

The Infinite

Harper Perennial

by Nicholas Mainieri

ISBN: 9780062465566

Introduction

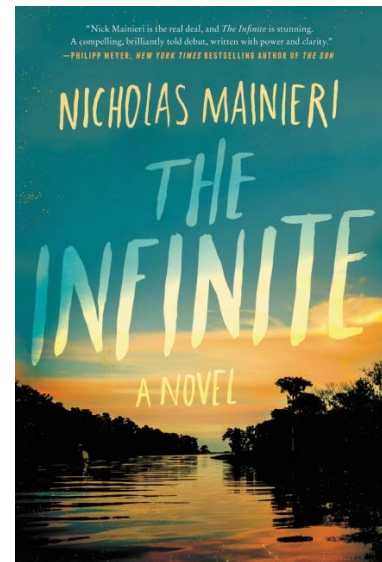
Jonah McBee has deep roots in New Orleans, but with hardly any family left, he half-heartedly is planning to enlist in the army after high school. Luz Hidalgo, an undocumented Latina and budding track star, followed her father there after Hurricane Katrina. Both have known loss. Both are struggling to imagine a new future. And when Jonah and Luz fall in love, it is intense, addictive, and real.

But everything changes when Luz discovers that she's pregnant. In a moment of panic, her father sends Luz back to Mexico so her grandmother can help raise the baby. Devastated, Jonah decides to take a road trip with his best friend when he doesn't hear from her.

Little does Jonah know, Luz is fighting for her life. Her trip has been cut short by a shocking act of violence, thrusting her into the endless cycle of bloodshed perpetrated by the cartels. So Luz does what she does best: She runs. And she goes farther and deeper than she ever imagined.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is it about Jonah that draws Luz toward him, and vice versa? What connects them, and why do they love each other?
2. In what ways does the past—as well as Luz's and Jonah's individual histories—continually assert itself in *The Infinite*?
3. How has Jonah come to know violence in his life? How has Luz? What does it mean to each of them, and do their ideas concerning violence change as the story unfolds?
4. Loops, cycles, circles... These shapes fill *The Infinite*. Where do you find them? What, ultimately, allows seemingly unending cycles to be escaped?
5. What is the significance of the monarch butterfly migration?
6. Stories are important to Luz—those her mother told her and those she tells herself. The facts are less important. Why? Does Jonah feel the same? What, if anything, does *The Infinite* have to say about stories and the power of stories, in general?



7. Luz's feelings, upon returning to Mexico, are that she belongs to neither Mexico nor America—that she's caught in some way between the two. Why does she feel this way?
 8. How does prayer factor into Luz's life? How about for Jonah?
 9. How do Jonah's dreams for the future evolve throughout *The Infinite*? How do they reflect changes in his character?
 10. One of the more apparent boundaries in *The Infinite* is the US-Mexico border. But what other kinds of borders exist in this novel, too?
 11. Which characters in *The Infinite* are silenced, literally or otherwise—unable to make their voices heard? Does this suggest anything to you? How does Luz come to think of her own voice by the end of the novel?
 12. Does Jonah agree or disagree with the lecture he receives from Victor, the graduate student who gives him a ride?
 13. Why does Dex tell Jonah to “be thankful and not look back?” What do you think this means?
 14. Why does Dex say he should have gone to Mexico with Jonah or done something like it once?
 15. What does Colby realize about the drug trade and his own role in it by the end of the novel?
 16. What comes next for Luz, after the end of *The Infinite*? What do you imagine? How about for Jonah?
 17. How is Luz finally able to outrun her ghost runner?
 18. Moses is thinking about sea turtles at the end of *The Infinite*—why? What is the significance of the sea turtles?
 19. How have Jonah and Luz been changed by first love?
 20. Why do you think the title is *The Infinite*? What things in the book are infinite?
-