally, he says, but the bitching is ritualistic.

In Chapter 19, Mario Incandenza's First and Only Even Remotely Romantic Experience, Thus Far, Hal Incandenza takes his brother, Mario Incandenza, for a walk around the Enfield Tennis Academy grounds. Mario can tell his brother wants to be alone, so he falls back so his brother can slip away. He runs into a girl, referred to as the U.S.S. Millicent Kent, a female tennis player. She is a tough, manly girl. She tells Mario she has



seen something interesting in the brush, a telescoping tripod. She leads Mario into the brush, complimenting his eyelashes. She continues to tell him about herself, but Mario hears Hal calling. She tries to put her hand down his pants, but Mario laughs and Hal comes running. The three walk into the tripod.

In Chapter 20, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Steeply said the choice of Boston for the Quebec group's operations center indicates the Entertainment may be near there.

Chapter 16, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 17, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 18, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 19, Mario Incandenza's First and Only Even Remotely Romantic Experience, Thus Far, Chapter 20, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

The results of the Entertainment have been discovered. Several people have now been rendered catatonic from watching it, and it took some time to figure out how to get them away from the tape. Even the police officers sent in to help the people were trapped by the tape's attractiveness. The Entertainment is a powerful item, and the separatist group wants it so they can use it against the O.N.A.N. Remy Marathe is a member of the Wheelchair Assassins, the separatist group but is a quadruple agent. This means he pretends to betray the group to the O.N.A.N., but the Wheelchair Assassins know this and believe he is only pretending to do that to give them the real information about the O.N.A.N. However, Marathe is really giving information back to the O.N.A.N. Much of this section includes the older students offering advice to the younger students. While much of this discussion is not crucial to the plot, it does indicate the camaraderie and bond the students have with each other. Mario Incandenza, who is deformed, has his one and only encounter with a woman. However, he is not as interested in U.S.S. Millicent Kent, but does not stop her from coming on to him. However, when they are interrupted, he does not seem disturbed.



Chapter 21, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 22, 3 November - Y.D.A.U, Chapter 23, Year of the Purdue Wonder Chicken, Chapter 24, Helen Steeply's Article, Chapter 25, Tally of Separatist Organizations, Chapter 25, Videophony

Chapter 21, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 22, 3 November - Y.D.A.U, Chapter 23, Year of the Purdue Wonder Chicken, Chapter 24, Helen Steeply's Article, Chapter 25, Tally of Separatist Organizations, Chapter 25, Videophony Summary

An oiled guru sits in spandex in the weight room of the Enfield Tennis Academy. No one knows why the man comes there or where he comes from, but he's always in there. He likes to lick people after they workout, then give them fitness advice. The man's name is supposedly Lyle. Someone referred to as "yrstruly" tells a story about himself, a person named C, and Poor Tony hanging out, shooting people and stealing money from them. They buy drugs from a man named Dr. Wo. C. overdoses.

In Chapter 22, 3 November - Y.D.A.U, Orin Incandenza calls his brother, Hal Incandenza. Hal doesn't like being on the phone just after he's gotten high. Orin tells him how hot it is in Arizona. He says he saw a man collapse from the heat not too long ago. Hal wonders if his brother is lying to him. Orin asks Hal if he knows anything about the Separatist movement.

In Chapter 23, Year of the Purdue Wonder Chicken, Hal Incandenza writes a seventh-grade essay comparing two characters, Hawaii-Five-O's Steve McGarrett with Hill Street Blues's Frank Furillo. Hal feels that Furillo is a more complicated and milder hero. (Chapter 24, Helen Steeply's Article) Helen Steeply publishes an article in Moment magazine, about a woman who carried her artificial heart in her purse. The woman was mugged by Poor Tony.

In Chapter 25, Tally of Separatist Organizations, a list of the organizations that support the separation of Quebec is given, along with how dangerous they are considered.



In Chapter 25, Videophony, an invention called videophony, which allows people to make calls using videos, is described. Urine testing is done at the Enfield Tennis Academy. Michael Pemulis sells urine samples to his classmates. Mario Incandenza tapes the sales.

Chapter 21, 30 April - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 22, 3 November - Y.D.A.U, Chapter 23, Year of the Purdue Wonder Chicken, Chapter 24, Helen Steeply's Article, Chapter 25, Tally of Separatist Organizations, Chapter 25, Videophony Analysis

As the novel continues, more bizarre characters are introduced. Lyle is a tennis expert, who spends all his time in the weight room. He apparently likes to lick the sweat off of people, a odd practice, symbolizing he feeds off the exertions of others. However, he offers valuable advice, so most of the students seem willing to put up with this. The parallel stories about the future patients at Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House continue. Poor Tony continues his crime spree, snatching purses whenever possible. He seems to have a compulsion to rob people in this manner. Orin and Hal Incandenza continue to have a familiar but strained relationship. When they talk, it is clear they do not hold ill will against each other and seem to get along; however, Hal seems unable to talk about some things comfortably with his brother. Orin questions his brother about the Separatist movement; however, Hal is not aware fully concerned with it. The drug use at Enfield Tennis Academy continues, and the students show their ingenuity at avoiding urine tests. This continues to show that that characters seem to be blase and resigned to their lives; concerned more with doing what they want and having fun.



Chapter 26, Winter B.S. 1960 - Tuscon, Az., Chapter 27, 4 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 28, Tennis and the Feral Prodigy, Chapter 29, Selected Transcripts, Chapter 30, Late October, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Ch

Chapter 26, Winter B.S. 1960 - Tuscon, Az., Chapter 27, 4 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 28, Tennis and the Feral Prodigy, Chapter 29, Selected Transcripts, Chapter 30, Late October, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 31, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

James Incandenza addresses a young man named Jim, a 10-year-old. He tells him how he needs to open a garage door. He also discusses Marlon Brando, and how Jim's mother loved the actor. However, she didn't understand the proper way to open a door. He predicts Jim will be a great tennis player. He talks about how his knee gave out during a tennis match, and his father dragged him off the court.

In Chapter 27, 4 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Michael Pemulis goes to the city, where he goes to score some more drugs, simliar but different to LSD, referred to as Madame Psychosis.

In Chapter 28, Tennis and the Feral Prodigy, Hal narrates a film called the Tennis and the Feral Prodigy, a film shot by Mario Incandenza. The film discusses how to properly play tennis, including how to grip the racquet. He said it helps to have a father who once had talent but lost it all.

In Chapter 29, Selected Transcripts, records describing the patients at Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House are gathered by a woman named Patricia Montesian, the house director. They describe things that the patients have sead to her in the Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment. One argues that he is not an alcoholic. Others talk about problems they have living at the home.



In Chapter 30, Late October, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hal Incandenza and his brother, Mario, listen to a radio show at a local club, featuring Sixty Minutes More or Less with Madame Psychosis.

In Chapter 31, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, some of the students work out in the Enfield Tennis Academy weight room. The students egg each other on, to lift more and more weights. At Ennet, many of the patients have tattoos, many of which are of women that the men who have the tattoo have now broken up with. Michael Pemulis obtains some more Madame Psychosis, and he, Hal and his friends plan to take it before an upcoming tennis match.

Chapter 26, Winter B.S. 1960 - Tuscon, Az., Chapter 27, 4 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 28, Tennis and the Feral Prodigy, Chapter 29, Selected Transcripts, Chapter 30, Late October, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 31, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

James Incandenza seems to have a strained relationship with his father. It is clear that the young man he is talking to is his younger self. His father was a demanding man, who would not accept anything but the best from his family. Mario Incandenza cannot become a tennis player like his father, but he is able to follow in his father's footsteps as a filmmaker. It seems that although the Incandenza boys, especially Orin, all had a strained, complicated relationship with their father, Hal and Mario still somewhat aspire to be like him. The patients at Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House can be seen as a parallel to the drug users at the Enfield Tennis Academy. The scenes at the home seem to be a vision of the future for some of the students, especially ones such as Michael Pemulis. For now, the students have enough strength to continue with their classwork while abusing drugs, but sooner or later their drug use will probably catch up to them. They are more concerned with the sensations of taking drugs, and how it helps them escape from their boring lives. This is something both the patients and the students have in common.



Chapter 32, 7 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 33, Chronology of O.N.A.N.'s Revenue Enhancing Subsidized Time, by Year, and Chapter 34, 5 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 32, 7 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 33, Chronology of O.N.A.N.'s Revenue Enhancing Subsidized Time, by Year, and Chapter 34, 5 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Joelle Van Dyne, star of James Incandenza's movies, is at a party at her friend's house. She hates the depressing moment when a party ends, and people begin to leave. She always wears a veil over her face.

In Chapter 32, Chronology of O.N.A.N.'s Revenue Enhancing Subsidized Time, by Year, a list of the years, in order, is included. They are The Year of the Whopper, The Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, The Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar, The Year of the Perdue Wonderchicken, The Year of the Whisper-Quiet Maytag Dishwasher, The Year of the Yushityu 2007 Mimetic-Resolution-Cartidge-View-Motherboard-Easy-To-Install Upgrade For Infematron/InterLace TP Systems For Home, Office or Mobile, The Year Dairy Products from the American Heartland, The Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and The Year of Glad. Joelle Van Dyne thinks about Orin Incandenza as she travels home. She smokes homemade freebase cocaine.

Joelle goes to Molly Notkin's for another party. Joelle feels depressed because of her looks, and almost want to go to a mirror and lift her veil. Joelle thinks about how she was Orin Incandenza's lover for more than two years, and the star of his father's movies for just under two years. The apartment Molly lives in used to be the place where James Incandenza shot the films involving Joelle. Joelle goes to the bathroom, where she mixed up freebase cocaine. She tries to overdose and ends up vomiting while someone else tries to get in the bathroom.

In Chapter 34, 5 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Orin Incandenza calls his brother, Hal. Orin tells Hal that he thinks he's being followed by handicapped people. He tells him he was hitting on a girl, or subject, at the post office, and he saw



three in an hour. Orin says a woman, Helen Steeply, is doing a profile on him for Moment magazine, and he doesn't know what to tell her about their dad's suicide. They discuss how Joelle made James agree to stop drinking before she'd be in his last film. They talk about how James committed suicide by sticking his head inside a microwave.

Chapter 32, 7 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 33, Chronology of O.N.A.N.'s Revenue Enhancing Subsidized Time, by Year, and Chapter 34, 5 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Joelle Van Dyne, the muse of James Incandenza, is introduced. Joelle, referred to by Orin Incandenza as the most beautiful girl in the world, always wears a veil. She claims she is deformed, although at this point it isn't clear whether she is really deformed or she merely wears the veil to hide her beauty. Joelle once dated Orin, and it seems to be the one, true, good relationship either of them has ever had with a member of the opposite sex. However, for some reason they did not stay together. Joelle has fallen far after James Incandenza died and she split up with Hal. She tried to help James Incandenza break his own dependency on alcohol, but was unsuccessful. What was going on in James Incandenza's mind during those past few days seems to be a mystery to all those who knew him. She is a full-blown drug addict, and attempts to take her own life during a friend's party. However, she is saved. Orin realizes that he is being followed by handicapped people. This indicates the Wheelchair Assassins have found Orin to be a person of interest, probably related to their quest to attain the Entertainment. A list of each of the years is included here, to give the reader some perspective on in what order the events in the novel are happening.



Chapter 35, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 36, 14 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 35, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 36, 14 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Hal Incandenza and his classmates play in a tennis match at Port Washington Tennis Academy in Long Island, N.Y. The team is excited because this year, they have John Wayne, who is ranked among the best players. The match is described in great detail. Michael Pemulis gets sick before the match. Don Gately has now been clean for more than 400 days, and he is a staff member of Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. He meets with the other patients, and tells them how gratified he is to now be clean. Gately is pleased with his job. He thinks about how the time passing at the center reeks of early sobriety. The tennis team returns from Long Island triumphant.

Orin Incandenza, the eldest of the Incandenza brothers, only played tennis until he was in college. He was a good player in high school, but not good enough to become a professional. He was a good student, however, and was able to attend college at Boston University. He gets a full scholarship to the university. He was also upset that Charles Tavis became headmaster very quickly after James Incandenza had committed suicide. Orin decided to make the switch to football. He made the switch because he had a crush on a baton-twirler, Joelle Van Dyne, also known as the Prettiest Girl of All Time. It becomes clear that Orin is an excellent football player. Joelle begins to videotape Orin while he is playing.

In Chapter 37, 14 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, poor Tony Krause has a seizure while in Boston. He goes through withdrawal after drinking cough syrup in a men's bathroom for a week. Someone calls an ambulance for him.

Chapter 35, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 36, 14 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

The students at Enfield Tennis Academy are still able to triumph in tennis matches on the whole, despite the drug use they indulge in. Orin Incandenza, while an adequate player, knew that he was never going to play professionally or live up to his father's



standards. He therefore decided to pursue a professional career in another sport, football. Although he primarily switched his focus to football specifically because of Joelle Van Dyne, his skills quickly become apparent. This shows that Orin is finally capable of distancing himself from his father, the rest of his family, and is able to support himself. He also has Joelle, whom he falls in love with and they begin a relationship. Joelle is seen here as a innocent and beautiful girl, who has not yet been tainted by her association with James Incandenza. Poor Tony Krause also becomes a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. The author continues to weave together the backstories of the different characters at the rehabilitation center.



Chapter 37, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 38, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 39, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, Chapter 40, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependenc

Chapter 37, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 38, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 39, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, Chapter 40, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, and Chapter 41, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

The classes at Enfield Tennis Academy are taught all week, and most teachers also teach a class on Saturday. The birth of Mario Incandenza was a complete surprise, including to his mother, Avril Incandenza. She did not have any indication that she was pregnant until she went into labor. James Incandenza does not know what to do, and thinks his wife is dying. However, Charles Tavis is there and is able to help. Mario was born premature and is deformed and small, and continues to be so as he grows. He is the only physically challenged person on campus. When he needs to stand to videotape something, he uses a stand to prop himself up. Hal looks up to his older brother.

In Chapter 38, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Remy Marathe and Hugh Steeply continue to talk. Marathe says they know an American man has made the Entertainment cartridge. He says a U.S.A. that would let its children die for the Entertainment could not survive in the modern world, and that the country is weak.

In Chapter 39, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, on Interdependence Day, some of the younger students at the Enfield Tennis Academy play a game they invented called Eschaton. The students play the game with about eight to



twelve players, as well as about 400 tennis balls. The teams fight each other by throwing the balls, creating a war game.

In Chapter 40, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, there are several new speakers at a Boston Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. Don Gately listens to the speakers. He is intrigued by a new patient, Joelle Van Dyne. One of the board of directors pulled some strings to get her admitted quickly. The patients who have lived decades sober are called the Crocodiles. Gately thinks that the crowd at Boston AA meetings are tough to please for the speakers. A description of the Statue of Liberty indicates instead of a torch, the statue holds a product that is changed every year.

In Chapter 41, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hugh Steeply has confessed to Remy Marathe that he is again a spy and is using the position of a female journalist as a cover. Late at night, at Enfield Tennis Academy, James Incandenza used to sit with Lyle in the gym and confess his marriage would be graded a C-, which Mario overheard.

Chapter 37, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 38, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 39, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, Chapter 40, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Interdependence Day, and Chapter 41, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Mario Incandenza was not a planned birth; his mother was unaware she was pregnant until he is born. While this is a rare occurrence, it is feasible. When she goes into labor, James Incandenza does not know how to handle it. This indicates that while he is a genius, his inability to deal with real life matters affects his relationship with his wife. Charles Tavis, on the other hand, is able to take charge of the situation. The differences between the two men may explain why Avril would stray from her marriage. James Incandenza admits himself that his marriage is not great, grading it a C-, indicating it only limps along. However, Mario overhears this, learning that his parent's marriage isn't as sound as he would hope. However, in many ways Mario is the sweetest and most innocent of the Incandenza brothers. Remy Marathe and Helen Steeply continue their discussion. Remy does not think much of the United States, especially since it is willing to let people die in order to obtain the Entertainment. Remy is clearly a jaded and yet worldly individual, who has studied politics and interactions between different countries. In Boston, Don Gately meets Joelle Van Dyne, a new patient. He is interested in her since she has gotten special treatment. It's clear that Joelle hasn't lost her charm.



Chapter 42, 8 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 43, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 44, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 42, 8 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 43, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 44, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Mario Incandenza creates a film interpretation of the formation of the O.N.A.N., which is not as well-received as his father's films were, but becomes popular with adults and adolescents. A synopsis of the film follows, but is interrupted by an account of Lyle listening to students working out in the weight room. Lyle tells some of the students never to underestimate objects. Hal Incandenza has compulsion issues about nicotine, but can't smoke because it will affect his tennis drills. He instead uses smokeless chewing tobacco. Mario's film contains several headlines from the tumultuous time when the Organization of North American Nations was formed, including about the great Concavity, as the U.S. calls it, or the great Convexity, as Canadians call it. This is a waste zone in what's left in the Northeastern section of the United States. Mario also uses puppets as the main characters in his film. Hal smokes marijuana and watches his brother's film.

In Chapter 43, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Remy Marathe and Helen/Hugh Steeply are still on the shelf on the mountainside. It is revealed Marathe lost his legs to a U.S.A. train. He and Helen seem to have no distinct plans for getting off the shelf of the mountainside. The two men are reluctant to broach the subject. They continue to discuss the politics of their respective nations. Marathe wonders what's important, the maximum pleasure for individual U.S.A. citizens, or the collective maximum pleasure. A boy named Eric Clipperton finally reaches the number one ranking he's aspired to for so long, but ends up killing himself in front of Mario and James Incandenza. His case highlights how some young players can't handle it when they achieve what they set out to do.

In Chapter 44, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Don Gately tells the Alcoholics Anonymous group he is ashamed he still doesn't have a solid understanding of a higher power. The third of the twelve step programs exhorts the alcoholics to turn to God as they understand them, but Don doesn't know how to do this.



Chapter 42, 8 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 43, 30 April/1 May, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 44, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Mario Incandenza's films are not as popular as his father's, but this fact doesn't seem to bother Mario, who is just happy to do something that he finds pleasing. However, some of his films do end up acquiring a following, especially one on the formation of the O.N.A.N. It is clear the country has changed greatly between the present time, when the novel was written, and the time when it is. We also see another facet of Hal Incandenza's addictive nature. He has a need for tobacco, but the smoke damages his lungs too much so he must use the smokeless tobacco. Hal still smokes marijuana, however, using it a crutch so he doesn't have to face the world. Hal seems to be unhappy with his life and constantly searches for a way to disconnect from it. As Eric Clipperton's death shows, many of the students have no idea where their life is going, leading their lives based on meaningless goals. Once those goals are reached, there is nowhere else to go, nothing else to attain. Therefore, Hal feels the safest course is to not strive for anything. As for Don Gately, he is happy in his sobriety, but cannot bring himself to truly understand God. This indicates while he has progressed far in his recovery, there is still work he has to do, although he is not sure how.



Chapter 45, Very Late October, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 46, 9 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 47, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 48, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 49, Winter, B.S. 1963, Sepulveda, Ca., and Chapter 50, 1

Chapter 45, Very Late October, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 46, 9 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 47, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 48, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 49, Winter, B.S. 1963, Sepulveda, Ca., and Chapter 50, 10 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Hal Incandenza begins to have a terrible recurring dream about losing his teeth. Mario is sleeping at the headmaster's house, and the rest of the family is wondering about Mario's weird mood.

In Chapter 46, 9 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, the Enfield Tennis Academy has morning drills for both the male and female players. Charles Tavis believes the players should be in a constant, Zen-like state of worry. As part of Don Gately's job, he runs errands for the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. Gately has realized he will go to any lengths to stay clean.

In Chapter 47, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Hugh Steeply brings up a Canadian series of experiments in the 1970s that involved implanting electronics into the human brain. Animals with the implants would press the levers giving them the jolts of pleasure until they died. Steeply brings up the implications this would have for humans, and its similarity to the Entertainment. He says the U.S. and Canadian governments shut the experiments down. The Les Assassins des Faueuils Roulants or the Wheelchair Assassins interrogate and kill a man named Lucien at his store.

In Chapter 48, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Hugh Steeply asks Remy Marathe if he ever thinks of viewing the Entertainment. They discuss what causes the Entertainment to have such appeal. Marathe says the cause is irrelevant.



In Chapter 49, Winter, B.S. 1963, Sepulveda, Ca., James Incandenza remembers his father asking him to help him with a mattress. His father goes to the mattress and walks all over it, bearing his weight down upon it. He is trying to identify where the bed squeaks. His father who is ill, passes out on the bed frame. Ken Erdedy tries to refuse a hug at the Ennet House, but the man, Roy Tony, freaks out so he gives in. Steeply tells Marathe they've already lost men to the Entertainment.

In Chapter 50, 10 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hal Incandenza waits to be seen by Charles Tavis. He thinks he is to be admonished because the Eschaton game was out of control. He hears his mother, Avril, counseling the young female students. Hal, Michael Pemulis and some other students have been called in for a drug test.

Chapter 45, Very Late October, Y.D.A.U., Chapter 46, 9 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 47, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 48, Pre-Dawn, 1 May - Y.D.A.U., Chapter 49, Winter, B.S. 1963, Sepulveda, Ca., and Chapter 50, 10 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Hal Incandenza has bad dreams about losing his teeth. In dreams, the losing of one's teeth could have several meanings. First, it can indicate a fear of death and growing old. It could also indicate that the dreamer has a fear of being powerless, or a fear of change. Overall, the dream shows that Hal has a fear of his life changing while he is not able to do anything about it. He doesn't know how to change its course, or if he even wants to. He has also lost Mario, who's been preoccupied, as his confidant. His fears of something happening prove accurate when he is called in for a drug test as a result of what happened at the Eschaton game. Charles Tavis actually likes to keep his players in a state of worry, for he feels it allows them to be better players. James Incandenza seems to have his own problems with his father, as well. Hugh Steeply and Remy Marathe are continuing to discuss the effects of the Entertainment on humans. It is clear that if the Entertainment were to be used in warfare, it would be devastating and could possibly escalate to bring about the end of the world.



Chapter 51, Pre-Dawn and Dawn, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Chapter 52, 0450H., 11 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 53, Early November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 54, Late P.M. Monday 9 November - Year of the Depend Adult U

Chapter 51, Pre-Dawn and Dawn, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Chapter 52, 0450H., 11 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 53, Early November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 54, Late P.M. Monday 9 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 55, Wednesday 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment Summary

Hugh Steeply brings up a Oriental myth about a woman who men couldn't resist, to emphasize how the search for pleasure is multicultural. Marathe says he must leave soon.

In Chapter 52, 0450H., 11 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Don Gately is talking to Joelle Van Dyne. Gately says you don't hit on a local guy's girl in a bar, because the guy will leave but come back with a gun. It happened to a friend of his. He asks about Joelle's veil, and she says she's a member of the Union of the Hideously and Improbably Deformed. They talk about the differences between Alcoholics Anonymous and the U.H.I.D. Joelle says the veil is a way to hide openly. Randy Lenz, a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, has discovered he likes to kill animals. He has gotten high on cocaine secretly maybe six times since he came to the recovery center. He has a hard time finding animals to kill around the center, since many of the women patients have become attached to the cats that live around there.



In Chapter 53, Early November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Rodney Tine, chief of the U.S. Office of Unspecified Services, has a special metric ruler which he uses to measure his penis every morning. The Entertainment seems to be popping up now and then in random places. J. Gentle, U.S. president, is briefed only after it took out the medical attache. A sociopathic and mentally retarded lance corporal was able to report that the film begins with a woman in a veil entering a building, before slipping into catatonia.

In Chapter 54, Late P.M. Monday 9 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Michael Pemulis walks through the administration building at Enfield Tennis Academy. He catches Avril Incandenza in a cheerleader's uniform, cheering on John Wayne, who is wearing a football helmet, shoulderpads, an athletic supporter and shoes and socks, and that's all. Pemulis says he wants to talk to Avril for just two minutes.

In Chapter 55, Wednesday 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment, Randy Lenz and Bruce Green walk through Boston at night. Lenz claims the recovery groups work, but compares them to a cult. Michael Pemulis checks if Hal has eaten, and he says he has. John Wayne sticks his head in, but doesn't say anything and leaves.

Chapter 51, Pre-Dawn and Dawn, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Chapter 52, 0450H., 11 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 53, Early November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 54, Late P.M. Monday 9 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 55, Wednesday 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment Analysis

Joelle Van Dyne and Don Gately get to know each other, discussing their histories and current lives. Joelle confesses that she wears the veil because she is a member of a union for the deformed. However, it is not clear whether Joelle has actually been deformed at some point in her life, or that her beauty is so devastating that it can be considered a deformity. Joelle says the veil is a way she can still hide while out in public, instead of hiding in her home. It appears that Joelle, as a frequent actor in James Incandenza's movie, is featured in the Entertainment. The one man who could report anything about the film indicated it starts with a woman in a veil entering a building. James' husband, Avril, seems to be involved in perversely sexual games with some of the students. Michael Pemulis discovers this, and it seems he plans to use this to his advantage. Since Avril is seen mostly through the eyes of other characters, it is harder to get a feeling for her motivations. She seems to be a bright, polite woman who care about her family. However, her strange urges are also part of her personality.



Chapter 56, Selected Snippets from the Individual Resident-Informal-Interface Moments of D.W. Gately, and Chapter 57, 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment

Chapter 56, Selected Snippets from the Individual Resident-Informal-Interface Moments of D.W. Gately, and Chapter 57, 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment Summary

Don Gately sees several patients during his tenure at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. The patients talk about people they've seen and that they know, including their sponsors. They complain about other patients who are annoying them, and about living at the house. Orin Incandenza has sex with a Swiss hand model in a hotel room. Orin had just driven Helen Steeply to the airport, and met the girl there. She asked him to sign a football for her son. Orin realizes he hasn't seen the men in wheelchairs since the day before he met the woman, but they come back hours after she leaves. Bruce Green and Randy Lenz are together. Green remembers that his mother had a heart attack from opening a can of peanuts that a fake snake jumped out. Lenz gets separated and ends up killing a dog. Mario Incandenza is about to turn 19. His insomnia gets worse, as the radio show Madame Psychosis has not returned. Mario is also unable to feel pain very well and has burned himself on a stove. He's worried because he has a hard time reading his brother's state of mind.

Orin Incandenza makes an effort to be considerate of the women he sleeps with. He loves caring for and reassuring the women. A man in a wheelchair comes to the door pretending to take a survey. The man asks him some bizarre questions. Orin says he misses the television shows of old, when he could predict what people would say. At Ennet House, Bruce Green comes back, and Gately takes a urine sample from him because he looks like something's wrong. Every night, Gately must wake the residents to move their cars, because the legal side of the street to park on changes exactly at midnight. Gately goes to get Lenz, but can tell he's high on something. The patients call Gately outside, where three men, Canadians, are harrassing the patients. Gately fights the men and gets shot in the shoulder. The patients help Gately and try to make him comfortable until help comes. An engineer from WYYY, the radio station, is kidnapped by a man in a wheelchair.



In Chapter 57, 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment, Hal Incandenza and the other boys eat during suppertime. Jim Troeltsch believes they are being given powdered milk. He gets angry about the supposed conspiracy. Hal and Mario know that this is true; once made, the milk is put into real milk dispensers.

Chapter 56, Selected Snippets from the Individual Resident-Informal-Interface Moments of D.W. Gately, and Chapter 57, 11 November - Year of the Adult Depend Undergarment Analysis

Ever since he broke up with Joelle Van Dyne, Orin Incandenza has not been able to commit to one woman. He never identifies the women by name, using the term "the Subject" to refer to them. However, in this case, he refers to the woman as a Swiss hand model, indicating that she may have touched more of a nerve in him than his usual women. While the woman is with him, the men in wheelchairs leave him alone, which seem to make him think there is something about her they don't like. The Wheelchair Assassins appear to be moving forward much more quickly with their plans. They continue to go after Orin, as well as an engineer at a local radio station. They seem to feel that they can get information from these people about the Entertainment, its creation and its location. Don Gately is injured when he tries to help the residents after they are being harassed. He is shot and taken to the hospital, leaving his charges without his help and leadership. Randy Lenz, one of the patients at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, appears to be losing his mind. He continues to kill animals and does not return to rehabilitation with Bruce Green. It is clear the treatment center is not able to help him overcome his problems.



Chapter 58, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Outcropping Northwest of Tuscon, Az., U.S.A., Chapter 59, 13 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 60, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 61, 14 November — Year of the De

Chapter 58, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Outcropping Northwest of Tuscon, Az., U.S.A., Chapter 59, 13 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 60, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 61, 14 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 62, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 63, 14 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Hugh Steeply and Remy Marathe continue to talk on the rock outcropping. Steeply says his dad was obsessed with the show, M*A*S*H. He talks about the popularity of the show. His father became addicted to the show, much as people become addicted to drugs. Marathe calls it excessive unbalance.

In Chapter 59, 13 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, at Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, Kate Gompert, Bruce Green and Geoffrey Day talk late at night. Day tells them about a nameless horror, a dark shape that has enveloped him twice in his life.

In Chapter 60, 13 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Hal Incandenza has a exhibition tennis match against Stice. Helen Steeply is present at the game, hoping to do an article for Moment. Helen Steeply has also sent a letter to Marlon Bain, a friend of Orin's when they were teenagers. Bain writes back to her questions, answering that James Incandenza separated from his wife because he began using Joelle Van Dyne more and more in his videos. Avril Incandenza seems to be too loving toward her sons, Bain thinks, and too forgiving to them.



Helen Steeply interviews tennis instructor Thierry Poutincourt about the game and discusses Hal. She says she is doing a profile on his brother. Thierry says Hal would be a better tennis player if he wasn't so emotionally susceptible to thinking about the game.

In Chapter 61, 14 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Matty Pemulis is a prostitute in Cambridge, Mass. He sees Poor Tony Krause there. Matty's father abused him as a child.

In Chapter 62, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, after eating dinner, Hal watches some of his father's films.

In Chapter 63, 14 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, poor Tony Krause has recovered from his seizure and has left the city hospital. He thinks about stealing a purse from a woman, and doesn't see Matty Pemulis watching him. Kate Gompert knows there are several different types of depression. A low-grade depression or melancholy is more commonly experienced. The younger students at Enfield Tennis Academy believe that James Incandenza suffered from this.

Chapter 58, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Outcropping Northwest of Tuscon, Az., U.S.A., Chapter 59, 13 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 60, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 61, 14 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 62, 13 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 63, 14 November — Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Hugh Steeply and Remy Steeply continue their discussion about the Entertainment and the effect of addiction on people. It is clear that the author is drawing parallels between the addiction to the Entertainment and the effects of drug addiction on the residents of Ennet House. The Entertainment is a captivating film that sucks in anyone who comes in contact with it, much like drugs can catch the user and consume their life. Helen Steeply continues to investigate the Incandenza family, visiting Hal at school and even tracking down their friends. It is clear the organization will do anything they need to to get their hands on the Entertainment. Helen learns that James and Avril's marriage may have failed because James spent so much time with Joelle van Dyne. Although it does not seem like James and Joelle had an affair, the time they spent together clearly made Avril feel neglected. It also appears that James Incandenza suffers from depression, something that he tried to alleviate through his association with Joelle and the films they made together. It may have been his motivation for creating the Entertainment, a film that would please people into a stupor.



Chapter 64, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 65, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 66, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 64, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 65, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 66, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Ruth van Cleve, a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, is allowed to leave the grounds with a patient that's been their longer. She and Kate Gompert walk around Cambridge. Kate is having problems dealing with Ruth, and hasn't slept in four nights. Kate is concentrating on her feet and doesn't see Poor Tony Krause following them, eying their purses. Hal Incandenza watches one of his father's movies about a fighting nun. Joelle Van Dyne goes to a Cocaine Anonymous meeting and listens to a speaker describing his lowest moment, when he walked out on his wife and child. Poor Tony Krause mugs Kate and Ruth and Ruth goes chasing after him. Kate is hurt, and her eye starts swelling shut.

In Chapter 65, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, the Wheelchair Assassins have two possible routes to pursue: indirectly surveying and infiltrating the surviving associates of the Entertainment's creator, or directly locate and secure the master copy of the Entertainment. They began with the direct route, only planning infiltration if the direct route was impossible.

In Chapter 67, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, poor Tony Krause, in his drag queen clothes, runs from Ruth. He loses her down an alleyway. The Wheelchair Assassins continue to search for the Entertainment tape at the Antiois' shop.

In Chapter 68, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Joelle Van Dyne has begun to worry obsessively about her teeth. The assassins find the Entertainment cartridge at the shop. They decide to focus their attentions now on the Incandenza family and the tape's performer, Joelle Van Dyne. Remy Marathe visits the



Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. Marathe pretends to be an addict. Joelle Incandenza has determined that she likes cleaning. When she dated Orin, she used to clean and get high when their relations were strained. Orin was only the second man to approach her in a romantic way. Jim Incandenza once told her he didn't know how to speak to his sons when his wife, Avril, was not around. Joelle enjoyed meeting Orin's family for the first time. Marathe goes through the entrance interview. He learns residents sometimes work at the Enfield Tennis Academy.

Chapter 64, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 65, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 66, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Tony Krause gives into his urge to steal purses by robbing Kate Gompert as she walks with a fellow patient. Joelle van Dyne continues to try and overcome her addiction by attending meetings. She seems to feel the pressure as she worries about her teeth, an indication that she is afraid of change. She realizes that when she dated Orin, she enjoyed taking drugs and cleaning, so she tries to get some of that satisfaction back by taking up cleaning again. It seems the only time Joelle was truly happy was during the time she spent with Orin, but she let her addiction get in the way of her relationship. The Wheelchair Assassins take a similar route to Helen Steeply, attempting to get to know those close to the creator of the Entertainment. To that end, Remy Marathe invades the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House in order to get closer to Joelle van Dyne. In the meantime, Hal Incandenza begins watching his father's films. It seems he feels this is a way to have a connection with his father, and an attempt to try to understand his father through his work.



Chapter 67, 11 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment and Chapter 68, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 67, 11 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment and Chapter 68, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

Mario Incandenza walks around the Enfield Tennis Academy, taping footage for a documentary he's working on. He interviews people, including LaMont Chu. LaMont says he has a hard time believing Hal Incandenza will be punished for the Eschaton game. He goes to his mother's office to interview her. Avril Incandenza is happy to see her son. She tells him Charles Tavis has been tied up with Helen Steeply for hours. Mario asks his mother how you can tell if somebody is sad. He wants to know how you can confirm if someone is sad. Her mom tells him the person may cry, or seem distracted. She asks if he is thinking about Hal, but he tries to play it off as if he's just asking in general. She tells him that some people are afraid to confront their feelings. Hal returns to his bedroom while Mario is sleeping. Mario wakes up and Hal tells him Michael Pemulis was able to talk the drug tester into give them thirty days before taking a urine test. Remy Marathe runs into Kate Gompert in a bar. She comes into the bar to throw up after getting mugged. She tells him she was walking along, trying to decide how to kill herself, before she was mugged. Marathe tells her about his wife.

Hal Incandenza tells Mario his career as a tennis player is done if he's forced to take a drug test that comes up positive. Mario asks Hal if he is sad, and realizes Hal is scared that he may still flunk the drug test.

In Chapter 68, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Rodney Tine Jr. runs the interrogation of Molly Notkin, who tells the Office of Unspecified Services that she believes the Entertainment features Madame Psychosis as the maternal incarnation of Death. She tells them Madame Psychosis' mother killed herself on Thanksgiving Day using a garbage disposal. She adds that Madame Psychosis was never sexually involved with James Incandenza, but was with his son. She doesn't believe Avril Incandenza has ties to any anti-American groups. Hal goes to a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. He runs into Kevin Bain, the brother of Orin Incandenza's friends Marlon Bain. Those at the meeting talk about accessing their inner infants. Don Gately is in the hospital, recovering after his attack. At first, he drifts in and out of consciousness. Some of the patients at Ennet House come to visit him. He also remembers being visited by a figure he calls the wraith.



Chapter 67, 11 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment and Chapter 68, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

Mario Incandenza appears to have the best relationship with his mother, Avril. He and his mother are able to talk to each other and it is clear that they have a bond. Mario asks his mother about how to tell if someone is depressed. It is clear he is worried about his brother, Hal, who seems to be showing his depression by hiding in his room and watching his father's movies. Hal also seems to be worried about the drug test that could change his life for good. However, his mood seems to improve for a time when he realizes he can delay it. This means, though, that he must refrain from using drugs, which will be very difficult. He commits to it, even attending a Narcotics Anonymous meeting. Molly Notkin also identifies Joelle van Dyne as Madame Psychosis. She reveals that Joelle's mother killed herself on Thanksgiving day, another suicide surround the characters of the novel. It seems that those who commit suicide in the novel are concerned with obliterating the self, wrangling themselves free of existence. Don Gately seems to tap into his own depression in the hospital, as he has visions of death.



Chapter 69, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 71, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment

Chapter 69, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 71, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Summary

The Wheelchair Assassins plan to replace tennis players from Quebec who are on their way to play at the Enfield Tennis Academy. In the hospital, Don Gately dreams of Joelle Van Dyne as death.

In Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, before the WhataBurger Invitational in Phoenix, Az., the students play exhibition matches. Joelle Van Dyne visits Don Gately in the hospital. She updates him of what's happening at Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. Gately is unable to respond to his visitors vocally because of his injuries. Gately would have feelings for Joelle, but not being able to see her face in a roadblock. Hal goes to brush his teeth and runs into Ortho Stice. Stice says his forehead is stuck to the window. The nurse brings Gately a notepad so he can try to communicate. Gately thinks about his old crewmates, including Gene Fackelmann, and how they used to hang around together.

Hal Incandenza is moving down the hall at the Enfield Tennis Academy when he is hit by a panic attack. He says the world seems almost edible, and the sensation was interesting, but the panic was there. He lays down on the carpet, and for a while is unable to get up. A friend comes to see him, but leaves when Hal doesn't answer him. Hal knows there is a chance that Avril Incandenza and Charles Tavis may be half-brother and half-sister, but this has never been proven. Hal feels better now that he is horizontal, because he knows he can never be knocked down. Gately traces his addiction back to when he was about nine, and smoked his first joint. He was a football player through school, but despite his size never bullied other children. He moved onto prescription medication. His grades drop, and he has no motivation to bring them up. When his mother died, he gave up on high school and football. Hal tells Michael



Pemulis he cannot talk him into using drugs. They have 20 days to go. Hal gets Michael to put in one of James Incandenza's movies before he leaves. Don Gately remembers working for a man named Whitey Sorkin with his friend Gene Fackelmann, collecting debts. Gately is surprised he did not know Gene was stealing from Sorkin almost from the start. Gately thought Gene would be in trouble, since he couldn't cover any bets if he lost since they spent so much money on drugs, but after Gene died, they found \$22,000. Sorkin had caught onto Gene's schemes.

Don Gately gives half of the money to Sorkin. He remembers getting high with Gene. Joelle Van Dyne is stopped by a woman, Helen Steeply, who warns her she is in danger. Joelle is not surprised. She tells her about starring in the Entertainment. Joelle says she is in one scene, going through a revolving door. Then Joelle, dressed in a nightgown, stood over a camera in a bassinet and apologized to it. The camera lens was supposed to make her look as if she was seen through a newborn's eyes. She says the master copies of anything unreleased were buried with Jim. Hal thinks about his parents, and how they were when they were young. Mikey Pemulis attends an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting and tells his story. The assistant district attorney that had sent Gately away comes to apologize to him as part of his 12-step program.

In Chapter 71, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Orin Incandenza is trapped in an inverted glass. The Swiss hand model is an agent for the Wheelchair Assassins. They put roaches in the glass to torture him. Sorkin sends a man named Bobby C to kill Gene Fackelmann.

Chapter 69, 17 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and Chapter 71, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment Analysis

The Wheelchair Assassins continue their attempts to learn more about the Entertainment from the Incandenza family. They plant their own agents at a tennis match involving the students from Enfield. They also abduct Orin Incandenza, and torture him with roaches, one of the things he is most afraid of. Orin is probably the most distanced of the Incandenzas; however, the agents still choose him to capture. Hal Incandenza is attempting to curb his drug use in light of the pending drug test. Since he is still a coherent and alert person, his condition at the beginning of the novel is not clearly explained. However, it appears he has somehow viewed the Entertainment by that point to put him in that state. In either case, it is clear that his withdrawal from drugs has affected his emotional state. He also knows that his mother, Avril, has a chance of being a blood relation to Charles Tavis. However, he views this fact with apathy, as he cannot see how the truth would do anything but damage their relationship. Therefore, he chooses not to acknowledge it.



Joelle van Dyne is also quizzed about the tape, and its contents are finally revealed. Joelle is seen in the tape apologizing as if to a baby. This is capitivating to the viewers of the Entertainment, suggesting it somehow taps into the primal attachment a child has for its mother. Helen Steeply learns there is probably a copy of the Entertainment in Jim Incandenza's grave, indicating both sides will now have a copy in their possession to use in their warfare. This could mean that both sides will use the Entertainment against each other, causing many people to become catatonic. However, since both sides have the tape and the potential to use it, it may stave off either from actually utilizing it since they know the other has it. As Don Gately lingers in the hospital, he has visions of Joelle, seeing her as death. These visions and the fact that Gately begins reminiscing about his life could indicate that his injuries are severe, and he may not survive as he is seeing his life flash before his eyes. He also makes peace with the assistant district attorney that wronged him.



Characters

Hal Incandenza

Hal Incandenza is the son of James and Avril Incandenza and the brother of Mario and Orin. He is very intelligent but insecure about this fact. Furthermore, his mental stability deteriorates as the novel goes on. Eventually, when he tries to talk, no one can understand him, although it is not clear how this happens. Hal is a frequent marijuana user. His withdrawal from the drug may have played a part in his condition. He enjoys keeping his marijuana use from his mother, who is paranoid about her sons keeping things from her. He also views the Entertainment, a film cartridge that disturbs all those who view it. Hal is a stellar tennis player that attends the Enfield Tennis Academy, which was founded by his father. Hal is a very isolated person. Although he has friends and family around him at the tennis academy, the only one he seems remotely close to is Mario and Hal still keeps him at a distance. His best friend is Michael Pemulis, but they do not seem to have a deep connection beyond their shared drug use.

Orin Incandenza

Orin Incandenza is the son of Avril and James Incandenza and the brother of Hal and Mario Incandenza. He is a football player with the Arizona Cardinals. He is also estranged from everyone in his family, except for his brother, Hal. He used to date a woman named Joelle Van Dyne, but after breaking up with her, he becomes a serial womanizer. Orin did attend the Enfield Tennis Academy, but when it became clear he was not an extraordinary player, he switched to football in college and found his true sports niche. Joelle Van Dyne eventually became a muse for his father, James Incandenza, and appeared in many of James' movies. Orin brother up with Joelle as she and his father got more involved and she began to use drugs more frequently. However, it is clear that he and Joelle were truly in love. Orin begins to notice that he is being followed by members of the Wheelchair Assassins, who want to learn more about the Entertainment, the tape James has made. However, the assassins are able to get the best of him because they play to his weakness, which is women. They send a Swiss hand model to capture his attention and then plan to torture him with bugs.

Avril Incandenza

Avril Incandenza is the mother of Hal, Mario and Orin Incandenza and the husband of James Incandenza. She is known as the Mom to her sons. She presides over the Enfield Tennis Academy, which was founded by her husband. She frequently has affairs with men, including Charles Tavis, the head of the academy.



Mario Incandenza

Mario Incandenza is the son of James and Avril Incandenza and the brother of Hal and Orin Incandenza. He is deformed, a condition he's suffered since birth. He works on his father's films. He is perhaps the sweetest and most kind of the Incandenzas.

Joelle Van Dyne

Joelle Van Dyne is an actress who appears in the Entertainment. In the video, she reaches down to the camera as if talking to a baby, and apologizes greatly. She is also the ex of Orin Incandenza. She is known as 'The Prettiest Girl of All Time,' but wears a veil because those who see her face will fall in love with her. It is later reveals she had been disfigured by an acid attack. She ends up in the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House because she tried to overdose on cocaine as a suicide attempt.

Charles Tavis

Charles Tavis is the head of the Enfield Tennis Academy. He has an affair with Avril Incandenza. At the beginning of the novel, he attempts to get Hal admitted to a university based on his tennis skills.

Michael Pemulis

Michael Pemulis is Hal Incandenza's best friend and a student at the Enfield Tennis Academy. He also deals drugs on campus.

Ortho Stice

Ortho Stice is a friend of Hal Incandenza's at the Enfield Tennis Academy. He appears to be visited by the ghost of James Incandenzas.

John Wayne

John Wayne is a tennis player and classmate of Hal Incandenza's at the Enfield Tennis Academy. He has an affair with Avril Incandenza.

Don Gately

Don Gately is a counselor at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. He used to be a thief and a prescription pill addict. He is also visited by the ghost of James Incandenza.



Remy Marathe

Remy Marathe is a member of the Wheelchair Assassins, or the Les Assassins des Faueuils Roulants, a Quebec separatist group. His is actually a quadruple agent, pretending to betray the group while really betraying them.

Bruce Green

Bruce Green is the ex-husband of Mildred Bonk Green and is a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House.

Randy Lenz

Randy Lenz is a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. He tortures animals as a means to relieve his cocaine addiction.

The medical attache

The medical attache is rendered insane by repeatedly viewing the Entertainment, the first character to be afflicted.

Hugh Steeply

Hugh Steeply, or Helen Steeply, is a secret agent. He assumes the role of a member of the opposite sex to add his cover as he tries to find out more about the Entertainment.

Rodney Tine

Rodney Tine is the chief of the U.S. Office of Unspecified Services.

M. Fortier

M. Fortier is the leader of the Wheelchair Assassins cell in the U.S.A.

Gene Fackelmann

Gene Fackelmann is an drug addict who works for Don Gately. He is murdered by a man working for Whitey Sorkin.



Eric Clipperton

Eric Clipperton is a tennis player who commits suicide in front of Mario and James Incandenza.

Whitey Sorkin

Whitey Sorkin hires a man to murder Gene Fackelmann.

Jim Troeltsch

Jim Troeltsch is a tennis player at the Enfield Tennis Academy.

Kate Gompert

Kate Gompert is a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House.

Pat Montesian

Pat Montesian is the manager at The Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House.

Ken Erdedy

Ken Erdedy is a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House.

Ruth Van Cleve

Ruth Van Cleve is a patient at the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House.

Poor Tony Krause

Poor Tony Krause is a drag queen who becomes a drug addict.

Matty Pemulis

Matty Pemulis is a prostitute in Cambridge, Mass.



Objects/Places

The Entertainment

The Entertainment is a film cartridge, also known as the Infinite Jest.

The Enfield Tennis Academy

The Enfield Tennis Academy was founded by James Incandenza. It is a tennis school outside Boston.

Organization of North American Nations

Organization of North American Nations is the governmental organization in the future presented in the novel. It is made up of the former nations in North America.

The Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House

The Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House is a recovery center outside Boston.

The United States Office of Unspecified Services

The United States Office of Unspecified Services is a espionage agency.

The Union of the Hideous and Improbably Deformed

The Union of the Hideous and Improbably Deformed is a group of people who have banded together to support each other because of their deformities.

Les Assassins des Faueuils Roulants

Les Assassins des Faueuils Roulants or the Wheelchair Assassins is a Quebec separatist group. The group seeks to use the Entertainment as a terrorist weapon.

Madame Psychosis

Madame Psychosis is a drug similar to LSD, but with slightly different effects. It is also the name of a radio show that intrigues Mario Incandenza.



Port Washington Tennis Academy

Port Washington Tennis Academy is a tennis school in Long Island, N.Y.

Eschaton

Eschaton is a children's game the students at the Enfield Tennis Academy invented.

WhataBurger Invitational

WhataBurger Invitational is a tennis match in Phoenix, Az.



Themes

Separatism

One of the larger conflicts in the novel *Infinite Jest* concerns the Quebec separatist movement. In reality, there is a movement among many people in Quebec who wish to separate from Canada. In the future society contained in the novel *Infinite Jest*, Canada and the United States are now one country. So the separatists begin to focus their attention on being anti-American, since the Americans still control most of the government. They do not have any qualms about using the American-made Entertainment against the American people in their war. Throughout the novel, the war seems to be primarily one of espionage, as each side struggles to get its hands on a copy of the film. Agents for both sides, such as Remy Marathe and Helen Steeply, will do whatever they need to to get the tape. Although on opposite sides, Remy and Helen share a kinship through their profession, and willing discuss what the results of their efforts to steal the Entertainment could have on the country. It seems that both sides are filled with so much animosity, they are willing to obliterate the minds of innocent people if it means their side will win. However, the characters outside the government, especially the Americans, seem to show apathy or turn a blind eye to the struggle, suggesting the population will be extremely susceptible to any attacks made using the film.

Addiction

Almost every character in *Infinite Jest* is addicted to something. The characters in the novel seek an escape from their solitary inner lives, whether it is by using drugs, alcohol, or sex. The way the characters handle these need to dodge their feelings differs. The primary addiction many of the characters turn to are either drugs or alcohol. The stage for many of the scenes in the novel is the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, fully populated by addicts. Some addicts are better at controlling their urges than others. Drug use is also rampant at Enfield Tennis Academy. Michael Pemulis supplies a number of the students with drugs, including Hal Incandenza. For those who use drugs, it is a way to dull the pain and boredom of their day to day lives. Many of the addicts also have their rituals that tie into their drug use. For example, Hal Incandenza always hides in the tunnels and uses a specific pipe to smoke marijuana. Other addictions are also evident in the characters in the novel. Orin Incandenza, after breaking up with Joelle Van Dyne, uses sex to try and fill the emptiness in his life. The most prominent addiction in the novel, however, is that of those who watch the Entertainment. The film is so captivating, no one who sees it can bear to turn away. The Entertainment is the ultimate in addiction, making the watchers so complacent and fulfilled they will never turn away.



Identity

One of the major crises the characters have in the novel, *Infinite Jest*, is one of self. All of the characters are isolated and jaded in some way. They have great difficulty communicating with others and interacting in their daily lives. The most obvious cases are the patients of the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House. These are people who use drugs to escape from their feelings of loneliness. The students and faculty at Enfield Tennis Academy also show signs of alienation, as many of the students are heavy drug users. Almost everyone in the novel is searching for something that will make them feel whole. The two institutions only serve to create a false sense of togetherness, but most of the characters would be hard-pressed to name any true friends. The one exception to this may be the character of Mario Incandenza, who seems to be less isolated than his brother and the rest of the family. However, he uses his film-making as a crutch to deal with his physical deformities. The sense of isolation can be most clearly seen with the people who have come into contact with the Entertainment. These people have had their minds obliterated and only then do they find true peace.



Style

Point of View

The novel *Infinite Jest* contains a multitude of characters and therefore the novel is told from many different points of view. Some of the main protagonists include Hal Incandenza, Orin Incandenza, Remy Marathe, Helen Steeply, Joelle van Dyne, and Don Gately. Much of the narration follows these characters. The style of narration varies from first-person, limited narration, to third-person, omniscient narration. The first tactic of first-person and limited narration, is used with only a few characters, such as Hal Incandenza. This technique gives the reader a better sense of such characters' isolation and feelings of alienation from the people around them. The first-person narrator is also used sporadically with nameless characters, usually as a one time event. For the majority of the novel, the narrator is third-person omniscient, meaning the narrator is distant and not involved in the direction of the action. However, the narrator is privy to the thoughts of all of the characters, and can understand and reveal each of their motivations and feelings. Much as the time in the novel flashes back and forth between the past and the present, the narration also goes back and forth. Therefore, many different storylines and anecdotes occur concurrently. This, combined with the fact that the timeline of the novel skips through several years, makes the narrative as a whole very complicated and unwieldy.

Setting

The novel, *Infinite Jest*, is set in a futuristic world, although how far in the future is unclear. In this world, corporations own the right to name each year; they are no longer numbered. In the world of the novel, North America has become the Organizations of North American Nations. It includes United States, Canada, and Mexico. The northeastern U.S. and portions of Canada are a waste dump. The novel takes place in several locations in this fictional world, including Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House and the Enfield Tennis Academy, both near Boston, Mass. The story of the novel is told through flashbacks, and the action alternates between the denizens at either location. The Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House is, much like it sounds, a rehabilitation center for drug addicts. Some of the characters, like Joelle van Dyne, have connections to the people living at the Enfield Tennis Academy. The academy is a school began by James Incandenza, a tennis player and inventor, who later killed himself by sticking his head into a microwave. His sons, Hal and Mario, live at the academy and are some of the main protagonists in the novel. Another son, Orin Incandenza, used to date Joelle van Dyne. James also used Joelle in many of his films. Therefore, the two locations and the connections between their inhabitants serve as the primary focus for the setting of the novel.



Language and Meaning

One of the most important facts to consider when discussing the language in *Infinite Jest* is that the novel takes place in the future. Therefore, many things have changed from the world as we know it, such as names of places and the governmental make-up of countries. Advertising and marketing seem to have gained a foothold with the nation, as the years are now named after products. The language paints a picture of a soulless society, one where people are more concerned with product and profit, not the betterment of self. The world has become subjects of the advertising industry and this mindset saturates all characters in the book, making them feel impersonal and isolated. Although there are plenty of people at both the Enfield Tennis Academy and the Ennet House Drug and Alcohol Recovery House, the majority of characters still feel alone in the world. The author, David Foster Wallace, chooses his words carefully to convey this sense of distance and isolation. The characters are alienated from each other, so it is rare to hear them talk in a familiar manner. Only Mario Incandenza seems comfortable enough with himself and others to talk candidly. Almost all the characters censor their words and feelings so as not to reveal them to others. In the end, the language contributes much to creating the atmosphere of a broken world in the novel, *Infinite Jest*.

Structure

The novel takes place over about nine years. They are The Year of the Whopper, The Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, The Year of the Trial-Size Dove Bar, The Year of the Perdue Wonderchicken, The Year of the Whisper-Quiet Maytag Dishwasher, The Year of the Yushityu 2007 Mimetic-Resolution-Cartidge-View-Motherboard-Easy-To-Install Upgrade For Infematron/InterLace TP Systems For Home, Office or Mobile, The Year Dairy Products from the American Heartland, The Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, and The Year of Glad. The events of the novel begin with in the Year of Glad, and jump throughout the years randomly. Most of the events happen in The Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment. The novel can be viewed as one large flashback, flitting back and forth through the years leading up to Hal's nervous breakdown in the opening scene. This structure means the reader has the task of piecing together the plot and flow of the story without clear guidelines and signposts. Also, throughout the novel, the author places many footnotes, making up a sizable section of the text. The footnotes enhance and shed light on events that take place in the main story. Overall, the structure of the novel is quite complicated and takes some concentration to unravel.



Quotes

"I am in here" (Chapter 1, Year of Glad, pg. 3.)

"The familiar panic at feeling misperceived is rising, and my chest bumps and thuds. I expend energy on remaining utterly silent in my chair, empty, my eyes two great pale zeros. People have promised to get me through this" (Chapter 1, Year of Glad, pg. 8.)

"I have been coached for this like a Don before a RICO hearing" (Chapter 1, Year of Glad, pg. 9.)

"He had never been so anxious for the arrival of a woman he did not want to see" (Chapter 2, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 23.)

"I'm the potentially gifted ten-year-old tennis and lexical prodigy whose mom's a continental mover and shaker in the prescriptive-grammar academic world and whose dad's a towering figure in optical and avant-garde film circles and single-handedly founded the Enfield Tennis Academy but drinks Wild Turkey at like 5:00 a.m. and pitches over sideways during dawn drills, on the courts, some days, and some days presents with delusions about people's mouths moving but nothing coming out" (Chapter 3, Year of the Tucks Medicated Pad, pg. 30.)

"For Orin Incandenza, #71, morning is the soul's night. The day's worst time, practically. He cranks the condo's AC way down at night and still most mornings wakes up soaked, fetally curled, entombed in that kind of psychic darkness where you're dreading whatever you're thinking of" (Chapter 8, October - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 42.)

"Hal likes to get high in secret, but a bigger secret is that he's as attached to the secrecy as he is to getting high" (Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 49.)

"Like most North Americans of his generation, Hal tends to know way less about why he feels certain ways about the objects and pursuits he's devoted to than he does about the objects and pursuits themselves" (Chapter 9, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 54.)

"I am coming to see that the sensation of the worst nightmares, a sensation that can be felt asleep or awake, is identical to those worst nightmares, a sensation that can be felt asleep or awake, is identical to those worst dreams' form itself" (Chapter 11, 3 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 61.)

"Are we not all of us fanatics? I say only what you of the U.S.A. only pretend you do not know" (Chapter 17, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 107.)

"If Hal fulfills this newly emergent level of promise and makes it all the way up to the Show, Mario will be the only one of the Incandenza children not wildly successful as a



professional athlete. No one who knows Mario could imagine that this fact would ever occur to him" (Chapter 25, Videophony, pg. 155.)

"What if in fact there were ever only like two really distinct individual people walking around back there in history's mist? That all difference descends from this difference?" (Chapter 7 - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 220.)

"Time is passing. Ennet House reeks of passing time. It is the humidity of early sobriety, hanging and palpable" (Chapter 35, 6 - November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 279.)

"Us, we think of what ends the Entertainment may serve. We find its efficacy tempting. You and we are tempted in different ways" (Chapter 49, Winter, B.S. 1963, Sepulveda, Ca., pg. 508.)

"I am deformed with beauty" (Chapter 52, 0450H., 11 November, Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 538.)

"For were there for him just one, now, special and only, the One would be not he or she but what was between them, the obliterating trinity of You and I into We. Orin felt that once and has never recovered, and will never again" (Chapter 56, Selected Snippets from the Individual Resident-Informal-Interface Moments of D.W. Gately, pg. 566-567.)

"The obsessed frequently endure" (Chapter 58, 1 May Y.D.A.U., Outcropping Northwest of Tuscon, Az., U.S.A., pg. 646.)

"The secret to sprinting in high heels, Poor Tony Krause knew, was to run on one's toes, inclined way forward, with so much forward momentum that one stayed well up on her toes and the heels never came into play" (Chapter 66, 14 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 719.)

"She likes to square herself in her chair, sitting up extra straight and grasping the chair's arms in a commanding posture. She looks like something Mario can't place when she does this. He keeps thinking the word typhoon" (Chapter 67, 11 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 763.)

"It wasn't like being high, but it was still very: lucid. The world seemed suddenly almost edible, there for the ingesting" (Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 896.)

"One way of looking at the film-obsession's endurance is that Himself was never really successful or accomplished at filmmaking" (Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 949.)

"Life is tennis. Those who serve best usually win" (Chapter 70, 20 November - Year of the Depend Adult Undergarment, pg. 952.)



Topics for Discussion

Compare and contrast the three Incandenza brothers, Hal, Orin, and Mario. How are they alike and how are they dissimilar? What is their relationship like with each other? What crutches, metaphorically speaking, does each use to get through life?

Considering Remy Marathe and Hugh and Helen Steeply are both spies, their discussion about the Entertainment is surprisingly frank. What advantages would each country have if they had a copy in their possession? Why might simply possessing the tape be enough of a weapon? Could it ever practically be used in warfare? Why or why not?

Discuss the nature of addiction. How do the characters' specific addictions help them cope with their lives? Does breaking the addiction seem to improve their lives or make them worse? Why or why not?

Throughout the novel, David Foster Wallace relies heavily on footnotes to accentuate the main action of the novel. What effect does this have? Why might this be more beneficial to the reading experience than simply enclosing those events in the main story?

The Entertainment is a highly-addictive video tape that puts those who view it into a permanent stupor. Consider the description of the tape's contents. Explain why this imagery might make people react as they do when they see it.

The Enfield Tennis Academy was created by James Incandenza to educate the brightest young tennis stars. However, most of the students seem highly unconcerned with their education or tennis winnings. What does this say about the motivations of youth in the future? What seems to be the main goal of the young characters in the novel?

Orin Incandenza and Joelle Van Dyne were close at one time, but have grown apart. How does the end of their relationship come about? How does it affect their future dealings with others? Would the two have been better off if they had stayed together? Explain why or why not.