Pnin

Pnin, Nabokov’s fourth novel in English, was, according to Gennadi Barabtarlo, “…begun late in the spring of 1953, probably after May 3 and certainly before June 29, between Portal, Arizona, and Ashland, Oregon, on one of the Nabokovs’ ‘lepping’ summer excursions.” In a letter to Edmund Wilson on 20-Jun-1953, Nabokov wrote, “…I have started a series of stories about a creature of mine, a Professor Pnin, which I hope the New Yorker will be interested in.” (NW3L 313) It was. The magazine accepted the first chapter and published it in November of that year.

As Nabokov worked on the book, he evolved a plan of ten chapters in the life of his émigré professor of Russian, Timofey Pnin of Waindell College. He wrote chapter two, titled “Pnin Had Not Always Been Single”, in January 1954, but The New Yorker declined it, saying it was too “unpleasant” (VNTAY 256). On 3-Feb-1954, Nabokov sent the two chapters plus an outline of the further eight chapters to Pascal Covici at Viking (VNSL 143–44).

Nabokov worked on chapter four in February and April of 1955 and sent it to The New Yorker later that spring. Katherine White, his editor at The New Yorker, exchanged letters on minor changes to chapter three in March (VNSL 156–160). He completed the final three chapters, of the now seven-chaptered book, in the summer (VNTAY 268). He sent chapter five, “Pnin under the Pines”, to The New Yorker on 21-Jul-1955 but the magazine turned it down (VNTAY 269–70).

On 29-Aug-1955, Nabokov sent Viking a copy of the complete. “My Poor Pnin was a provisional title on a typescript prepared for Viking (Pascal Covici). Covici liked the book very much but oddly asked that it be lengthened, upon which VN took his text back.” (Véra Nabokov, personal correspondence, 3-Nov-1982). (A copy with this title is at the Harry Ransom Center of the University of Texas at Austin.) Harper and Brothers also passed on the book. Nabokov then sent the manuscript to Doubleday in June. It accepted the novel and, after changes requested by Nabokov, a dust jacket cover by Milton Glazer was approved (VNSL 190–191). The book was issued on 7-Mar-1957 to very positive reviews and in two weeks went into a second printing (VNTAY 307).

A comparison of the chapters in The New Yorker in 1953 and 1955 and as they appeared in the book published by Doubleday in 1957 shows differences, particularly in dates (e.g., Pnin’s birthday, his graduation from the University of Prague, when he began teaching at Waindell).

Of the book’s seven completed chapters, four of them first appeared in The New Yorker before its book publication:

- Chapter 1 as “Pnin”, 28-Nov-1953.
- Chapter 3 as “Pnin’s Day”, 23-Apr-1955.


Edition Summary

A30.1 Pnin FIRST EDITION (DOUBLEDAY), 7-Mar-1957, 4 issues
| A30.2  | Pnin  | First British edition (Heinemann), 9-Sep-1957, 4 issues |
| A30.3  | Pnin  | First wrappers edition (Avon), May-1959, 10 issues |
| A30.4  | Pnin  | First British wrappers edition (Penguin), 25-Aug-1960, 11 issues |
| A30.5  | Pnin  | New American wrappers edition (Atheneum), Dec-1963, 6 issues |
| A30.6  | Pnin  | New American library edition (Robert Bentley), 1982, 1 issue |
| A30.7  | Pnin  | New American wrappers edition (Anchor Press), 1984, 1 issue |
| A30.8  | Pnin  | New American wrappers edition (Vintage), Jun-1989, 3 issues |
| A30.9  | Pnin  | New American wrappers book club edition (Quality Paperback Book Club), 1993, 2 issues |
| A30.10 | Pnin  | New American/British edition (Everyman’s Library), 2004, 2 issues |
| A30.11 | Pnin  | First edition (Penguin), 2012, 1 issue |
**A30.1**

**First printing, variant a, 7-Mar-1957**

**Collation:** (20.9 X 13.9 cm), undetermined signatures, 96 leaves, pp. [1–6] 7–191 [192]

**Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | DOUBLEDAY & COMPANY, INC. | GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK | 1957

**Copyright page:** Chapters 1, 3, 4, and 6 appeared originally in *The New Yorker* | All of the characters in this book are fictitious, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, is purely coincidental | Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 57-6299 | Copyright © 1953, 1955, 1957 by Vladimir Nabokov | All Rights Reserved | Printed in the United States of America | First Edition

**Binding:** Black cloth over boards with headband. White endpapers. Top and bottom edges trimmed. Fore-edge untrimmed. Top edge stained red. **Front and back covers:** blank. **Spine:** running down yellow stamping, PNIN | red | Vladimir Nabokov Doubleday.

**Covering:** White dust jacket. **Front cover:** drawing signed by [Milton] Glazer of Pnin holding copy of book titled “TIHH” by "B. HABOKOB" | four letters successively in red, purple, brown, orange | PNIN | a novel by | VLADIMIR | NABOKOV. **Back cover:** | purple | PNIN | a novel by | orange | VLADIMIR | orange | NABOKOV | four quotations. **Spine:** running down | four letters successively in red, purple, brown, orange | PNIN VLADIMIR | NABOKOV | running across Doubleday. **Front flap:** Price, $3.50 | 46946 | orange | PNIN | two-paragraph blur | purple | PNIN | a novel by Vladimir Nabokov. **Back flap:** orange | VLADIMIR | orange | NABOKOV | biographical sketch | JACKET DESIGN BY MILTON GLAZER | Printed in the U.S.A.


**Price:** $3.50

**Description:** The text has not been compared to its appearances in *The New Yorker*. But there are known differences, such as Pnin’s birthdate (May 18 in the magazine, February 5 in the book).

**Works:**

1) Pnin
As variant a, except

Covering: White dust jacket. Front flap: 46946 | Price, $3.50 | …

¶ New printing, Mar-1957

As first printing, variant a, except

Copyright page: Without “First Edition” at the bottom of the page.

Binding: Top edge unstained.

Covering: Front flap: 46946 | Price, $3.50 | …

Description: This printing has three differences from the first printing, variant a: no “First Edition” on the copyright page, no stain on the top edge, and the number above the price on the front flap.

Within two weeks, the book went into a second printing.

¶ New printing, 1959

As first printing, variant a, except

Title page: Without “1957” after the publisher’s location.

Copyright page: Without “First Edition” at the bottom of the page.

Binding: Top edge unstained.

Description: This printing has at least three differences from the first printing, variant a: no “First Edition” on the copyright page, no stain on the top edge, and a gutter code on p. 191 of “A 12”, meaning a printing of March 1959. I do not know if the number is or is not above the price on the front flap.

A30.2

FIRST BRITISH EDITION (HEINEMANN)

¶ First printing, 9-Sep-1957

As first edition, except


Title page: Vladimir Nabokov | PNIN | * | \publisher’s device\ | HEINEMANN | MELBOURNE LONDON TORONTO

Copyright page: William Heinemann Ltd | LONDON MELBOURNE TORONTO | CAPE TOWN AUCKLAND | THE HAGUE | * | First published in 1957 | MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY | MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED, LONDON AND EDINBURGH

Binding: Navy blue cloth over boards. White endpapers. All edges trimmed. Front and back covers: \blank\, Spine: \white stamping\, PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | HEINEMANN

Covering: White dust jacket. Front cover: illustration by J. Faczynski of bald-headed man holding glasses, with Russian and American buildings\reddish-brown| PNIN | reddish-brown, at angle\, a novel by \ Vladimir Nabokov. Back cover: \ilustration of man walking towards Russian and American buildings\reddish-brown| PNIN | Vladimir | Nabokov | \four blurbs\, Spine: \reddish-brown background\, bald man holding glasses\, PNIN | a novel by \two-lines in white\, Vladimir | Nabokov | HEINEMANN. Front flap: \title, author, description\, Wrapper design by Faczynski | 13s. 6d. | NET. Back flap: \author, description continued\, \pasted on promotion for Lolita, with blurb\.


Price: 13s 6d

Description: The second printing copyright page dates the first printing in October 1957. Other information points to 9-Sep-1957.

There is one citation, in the English Catalogue of Books, for a “cheap edition” at 5/ by Heinemann on 1-Jan-1962. There is no evidence that it was ever issued.

For some reason, none of the Heinemann printings of Pnin contain a copyright notice. This was also true of the first four Penguin printings beginning in 1960.
A30.2 First printing, 1957, copyright page

¶ Second printing, Nov-1957

As first printing, except

Copyright page: … | Published in October 1957 | Second impression, November 1957 | …

Covering: White dust jacket. Back cover: with single blurb from Rebecca West. Front flap: reddish-brown PniN | Vladimir Nabokov | (Author of the controversial novel ‘Lolita’) | five blurbs that continue on back flap |
Wrapper design by Faczynski | SECOND IMPRESSION | 13s. 6d. | NET.
Back flap: continuation of blurbs

¶ Third printing, Jan-1960

As first printing, except

Copyright page: … | Published in October 1957 | Second impression, November 1957 | Third impression, January 1960 | …


Price: 21/-

¶ Fourth printing, 1969

As second printing, except

Collation: (18.2 X 12.1 cm)

Title page: Vladimir Nabokov | PniN | * | ‘publisher’s device’ |
HEINEMANN : LONDON


Binding: Front flap: ‘reddish-brown’ PniN | Vladimir Nabokov | (Author of the controversial novel ‘Lolita’) | five blurbs that continue on back flap |
Wrapper design by Faczynski | 30s | £1 50p | net | 434 49050 4. Back flap: continuation of blurbs

Price: 30s, £1.50p
Differences between the first printings, American and Canadian, are publisher information on the title pages and printing location on the copyright pages.

**First printing, May-1959**

**Collation:** (17.9 X 10.4 cm), pp. [1–6] 7–160

**Title page:** Two pages. Left page: VLADIMIR NABOKOV | *Author of “Lolita”*. Right page: ‘over brushed shading’; PNIN | *Complete and Unabridged* | AVON BOOK DIVISION—| The Hearst Corporation | 575 Madison Avenue—New York 22, N.Y.

**Copyright page:** Copyright, ©, 1953, 1955, 1957, by Vladimir Nabokov. Chapters | 1, 3, 4 and 6 appeared originally in *The New Yorker*. Published by arrangement with Doubleday & Co., Inc. Printed in the U.S.A.

**Binding:** White wrappers. **Front cover:** ‘bald-headed man in black suit with a cane and briefcase watching three co-eds talking’

**Series and Number:** T-323

**Price:** $0.35

**Works:**

1) *Pnin*

**First Canadian printing, May-1959**

*As variant a, except*

**Title page:** Two pages. Left page: VLADIMIR NABOKOV | *Author of “Lolita”*. Right page: ‘over brushed shading’; PNIN | *Complete and Unabridged* | AVON PUBLICATIONS, INC. | 575 Madison Avenue—New York 22, N.Y.

**Copyright page:** Copyright, ©, 1953, 1955, 1957, by Vladimir Nabokov. Chapters | 1, 3, 4 and 6 appeared originally in *The New Yorker*. Published by arrangement with Doubleday & Co., Inc. Printed in Canada

**Third printing, May-1969**

**Collation:** (17.9 X 10.5 cm), pp. [1–6] 7–190 [191–192]

**Title page:** ‘within ruled border with curved corners’; PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | An Avon Library Book | ‘publisher’s device’

**Copyright page:** … | First Printing, May 1959 | Third Printing (Avon Library), May, 1969 | Cover illustration by James Avati | …

**Binding:** White wrappers. **Front cover:** illustration by James Avati of bald-headed man with glasses carrying a large volume and a briefcase

**Series and Number:** Avon Library, NS41

**Price:** $0.95

**Description:** This printing is newly typeset.

**Fourth printing, Aug-1969**

*As third printing, except*

**Title page:** ‘within ruled border with curved corners’; PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ‘publisher’s device’ | AVON | PUBLISHERS OF | DISCUS • CAMELOT • BARD

**Copyright page:** … | First Printing, May 1959 | Fourth Printing (Bard Edition), August, 1969 | …

**Series and Number:** Bard Books, YN249
Fifth printing, unknown date

As third printing, except

Title page: within ruled border with curved corners PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | publisher's device | BARD BOOKS / PUBLISHED BY AVON


Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: uncredited illustration of a man reading a book, pen between fingers, head covered by a cloud topped by an origami-like figure

Series and Number: Bard, 15800

Price: $1.65

Sixth printing, unknown date

As fifth printing, except


Seventh printing, unknown date

As fifth printing, except

Title page: within ruled border with curved corners PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | publisher's device | A BARD BOOK / PUBLISHED BY AVON BOOKS


Series and Number: Bard, 40600

Price: $1.95

Eighth printing, unknown date

As fifth printing, except


Series and Number: Bard, 50906
**A30.3 Eighth printing, cover, front**

Price: $2.50

Ninth printing, unknown date

*As fifth printing, except*


*Series and Number: Bard, 54981*

*Price: $2.75*

*Description: This printing has multiple ISBNs. The copyright-page has 0-380-50906-7 and the spine has 0-380-00819-X. In fact, the spine has an additional almost-ISBN, 380-54981-6, with an additional 275 denoting the price.*

**A30.3 Ninth printing, cover, front**

Tenth printing, unknown date

*As ninth printing, except*

*Copyright page: … | UN 15 14 13 12 11 10*

*Binding: The back cover has the bar code ISBN 0-380-00819-X.*


*Series and Number: Bard, 57513*

*Price: $2.95*

*Description: Like the ninth printing, there are multiple ISBNs. The copyright-page has 0-380-50906-7; the spine has 0-380-00819-X and an additional almost-ISBN, 57513-2-295; and the back has a bar code for ISBN 0-380-00819-X.*

**A30.3 Tenth printing, cover, front**

**A30.4 First British wrappers edition (Penguin)**

First printing, variant a, 25-Aug-1960

*Collation: (18.0 X 10.9 cm), pp. [1–6] 7–159 [160]*

*Title page: Vladimir Nabokov \ bloated rule\ | PNIN | PENGUIN BOOKS*

*Copyright page: … | Published in Penguin Books 1960 | …*

*Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: illustration by J. Faczynski of bald man holding glasses, in front of Russian and American buildings (slightly modified from dust jacket cover of the Heinemann edition)*

*Series and Number: 1491*

*Price: 2/6*

*Description: The first four Penguin printings do not have copyright notices.*
Additional Works: Beginning with the 1997 sequence, an afterword by Michael Wood was included.

Works:
1) Pnin
Fourth printing, 1983

As third printing, except


Price: £2.50

Fifth printing, 25-Sep-1986

As third printing, except


Binding: White wrappers. Slightly redesigned cover with Lindner illustration.


Series and Number: Penguin Modern Classics

Price: £3.95

Description: Finally, this printing has a copyright notice.

Sixth printing, 1988

As third printing, except


Seventh printing, unknown date

As third printing, except

Copyright page: … | Published in Penguin Books 1960 | 7 9 10 8 | …

Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: illustration by P. Konchalovsky, Poet's Window


Series and Number: Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics

Price: £4.99

1997 sequence, first printing, 1997

As seventh printing, except

Title page: Vladimir Nabokov | bloated rule | PNIN | with an afterword by Michael Wood | publisher's device | PENGUIN BOOKS

Copyright page: … | Published in Penguin Books 1960 | Published with an Afterword 1997 | 1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2 | …


Series and Number: Penguin Twentieth-Century Classics

POINTS

The same cover but a new printing sequence, a different price and ISBN, and an afterword.
**Description:** Includes an afterword by Michael Wood.

- **2000 sequence, first printing, 2000**
  - As 1997 sequence, first printing, except
  - Copyright page: … | Published in Penguin Books 1960 | Published with an Afterword 1997 | Reprinted in Penguin Classics 2000 | 1 | …
  - Series and Number: Penguin Classics
  - Price: £7.99

- **Eleventh printing, 29-Apr-2010**
  - As 2000 sequence, first printing, except
  - Title page: VLADIMIR NABOKOV | *Pnin* | publisher’s device | PENGUIN BOOKS
  - Series and Number: Penguin Modern Classics
  - Price: £12.00
  - Description: This issue continues a printing number sequence (eleventh) and uses a continuing ISBN. But the text has been reset and it has a new pagination.
  - Includes three pages of publisher’s ads for Nabokov books.
  - One in a series of Nabokov books that Penguin reset and issued with new covers in late 2009 and into 2010.

**NEW AMERICAN WRAPPERS EDITION (ATHENEUM)**

- **First printing, Dec-1963**
  - As first edition, except
  - Collation: (18.3 X 10.9 cm), pp. [1–6] 7–191 [192]
  - Title page: PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1964
  - Copyright page: … | First Atheneum Edition
  - Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: illustration by Milton Glaser of bald-headed man with glass holding a paper or book on which is written “Pnin” and “Nabokov” in Cyrillic, similar to the dust jacket illustration for the 1957 first edition.
  - Series and Number: Atheneum, 55
  - Price: $1.25
**Description:** Though the title page gives a date of 1964, the copyright pages of the second and later printings give a printing date of Dec-1963.

- **Second printing, Jan-1965**
  *As first printing, except*
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1965
  
  **Copyright page:** … | First Atheneum Printing December 1963 | Second Printing January 1965

- **Third printing, Dec-1965**
  *As first printing, except*
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1965
  
  **Copyright page:** … | Third Printing December 1965

- **Fourth printing, Jun-1966**
  *As first printing, except*
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1966
  
  **Copyright page:** … | Fourth Printing June 1966

- **Fifth printing, Apr-1967**
  *As first printing, except*
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1967
  
  **Copyright page:** … | Fifth Printing April 1967
  
  **Price:** $1.65

- **Sixth printing, Dec-1967**
  *As first printing, except*
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ATHENEUM NEW YORK | 1967
  
  **Copyright page:** … | Sixth Printing December 1967
  
  **Price:** $1.65

**A30.6 New American Library Edition (Robert Bentley)**

- **First printing, 1982**
  *As first edition, except*
  
  **Collation:** (20.9 X 13.6 cm), 192 pages
  
  **Title page:** PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ROBERT BENTLEY |
A30.7 New American wrappers edition (Anchor Press, imprint of Doubleday)
¶ First printing, 1984
As first edition, except
Collation: (20.6 X 13.9 cm), 192 pages
Title page: PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | ANCHOR PRESS / DOUBLEDAY | GARDEN CITY, NEW YORK | 1984
Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: 'purple patterned background'
Series and Number: The Anchor Literary Library
Price: $6.95
Description: With a gutter code on p. 191 of “Z7”, meaning that it was printed in February 1984.

A30.8 New American wrappers edition (Vintage, imprint of Random House, USA)
¶ First printing, Jun-1989
As first edition, except
Collation: (20.3 X 12.9 cm), 208 pages
Title page: PNIN | Vladimir Nabokov | Vintage International | Vintage Books | A Division of Random House, Inc. | NEW YORK
Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: 'photo by Barnaby Hall of a squirrel on a birdbath'
Series and Number: Vintage International
Price: $7.95
Description: The typesetting of the 1957 Doubleday edition, A30.1, spawned four further editions, A30.2, A30.5, A30.6, and A30.7.
Nabokov’s corrections of that typesetting were incorporated into the text of this edition and published for the first time:
* p. 56, line 11 – changed “shepchï” to “shepchu”.

¶ Twenty-third printing, 2009
As first printing, except
Copyright page: … | 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 | …
Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: 'art of a specimen box filled with a bowtie, imprinted multiple times with the letters of the title, pinned to the inside with a title label below and the author’s name, by Carin Goldberg, cover photograph by Alison Gootee'.
Contents: Pp. [195–197] are publisher’s ads for other Nabokov books. P. [199] is a publisher ad for the then forthcoming *The Original of Laura*.


Price: $14.00

Twenty-fourth printing, unknown date, distributed by Paw Prints

As twenty-third printing, except

Copyright page: … | 29 28 27 26 25 24 | …

Binding: Pictorial boards. Back cover: bottom fifth of the back cover has information about Paw Prints instead of Vintage. Spine: no publisher information

Description: This binding in pictorial boards was produced for the library market. The 208 internal pages are, except for the printing line on the copyright page, the same as for the twenty-third printing. But the binding has the differences noted above.

NEW AMERICAN WRAPPERS BOOK CLUB EDITION (QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOK CLUB)

First printing, variant a, 1993

As first edition, except

Collation: (20.9 X 13.8 cm), pp. [i–ii] [1–6] 7–191 [192–198]

Title page: PNIN | VLADIMIR | NABOKOV | butterfly | QUALITY PAPERBACK BOOK CLUB | NEW YORK

Copyright page: … | This edition was specially created in 1993 for Quality Paperback Book Club … | …

Binding: White wrappers. Front cover: illustration by Paul Klee, Gelehrter


Description: With a gutter code of “RD5Y” on p. [198].

First printing, variant b, unknown date

As variant a, except


Description: With a gutter code of “RD9EE” on p. [198].

NEW AMERICAN/BRITISH EDITION (EVERYMAN’S LIBRARY, IMPRINT OF DAVID CAMPBELL)

First printing, variant a, 2004
The American and British distributions differ in the dust jacket back and front flap, price, and ISBN.

**Collation:** (20.5 X 12.4 cm), pp. [i–vi] vii–xxix [xxx] [1–2] 3–143 [144–145]

**Title page:** VLADIMIR NABOKOV | within fancy border | Pnin | with an Introduction by | David Lodge | ‘publisher’s device’ | EVERYMAN’S LIBRARY | Alfred A. Knopf New York London Toronto | 272

**Copyright page:** THIS IS A BORZOI BOOK | PUBLISHED BY ALFRED A. KNOPF | First included in Everyman’s Library, 2004 | … | ISBN: 1-4000-4198-8 (US) | 1-85715-272-7 (UK) | …

**Binding:** Red cloth over boards with headband and marker ribbon. White endpapers. All edges trimmed. Front and back covers: ‘blank’ Spine: ‘gilt stamping’ VLADIMIR | NABOKOV | ‘device’ | PNIN | EVERYMAN’S LIBRARY


**Series and Number:** Everyman’s Library, 272

**Price:** $17.00

**Additional Works:** With an introduction and bibliography by David Lodge and a chronology.

**Works:**

1) Pnin

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(Draft of 7 Jun 2013)