



American Bee: The National Spelling Bee and the Culture of Word Nerds

James Maguire

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What the bestselling *Word Freak* did for Scrabble, this riveting narrative now does for the National Spelling Bee. Here is a captivating slice of Americana--part sporting event, part absorbing human drama, and part celebration of the magic of words.

Every spring in the nation's capital, after a starting pool of 10 million kids narrows to 250 finalists, America's top young spellers face off in a nail-biting contest. So electric is the drama that millions of viewers tune in to watch ESPN's live telecast

But this national obsession is much more than a sporting story--and this first-ever narrative nonfiction book about the National Spelling Bee immerses the reader in unique subculture, portraying the endearing fraternity of brilliant, eccentric young word nerds who vie for a gold trophy, a hefty check, and a glorious moment of national fame.

Author James Maguire, who like the contestants is an inveterate word nut, captures the agony and glory of this singularly American event. He profiles the top five spellers across the country, exploring their hopes and dreams--and strategies for winning--as they prepare for their moment in the spotlight. *American Bee* takes readers behind the scenes at the National Bee, providing a narrative thrill ride as the tension mounts round by round.

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