



# Nymphomation

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Set both in a real and imaginary Manchester, Jeff Noon's story concerns a revolutionary lottery game that is engulfing the city in a tide of gambling fever. As a group of mathematics students look at the mind-numbing probabilities involved, they soon find more sinister realities. The Company has developed the nymphomation, and has the power to devour the city's dreams

## **Nymphomation Details**

Date : Published November 1st 2000 by Transworld Publishers (first published October 2nd 1997)

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Author : Jeff Noon

Format : Paperback 368 pages

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## From Reader Review Nymphomation for online ebook

### Andrew says

I think Vurt was maybe one of the best contemporary sci fi books I have read...more so with regard it's aftermath as I read it I found it a compelling book but once finished I truly appreciated it more...it was a book that would return to me....maybe the same thing will happen with this book..although I don't think so. Initially I enjoyed this book an idea of a future national lottery based on changing Dominos plus the introduction of a world like ours and yet different in subtle ways made this a compelling and easy read ...however towards the end it just felt like it was a book that started to get bogged down by its big ideas...and that is a shame as until the closing chapters it equalled vurt. Anyhow I will read more by the author..his extraordinary vision and use of language alone dictates the fact I do need to read more...plus maybe re-read vurt of which this serves as a prequel of sorts.

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### Semina says

Overall I enjoyed this novel, mainly because it ridicules the modern way of consumerism so brilliantly and because cyber punk is so rare to find, but in the end it became too heavy (I can't describe it in any other way). That's the reason I'm rating it 3 stars; it took me too much effort to finish it.

I loved the mathematics references. I need more of those in my life, even though they weren't actually exact.

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### Adrik Kemp says

There is something endlessly appealing about the vurt world and its feathers and this prequel/sequel gives a lot of what we loved and more in a bizarre parallel world that's only set to get even weirder.

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### Laura says

I thought most of this novel was pretty poor, but the last section was simply abysmal. I can't think of a single thing that was done well; the characters were more like grinning cardboard cut-outs than real people; the "plot" was just a series of random events, many of which didn't make any sense and weren't explained (and I don't mean cliffhangers, I mean things left completely unexplained all the way through the book) and the descriptions were virtually non-existent (for example, Noon never explain what a blurbvert actually looks like, even though to be able to understand some of the scenes required a reasonable understanding of their physiology). But more than anything the writing style was just dreadful. Noon is a sub-medioocre writer who seems to think he's Shakespeare. The book was just littered with jarring, overly flowery phrases which just don't MEAN ANYTHING. E.g. "I am now double-six and life is a song sung low and cool to rouse the gentle spirit". Out of context that may sound passable, but trust me, in context it's just meaningless nonsense. To give Noon some credit I did read it to the very end so it wasn't completely unbearable, but there were

several points when I just wished it was all over. Overall: Thumbs down.

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### **Ingmar Boddington says**

Very odd, but entertaining.

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### **PDExperiment626 says**

Nymphomation is frenetic prequel to 'Vurt' and 'Pollen' (but chronologically occurring after 'Automated Alice'). As with Noon's other works, many interesting ideas are conveyed in the story; but this particular novel takes place before the birth of the Vurt (indeed the book provides information as to how the birth of the Vurt came about).[return][return]In Nymphomation, Noon extends himself further in terms of literary prose when compared to his earlier works of 'Vurt' and 'Pollen'. The jump between first and third person perspectives, shifts in character emphasis along with his prose ranging from stream-of-consciousness to academic exposition in some sense challenges the reader to keep up with the ideas going on in the book. Personally, I found this spectrum of literary style fun and interesting to read; but it will put others off to the story. [return][return]That being said, the characters in Nymphomation were not as strong as those in Pollen or Vurt. While the characters I believed to be realistic in their personalities, they are extremely static and their roles shift in the story in an artificial way. Basically, Daisy is developed as a main character who is supplanted in this role at the end of the story by Jazir who moves in from a supporting role. Unfortunately, Jazir wasn't developed enough to justify this transition. As for Daisy, Noon developed her plot line but Noon failed to reflect this development in her personality, making her character seem static despite the story surrounding her. [return][return]In addition to the problems with characters, the plot was also not as inventive as some of Noon's other works. The plot follows a standard archetype of a group of characters trying to take down a larger corporate construct. Toward the end of the story, the plot line gets more and more abstract falling into essentially something straight out of the mind of Borges. While I like the abstract personally, it may not be everyone's cup of tea.[return][return]On of the particular points that I really thought interesting in this book is how Noon refers to mathematics throughout the novel. As a student of mathematics, I have a tendency to judge its uses in a fictional setting rather harshly; but I love what the path that Noon has taken in Nymphomation. Instead of conveying mathematics as something that is tantamount to a novel construction and manipulation of symbols on paper (which is prolific in much of fiction) he takes a simulation approach to his mathematical references. That is, instead of referring to equations by symbols he refers to them through the physical things they model. For example, getting people to dance in a rave he would refer to as the DJ manipulating the equation of the crowd. Noon uses this mechanism consistently in the book; and it works very well if you buy into the ideas of *Simulacra and Simulation* (a book by Baudrillard). While this has problems when it comes to purely theoretical mathematics, I love this approach as it enables mathematics to be portrayed in a more artistic light and not some technically brutal manipulation of symbols.[return][return]One a smaller note, the typesetting (at least in the Black Swan Edition) is awesome for this book. The blurbfly inserts and typographical artistry in the layout I found immensely appealing. This is one of the very few novels you will find that is typeset in a sans-serif font. [return][return]Overall, I think Nymphomation presents a lot of interesting ideas and literary prose; but is lacking in plot/character interest when compared to Noon's earlier works 'Vurt' and 'Pollen'. While I personally really enjoyed reading this book, it may not be everyone's thing. If unfamiliar with Noon's work, I would suggest first reading 'Vurt' or perhaps 'Pollen' before jumping into this story.

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### **Jamie says**

A very strange science fiction/mathematical mystery. I enjoyed reading it just after grad school to ease my brain off of academic tomes. Penned by British author Jeff Noon who has a distinct style and rhythm to his writing that differs from most American fantasy authors. The frightening reality of futuristic corporate dominance and consumer greed spinning out of control over a lottery game was well crafted. The ending got a little strange but when does science fiction ever leave you feeling wholly satisfied? I'd recommend it for a dark, twisty read of a future reality.

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### **Tyler Hayes says**

There is no wit quite like Jeff Noon's; I would recommend any book by him in a heartbeat. This is a book about love, and sex, and dystopia, and dominoes, and the way humans process information, and the inevitable bridge between humanity and technology. Positively staggering.

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### **Idoru says**

This is an exceptionally hard book to review. Not because it's bad – it isn't, it's excellent – but because it's almost impossible to define what it's about.

Gambling? Definitely. It nicely sums up our seeming obsession with the National Lottery and Euromillions, the faith of the poor and the desperate that a game of chance will turn their lives around.

But it's about much more than that. Love, friendship, mystery, murder, maths and the idea that information creates more information – it reproduces, hence nymphomation.

It's 1999 and Manchester is in the grip of a new gambling game based on dominoes – match your domino with the randomly chosen one to win. One side means a smaller win, getting both means winning big. Every Friday night the populace of Manchester hold onto their 'bones' and hope to match the winning numbers. A double six garners the best prize, while a double blank (the 'joker bone') is the booby prize – no one knows what it is, but everyone knows it's bad.

But of course there's much more to it than that, and a small group of Mancunians are brought together to look at what really might be going on. What does the joker bone really represent? Who is the mysterious Mr Millions? What does all this have to do with groundbreaking yet dangerous maths research from the 70s? And what is the true nature of luck?

It's hard to go into further detail without giving the game – pun intended – away. Suffice to say this is an exceptionally well written thriller crossed with urban fantasy. It's part of Noon's Vurt series, but doesn't require the others to have been read.

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## **Adam Lowe says**

See, here's the problem I have with Jeff Noon. *Vurt* and *Falling Out of Cars* are two of the best science fiction novels I've ever read. They changed my view of the contemporary novel and provided me ample fuel for critical study at university.

But *Nymphomation* somehow doesn't match up. The bursts of purple prose, whilst entertaining in places, lack the raw energy of his two masterpieces. There's much of *Vurt*'s style and panache here, but it feels overdone, half-baked and inconsistent. I feel the real issue is with peer review. As a writer and editor myself, I think the best thing for my own writing has been airing my work amongst other writers and taking onboard their feedback. Whilst no one can grasp quite what a writer wants to portray like the writer, the writer suffers from a lack of objectivity and, occasionally, a lack of originality. It's too easy to become self-indulgent and write the kind of fiction we're comfortable with. That's the real flaw with *Nymphomation*.

I feel that Noon should have pushed himself further. The promise of *nymphomation* (information which is reproductive, hybridising, sincretic and promiscuous) could go much wider. I almost expected the house at the end to be a place of constantly bifurcating realities. I anticipated a place where characters encountered multiple versions of themselves and wandered through different versions of the past. I expected books with constantly changing and mutating stories, and DNA strands spiralling into chaos.

Instead we got a poorly conceived maths lesson with yet *\*more\** Lewis Carroll allusion. In *Falling Out of Cars* and *Vurt*, the allusions were fine. In this, I really felt Noon should read more. There are many things more appropriate at this juncture in his writing career. *The Book of Sand* is an obvious one. *The Master & Margarita* is another one. Even these would be better than another Alice allusion.

The idea, though, as always, was great. It was just the development which needed further guidance. More peer review in the developmental stages would have pushed him in newer, stranger directions. This almost wasn't strange enough.

I'm anxiously waiting for Noon's next novel, but after *Falling Out of Cars*, his prose writing seems to have taken second fiddle to scriptwriting. Let's hope he reads a little more before knocking out the next book.

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## **Guy Ferguson says**

I read this in Nepal and India in Jan of 2011. I chose this book to take as one of its characters is Jaz, (inventor of Vaz), a beautiful Indian boy. I know it's a tenuous link, but it helped. The book is great, and why Jeff Noon has written nothing since the early new century (*Falling Out of Cars*) should be cause for a Royal Inquiry in teh UK. Just jumped to his website (<http://www.jeffnoon.com/index.php>) and it looks as it did last time I looked a few years back. An April 2005 update is the latest, except for a 217babel plug that's a dead link.

What's up Jeff? You rock, your writing is razor sharp in encouraging in the true meaning of teh qword. This book synches with a few others of his, most notably *Vurt*. I love the characters, the mad maths and teh dominoes. Not a great review, but a great book to take to India and Nepal.

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## **Nicholas Barone says**

In Nymphomation, Jeff Noon returns to the Manchester of Vurt and Pollen, but in the year 1999 - a time before the vurt and before Fecundity 10 created all the cross breeds that populate Noon's first two novels.

The story revolves around a lottery (based on dominoes) that is being tested in Manchester before being rolled out to all of England. Daisy Love, our main character, is a mathematics student who becomes mixed up with a group of students who are trying to unravel the secrets of the lottery. As the story continues, we see that the events unfolding are the genesis of all the weirdness in the Manchester of Vurt and Pollen.

As usual, Noon's prose is amazing. On top of that, the plot in Nymphomation is his best so far. Definitely superior to Pollen, this final entry in the series ranks right up there with the Vurt (the first).

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## **Jay says**

Jeff Noon has so much imagination that I am in awe. I so need to reread his first four novels all at once, rather than separating them by years or decades. He creates such an alien culture, ties together so many threads, and makes it all so real. And his use of language astounds me. As a simple example: "Unintendo" as the name of a company. That "U" on the front makes all the difference.

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## **Stuart says**

Blurb: The air of Manchester is alive with blurbvurts, automated advertisements chanting their slogans. But the loudest of all is for Domino Bones, the new lottery game. Every Friday night the winning numbers are illuminated on the body of Lady Luck, the voluptuous figurehead of the game. For the winner, it is unimaginable riches, for the losers another week to wait for the bones to fall again. But there is only one real winner, The Company, which plays the city's fragile expectations with callous ease.

A group of mathematics students are looking at the mind-numbling probabilities involved and searching for the hidden mysteries behind the game. They watch the city at work and at dangerous play and slowly uncover the sinister realities behind the mania. The Company is devouring Manchester – it has the nymphomation, an evolutionary process which has the power to take over the city's dreams...

Comments: Picked this up because I really like dystopian stuff. Think the premise is pretty good, set in an alternative universe Manchester c.1999, even the police are sponsored by a Burger company - thought it would be a fun little read about company monodominance. Which I think it tries to be, but it doesn't really work. It just descended into personal vendetta, but I didn't care for any of the characters enough to give a shit what happened to any of them. The faux-probability stuff was kind of interesting, but not enough to carry the book. And the ending was a) a bit predictable and b) completely daft at the same time, where as those two things don't normally go together. Overall, a good concept with poor execution, which I'm always likely to give higher marks for than the other way round

### **Kate says**

I sometimes think I would like Jeff Noon's books more if I either had a better head for math, or abusing certain substances. That said, while this isn't my favorite of his Vurt series--that would be Automated Alice--this one pulls together a lot of threads from the rest of the series and also describes where the whole crazy world that began in Vurt came from.

Enjoyable book; enjoyable, if sometimes headache-inducing, series.

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### **Lushr says**

How to describe.... A company sets up a lottery in Manchester, but all is not what it seems. Noon has his own brand of magic/LSD sci fi that is like Alice through the looking glass. Two kids eating curry in the local Indian restaurant get thrown into this crazy story and it's just one of those stories that's stuck with me and I continually want to reread.

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### **Marianne says**

It reminds me of the physics-sex explorations of the Schrödinger's cat and Illuminati books I read back in early high school. Fast and loose sentences, tense and sometimes a little awkward. A sense of the future, as seen from the recent past. An interesting premise, but with a race to a bit of a flat ending.

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### **Suzie says**

Nymphomation is a story about lottery fever in Manchester. It's a scifi/mathfi thriller about math majors, gambling, MUDs, computers, mazes, genetics, greed, and luck. The writing style owes something to cyberpunk, but a lot more to Anthony Burgess/A Clockwork Orange. 100% unassailably British. You will either love or hate the writing style. Whether the substance is fulfilling is something that will depend on your personal taste. If you enjoyed Vurt, you will probably enjoy this one. I thought it was a fun read, but in no way was it deep. I found the ending deeply unsatisfying. Also worth noting, for something starting with 'Nympho' this book doesn't really have an awful lot of sex scenes in it.

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### **Nate D says**

Even to my jaded reading ear, this just pops off the page with hyperkinetic sentence and story-structure. There's a fast pop frivolity to it as well, but that just seems to bring it closer to the pulp-lit innovations of the late 60s than most of their modern imitators. How exciting that I can still get grabbed like this (as with other 2016 reads, it's a good year so far: Our Lady of the Nile, The Third Policeman, and Breaking and Entering) from page one. And even if the mathematical underpinnings turn out to be mostly empty and undeveloped sketches of ideas (come on, thrown me some ideas to really chew over in the world outside the novel's!), even if a certain logic was eschewed in favor of bringing every plot thread together for the most

climactic culmination possible under the circumstances, it's all just so much fun to read. And for a blind buy out of the Strand dollar bins, no less. Definitely will need to track down a few other entries in Noon's cyberpunk sequence.

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### **Chris says**

A science fiction book about probability and games of chance? I never knew there was a writer so attuned to my own heart. It was like watching the movie pi, which reminded me that I love math, especially when it's used for intrigue. The books sort-of tagline - "Play to win" - ran inside my head for a while whenever I was playing a game of any sort.

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