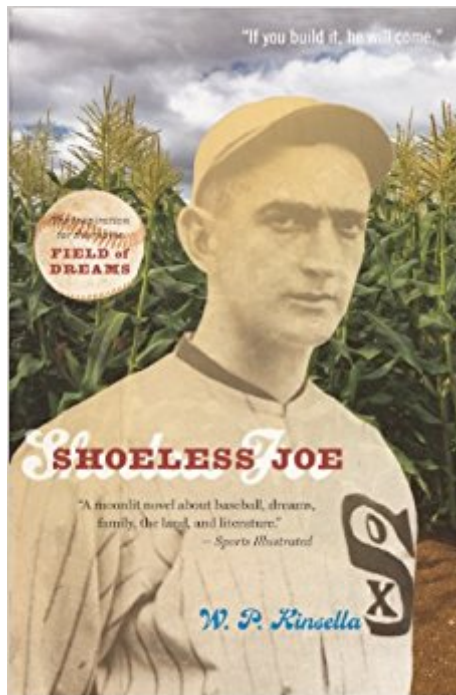


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# Shoeless Joe (Turtleback School & Library Binding Edition)



## Synopsis

FOR USE IN SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES ONLY. Ray Kinsella's fanatic love of baseball drives him to build a baseball stadium in his corn field and kidnap the author, J.D. Salinger, and bring him to a baseball game.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

W. P. Kinsella plays with both myth and fantasy in his lyrical novel, which was adapted into the enormously popular movie, *Field of Dreams*. It begins with the magic of a godlike voice in a cornfield, and ends with the magic of a son playing catch with the ghost of his father. In Kinsella's hands, it's all about as simple, and complex, as the object of baseball itself: coming home. Like Ring Lardner and Bernard Malamud before him, Kinsella spins baseball as backdrop and metaphor, and, like his predecessors, uses the game to tell us a little something more about who we are and what we need. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"W. P. Kinsella plays with both myth and fantasy in his lyrical novel, which was adapted into the enormously popular movie, 'Field of Dreams.' It begins with the magic of a godlike voice in a cornfield, and ends with the magic of a son playing catch with the ghost of his father. In Kinsella's hands, it's all about as simple, and complex, as the object of baseball itself: coming home. Like Ring Lardner and Bernard Malamud before him, Kinsella spins baseball as backdrop and metaphor, and, like his predecessors, uses the game to tell us a little something more about who we are and what

we need." .com --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I rarely read a book after seeing the movie version, but *Field of Dreams* is one of my favorites, and I was curious to learn more about the near-mythical Shoeless Joe Jackson. And the movie was so unusual, I wanted to discover how much of its originality came from the book. I was not disappointed. The book possesses all the whimsy of the movie and then some, a kind of magical realism with a light touch. In this story, baseball is more than a sport, and the main character, Ray Kinsella is more than a fan. The sport symbolizes an idealized and simpler time, but Ray's farm and family, the land and his sense of belonging, are a large part of the story too. Ray has more or less floated through life, with a sense more of wide-eyed confusion than discontent. He loves his wife and child, and finds peace on the farm, but his situation is not stable. The farm is bleeding money, and he's at risk of losing it all. The rapid pace of technology and of big corporate interests threaten to take over the farm, to tear down the farm house he calls home, and replace it with a cinder block, computerized command center, making his precious plot a part of a much larger agribusiness. Ray's worries are overshadowed not only by this threat, but by memories of his deceased father and their unresolved relationship. His father led a hard and unhappy life, except for a brief time in his youth when he followed his dream to play professional baseball. All these threads are brought together with eclectic fellow travelers (more than in the movie) Ray's twin brother, who works as a carnival barker, the old man who sold Ray the farm, who claims to be the oldest living Chicago Cub). But what really separates the book from the movie is the writing. The story is told with such rich and evocative language (although occasionally a bit over the top), that reading this wonderful novel feels like waltzing through a dream.

I love the movie *Field of Dreams*. Can't stop crying when he talks to his father, and I've seen the movie at least 20 times. So I wanted to read the book. The narrative is pretty similar, but as in all movies based on books, the characters are more developed in the book. And the book spoke to me as the movie did. I can't explain it, something about dead fathers and sons and baseball and, in my case, an America of long ago that somehow was simpler than the one of today. As I said, I can't explain it, but I loved it.

This is the novel on which the very popular film *Field of Dreams* was based and like that film it is chock full of Americana including baseball, farm life, small towns, J.D. Salinger, and

road trips. It's also brimming with baseball lore, trivia, batting averages, anecdotes, and personalities like the eponymous Shoeless Joe Jackson who, after the farmer Ray Kinsella builds a baseball diamond in his cornfield when he is promised by a mysterious baseball announcer voice that "if you build it, he will come", returns, along with his teammates, the notorious Black Sox, who were banned from the game after accepting money from gamblers to throw the World Series in 1919. It was his dream to play the game he loved again after being banned from the major leagues, Ray believes, and the field of dreams is where his dream comes true at last. As do the dreams of several others. Ray's father, who played only briefly in the minor leagues but worshipped the game fervently throughout his life, also comes, as do Moonlight Graham, another character from the early years of the game who only played one inning in the majors and never got a chance to go to bat, and J.D. Salinger who, according to this novel, harbored a dearly held aspiration as a youth to play professional ball at the Polo Grounds. For all of them the baseball diamond isn't Iowa, it's heaven. Canadian author W.P. Kinsella has thumbed through his Baseball Encyclopedia with intense concentration and it's pretty admirable the way he spins an enchanting tale out of the facts and personalities he's found there. The allegorical possibilities of baseball are stretched, gloriously, deliriously, to their limit and beyond, as immortal baseball gods return to earth to play their game, which is really the religious rites of their faith, on a cornfield that has been lovingly converted to a baseball diamond. In the meantime Ray needs to figure out a way to keep up with his mortgage payments so his family can stay on the farm because if he can't there's a greedy developer eyeing his baseball diamond as the last puzzle piece in a large tract being assembled for development. Grounding the nostalgic, mythical healing property of baseball in the team which has become a byword for dishonesty and corruption is questionable but the book does rise to a sort of poetic euphoria with its lyrical evocations of a past that never was. When J.D. Salinger expresses this sentiment, one which was forcefully and eloquently expressed by James Earl Jones in the film where he plays the author Terence Mann (Salinger threatened to sue the filmmakers if they used his name), "America has been erased like a blackboard, only to be rebuilt and then erased again. But baseball has marked time while America has rolled by like a procession of steamrollers" you realize that this novel is steamrolling history, or at least erasing it, to rebuild the American past according to a collective dream logic, made up of carefully chosen components which activate a nostalgic yearning then satisfy that yearning in the same manner that a psychic conflict is resolved through a dream.

This is the book the movie "Field of Dreams" was based on. It was an enjoyable read and explores some of the numinous aspects of baseball and how it has become such an important part of many people's lives. The background of the Black Sox scandal also explores some of the emotion centering around the downfall of heroes. For anybody who likes baseball or fantasy this is a solid read.

I hadn't read a baseball book since Ball Four, had been mad at baseball for several years. Then the world went crazy (9/11), and "reality" TV made the scene, and I decided to watch a ballgame on TV. Comfort food for my spirit. I'd seen Field of Dreams, it made me feel good, so I thought I'd try baseball again. It was good timing. In a few seasons my Kansas City Royals won the World Series. I still watch when they lose. All because of a movie. So, I came across this book and had to read it. I'm so glad! Don't expect movie. It's not the same. And that's where I'll leave it to you, to go through the gate with Shoeless Joe...

I am a huge fan of "Field of Dreams" and wanted to read the original book. The movie is superior. Annie is too complacent in the book. The whole stand-by-your-man regardless of his decisions was a bit much. There were too many unresolved issues and the ending was nonsensical.

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