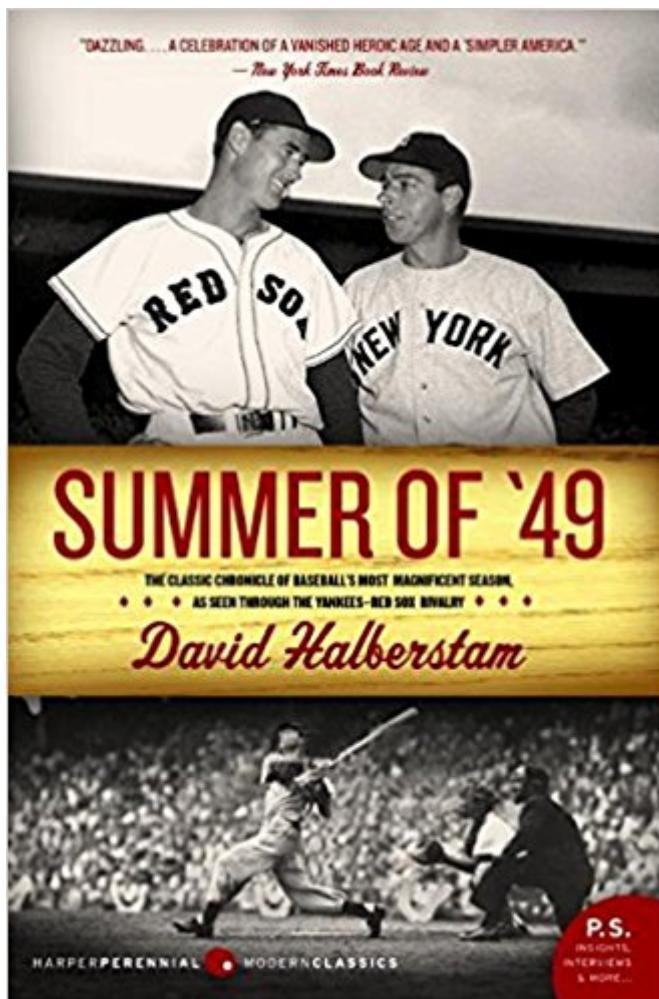


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Summer Of '49 (Harper Perennial Modern Classics)



Synopsis

With incredible skill, passion, and insight, Pulitzer Prize-winning author David Halberstam returns us to a glorious time when the dreams of a now almost forgotten America rested on the crack of a bat. The year was 1949, and a war-weary nation turned from the battlefields to the ball fields in search of new heroes. It was a summer that marked the beginning of a sports rivalry unequaled in the annals of athletic competition. The awesome New York Yankees and the indomitable Boston Red Sox were fighting for supremacy of baseball's American League, and an aging Joe DiMaggio and a brash, headstrong hitting phenomenon named Ted Williams led their respective teams in a classic pennant duel of almost mythic proportions—one that would be decided in an explosive head-to-head confrontation on the last day of the season.

Book Information

Series: Harper Perennial Modern Classics

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; Reissue edition (May 9, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0060884266

ISBN-13: 978-0060884260

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 168 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #73,759 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #77 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball #310 in Books > Deals in Books #819 in Books > History > Americas > United States > State & Local

Customer Reviews

With the airwaves saturated with so much sporting choice, it's hard to imagine how, not that long ago, baseball so completely dominated the landscape and captured imaginations. Given the 1949 season that veteran journalist David Halberstam meticulously recreates, maybe it's not so hard after all. It was a season of great public and personal drama for the Boston Red Sox and the New York Yankees, with the conflict finally resolving itself in a Yankee pennant following a head-to-head showdown on the final day of the season. Each team was led by a star of the highest magnitude: Joe DiMaggio spurred the Yankees despite missing half the season with a foot injury; Ted Williams virtually carried the Sox on his back, missing an unprecedented third Triple Crown by mere decimal

points on his batting average. Halberstam focuses much of his narrative on the trials of these two individual sporting giants, adding fine supporting performances by Yogi Berra, Ellis Kinder, Dom DiMaggio, even restaurateur Toots Shoor. Both on and off the field, Halberstam beautifully captures the ethos of a more innocent game that no longer exists, played by heroes far more driven by their pride than by their salaries. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is ostensibly about the pennant race between the Yankees and Red Sox that year and the "rivalry" between Joe DiMaggio and Ted Williams. But, as he did in *Breaks of the Game* (LJ 11/15/81) and *The Amateurs* (LJ 7/85), Halberstam focuses on a season and studies an era. Baseball came of age in the summer of 1949. Postwar America looked to baseball for a sense of normalcy in its life; television began to have an impact on the sport; Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier. Summer of '49 is more than a collection of anecdotes. It is a study of all the elements and personalities that influenced baseball that year and beyond. Halberstam brings them together in such an enjoyable, interesting, and informative manner that a reader needn't be a baseball fan to appreciate the book.- Martin J. Hudacs, Towanda H.S., Pa.Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

While *Summer of 1949* is not David Hallberstam's most well-known book on baseball, *Summer of '49* displays the hallmarks of a David Hallberstam's books. The reader feels transported back in time thanks to Hallberstam's vivid descriptions and rich characterizations that make even the most forgotten player to baseball history look like they are larger than life. Beyond that, the reader also learns about the evolution of baseball through the early days of television and the beginnings of a shift from an owner control model to more of a player control model. They don't generally write books like this anymore as the reader actually feels like they are in 1949 living and dying with every pitch just as though they were in the stands at Fenway Park or Yankee Stadium. It is for these reasons that I recommend *Summer 1949* to the baseball and non baseball fan alike because Hallberstam knows how to write a human story beyond the lines of baseball.

Author David Halberstam transports us back to a time when there were no divisions, only two eight-team leagues. With the end of World War II and the advent of television, baseball was poised to become a major part of Americana. Some of the greatest players ever were playing in 1949, among them Boston's Ted Williams and the New York Yankees. A

Joe DiMaggio. Mr. Halberstam begins the book in 1948, a year that featured a three-way battle for the league title between the Yankees, the Red Sox, and the Cleveland Indians. All three teams were knotted with one week to go in the season, and when the dust settled, the Indians and Red Sox were tied and headed for a playoff game. Unfortunately for the Red Sox, they lost the game 8-3 and had to wait until 1949. Understandably, Boston considered 1949 to be "their year." The rest of the book takes the reader into the baseball season of 1949, covering the pennant race that would essentially be about two teams, Boston and New York. Like a great novelist, the author fleshes out the players that were part of that season, sharing stories and anecdotes. Mr. Halberstam also gives us a fascinating view of baseball and its fans 70 years ago, how America viewed its teams, and the relationship between sports reporters and the teams. Along the way, there are many pieces of information for today's baseball fans, such as the first player to have a representative (whose first job was to have a player paid for speeches in money rather than watches) as well as the backgrounds of many of yesterday's stars. The book ends with another exciting finish to the regular season and includes the World Series with the National League winner, the Brooklyn Dodgers. Mr. Halberstam then takes the time to tie everything up in a nice package with a what-happened-to-them-later chapter, a fitting end to a great book. This is definitely a gem for baseball fans. Five stars.

I love baseball but this is so much more. It is about post war America and is brilliant picture of this era. Halberstam was great in showing us ourselves. It was a great loss when he died in a car crash.

I am persuaded that David Halberstam could take any topic, write about and make it fascinating, compelling, important reading. Straight up; I am no fan of baseball, could care less who wins the pennant or the Series but this book involved me in a way few have. I was alive during the Summer of '49 but had no interest in the events here described and, now, I'm sorry I didn't pay closer attention. Halberstam's attention to detail is pervasive but never annoying. You may be interested in what was served for breakfast but not how it was made and who served it. And yet, it's totally fulfilling in that when you've finished you cannot believe there's anything about the events described you don't know. In some ways it's a collection of biographies of the men who played the game and, concurrent to that, it's a dual biography between two teams and their antagonism and desire to win. That, oddly, is the least important story as it's the people, the incidents, the detailed background that suspend the story over the reality and yet every word is true. It's entirely possible to believe that Halberstam must have been at least a water boy for both clubs, how else to explain the wealth of

fascinating detail? Too, this is a time when truly great players, players remembered and revered to this day were active and that only helps the story. It reminds the reader that this was a time when the war was well and truly over, the United States could apply themself to a past time that had been on hold for almost a decade. The teams had time to rebuild, the fans could now move about without gas rationing and wondering whether the tires had another fifty miles in them. It's the beginning of the Truman/Eisenhower era of good feeling. As a reader it wasn't that I couldn't put this down so much as I didn't want it to end. I parcelled it out to myself like the best pie, delicious to eat but, when you look down, there's less left; I watched my book mark move toward the end hoping that, nah, when I got there I would be referred to book two, Fall of '49 followed by, of course, Winter of '49. But it did end, I know who won what and I'm not telling. And no fair jumping on a search engine to find out. Buy the book and let David Halberstam voodoo writing enchant you until you want to be in stands completely forgetting that this is history completed. In "Summer of '49" David Halberstam exhumes the time, the place, the people and makes them as viable now as they were then. This is required reading for anyone who admires brilliant writing.

With great detail, author David Halberstam has provided the reader with a clear picture of the intense battles waged by the Yankees and Red Sox during the 1940s and 50s. He provides much information about the players, their lives, and their interactions with each other. Any Yankees or Red Sox fan should enjoy this book thoroughly. Especially those fans who lived through the summer of 1949, following the Yanks or Sox on a daily basis.

I really enjoy a well researched book and this is one of those special books about baseball. This book covers so much about the players on two teams fighting for the American league pennant. The details about their personalities and what makes a champion borders on human talent and lady lucky. Good read, I highly recommend.

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