



Gentlemen and Players: A Novel (P.S.)

By Joanne Harris

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For generations, privileged young men have attended St. Oswald's Grammar School for Boys, groomed for success by the likes of Roy Straitley, the eccentric Classics teacher who has been a fixture there for more than thirty years. This year, however, the wind of unwelcome change is blowing, and Straitley is finally, reluctantly, contemplating retirement. As the new term gets under way, a number of incidents befall students and faculty alike, beginning as small annoyances but soon escalating in both number and consequence. St. Oswald's is unraveling, and only Straitley stands in the way of its ruin. But he faces a formidable opponent with a bitter grudge and a master strategy that has been meticulously planned to the final, deadly move.

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Gentlemen and Players: A Novel (P.S.) By Joanne Harris Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Bestseller Harris (*Holy Fools*) exposes the brittle line dividing the haves and have-nots in this disturbing yet strangely rewarding morality tale set in the hallowed halls of St. Oswald's, an aristocratic British boys' school hovering on the edge of extinction. *Audere, agere, auferre* (To dare, to strive, to conquer), the school motto, is something young outsider Snyder, whose father has become St. Oswald's porter (or caretaker), takes painfully to heart after infiltrating the institution as a student under the alias "Julian Pinchbeck." Snyder's secret crush on Leon Mitchell, a charismatic upper-class boy, leads to tragic consequences that include the senior Snyder's losing his job. Fifteen years later, Snyder returns, masquerading as a teacher and plotting retribution. Classics teacher Roy Straitley, with his easygoing, ruefully resigned viewpoint, nicely contrasts with Snyder's relentless first-person intensity. Straitley, who loves St. Oswald's, unwittingly proves to be a formidable opponent and provides Snyder with a vital lesson: not every chess game ends with checkmate.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School—Three voices are heard in this tale of a venerable English boys' school. One belongs to Roy Straitley, a veteran teacher of classics. Another is that of a teacher who has just arrived at St. Oswald's with the malicious intent of bringing it down through well-placed rumor and cunning innuendo. The third is that of a child from 14 years earlier who loves the school but does not belong to it. He even assumes an alter identity, Julian Pinchbeck, complete with uniform, in order to roam the school at will and as much as possible escape the painful reality of life with his loutish father, its porter. Then he makes a friend at St. Oswald's and at last has someone from his chosen world with whom to spend his time. But everything unravels with the death of Julian's adored friend. Now the teacher who was the child Julian returns. Harris shows what a master storyteller she is through the play and counterplay of current happenings twisting through the telling of what went on before. The story builds suspensefully and cleverly with surprises and turns to a satisfying denouement.—*Judy Braham, George Mason Regional Library, Fairfax County, VA*
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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

Harris, author of *Chocolat* (1999), *Five Quarters of the Orange* (2001), *Holy Fools* (**** May/June 2004), and other fiction, has switched genres once again. This time, she's crafted a school novel as murder mystery. This elegant, class-themed whodunit pans back and forth in time and features two slightly unreliable narrators. While Straitley represents the school's ethos, Snyder, by contrast, is pure evil—too much so for Harris to portray adequately. The premise, compounded with a shocking final twist, also stretched credibility for some critics. If in the end the pieces don't all fit together, *Gentlemen* offers a complex tale of intrigue and revenge.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Dave Thomas:

Do you have favorite book? In case you have, what is your favorite's book? E-book is very important thing

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Catherine Browning:

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