



Obedience: A Novel

By Will Lavender

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When the students in Winchester University's Logic and Reasoning 204 arrive for their first day of class, they are greeted not with a syllabus or texts, but with a startling assignment from Professor Williams: Find a hypothetical missing girl named Polly. If after being given a series of clues and details the class has not found her before the end of the term in six weeks, she will be murdered.

At first the students are as intrigued by the premise of their puzzle as they are wary of the strange and slightly creepy Professor Williams. But as they delve deeper into the mystery, the boundary between the classroom and the real world is blurred and the students wonder if it is their own lives they are being asked to save.

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Obedience: A Novel By Will Lavender Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #1186125 in Books
- Brand: Broadway Books
- Published on: 2009-01-06
- Released on: 2009-01-06
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .66" w x 5.17" l, .48 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A complex conspiracy involving the writing of a book drives Lavender's compelling debut, a thriller that will strike some as a mix of John Fowles's *The Magus* and Stephen King's *The Shining*. At Indiana's Winchester University, three students—Brian House, Dennis Flaherty and Mary Butler—are taking Logic and Reasoning 204, taught by enigmatic Professor Williams. They quickly learn this is a course like no other. Their single assignment is to find a missing 18-year-old girl, Polly, in six weeks time—or else, Williams asserts, she will be murdered. Is this merely an academic exercise? As Williams produces clues, including photographs of Polly and her associates, the students begin to wonder where homework ends and actual homicide begins. Together with Brian and Dennis, Mary ventures off campus in search of Polly into a world of crumbling towns, decrepit trailers and hints at crimes old and new. A rapid-fire plot offsets thin characterization, though the conspiracy becomes so all-encompassing, so elaborate, that readers may feel a bit like Mary when baffled by her quest: This is what she felt like: led, played, not in control of anything she did. (Feb.)

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Review

"*Obedience* is evidence that crime fiction is hardly a played-out genre [G]rafts the world-turned-upside-down suspense of a Harlan Coben thriller to the hall-of-mirrors vertigo of a novel by Paul Auster [I]ts ultimate implications continue to spin out in a reader's mind after the final page is turned."

—*Wall Street Journal*

"Authentic puzzle mysteries are an endangered species in these hectic times, so it's a genuine, if slightly perverse, kick to follow every byzantine clue in this bizarre game.... If you solve this one without peeking at the last chapter, it's an automatic A."

—*New York Times* Book Review

"*Obedience* is a fiendishly clever thriller, debut or no, and Lavender exhibits deft control at the wheel."

—Bookgasm.com

"*Obedience* is quite a twisty little number the taunting nature of the challenge is irresistible...."

—*New York Daily News*

"[T]his is one of those high-concept thrillers with a final twist that upends all expectations, filled with characters who are not what they seem."

—Entertainment Weekly

"*Obedience* is a full course load of sinister fun."

—Salon.com

An inspired thriller about cognitive dissonance, conjectural misdirection and the conspicuous dichotomy between academia and the real world."

—Kirkus Reviews

"Will Lavender stuns with this compelling thriller.... The surreal but believable landscape fairly bursts from its confines, goading the reader into finishing just one more page."

—*Louisville Courier-Journal*

“It’s a terrific book, part cat-and-mouse mystery and part psychological study of group behavior.... [A] wonderful book with a strong emotional punch at the end.”

—*St. Petersburg Times*

“Lavender’s first novel suggests he has a bright future. The novel is briskly plotted with deft narrative. *Obedience* builds to a swirling conclusion. It becomes a place where morality is blurred and intentions drift astray.”

—*Tampa Tribune*

“In his tautly strung debut novel, *Obedience*, literature professor Will Lavender tears a page of out Milgram’s notebooks and sets into motion a chain of events that escalates far beyond its intended intellectual exercise. . . . Mystery fans will be satisfied to hang on around the story’s hairpin turns as the list of suspects swells and narrows with the unearthing of each clue, but Lavender . . . is aiming at a broader target and posing deeper questions.”

—*Bookpage*

“First-time novelist Lavender has a knack for creepy characters and red herrings.”

—*Library Journal*

“First novelist Lavender has sprinkled his text with enough red herrings to feed the Biblical 5,000 but uses them to build page-turning suspense. . . . Lavender’s invocation of the notorious Milgram experiment conducted at Yale on obedience to authority adds an additional—and salutary—layer of psychological meaning to his elaborate plot.”

—*Booklist*

More Praise for *Obedience*:

“*Obedience* draws you in and never lets go — and what a ride!”

—David Baldacci

"In his dream-like and labyrinthine debut, Will Lavender delivers a clever, intricate page-turner that kept me guessing late into the night. *Obedience* is a house of mirrors where every corner we turn is a false reflection of the truth until the shocking final scene. A gripping exploration of human nature and all its foibles told in Lavender's fresh and original voice, *Obedience* is not to be missed."

—Lisa Unger

“*Obedience* is a very scary story set on the border where good meets evil, located in this case in that scariest of places, academia. Taut, twisty, and highly original: the pages turned themselves.”

—Peter Abrahams

"A taut and timely thriller that explores the dark side of academia, where classrooms are dangerous and paranoia abounds."

—Karin Slaughter

"A taut, clever puzzle, so artfully crafted and tightly wound that it springs open its trap when you least expect it to."

—Carol Goodman, author of *The Sonnet Lover* and *The Ghost Orchid*

"A devilishly inventive debut that reads like a house of mirrors. Nothing is what it seems, right up to the

devastating finale."

—Brian Freeman, author of *Stripped*

From the Hardcover edition.

About the Author

WILL LAVENDER teaches literature and writing in Louisville, Kentucky. He has an MFA in creative writing from Bard College, and his short fiction has been published in various small journals. *Obedience* is his first novel.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

James Pierce:

In this 21st hundred years, people become competitive in each and every way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these individuals survives, being in the middle of typically the crowded place and notice by surrounding. One thing that oftentimes many people have underestimated it for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a guide your ability to survive raise then having chance to remain than other is high. For yourself who want to start reading some sort of book, we give you this specific *Obedience: A Novel* book as beginning and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is usually more than just a book.

Sandra Spier:

Information is provisions for those to get better life, information currently can get by anyone in everywhere. The information can be a know-how or any news even a concern. What people must be consider while those information which is inside former life are challenging to be find than now's taking seriously which one is suitable to believe or which one the actual resource are convinced. If you get the unstable resource then you have it as your main information there will be huge disadvantage for you. All of those possibilities will not happen in you if you take *Obedience: A Novel* as the daily resource information.

Larry Swartz:

The book untitled *Obedience: A Novel* contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains the girl idea with easy way. The language is very straightforward all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read the item. The book was authored by famous author. The author provides you in the new period of literary works. It is easy to read this book because you can read more your smart phone, or product, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. In a situation you wish to purchase the e-book, you can open up their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

Ernest Bryan:

Reading a book make you to get more knowledge from that. You can take knowledge and information from the book. Book is prepared or printed or descriptive from each source that will filled update of news. With this modern era like right now, many ways to get information are available for you actually. From media social similar to newspaper, magazines, science book, encyclopedia, reference book, novel and comic. You can add your knowledge by that book. Do you want to spend your spare time to open your book? Or just trying to find the Obedience: A Novel when you desired it?

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