



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

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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:

Alan Durham:

Now a day people who Living in the era just where everything reachable by interact with the internet and the resources within it can be true or not demand people to be aware of each details they get. How a lot more to be smart in acquiring any information nowadays? Of course the reply is reading a book. Reading through a book can help folks out of this uncertainty Information mainly this Obedience: A Novel book since this book offers you rich info and knowledge. Of course the info in this book hundred percent guarantees there is no doubt in it you know.

Anthony Vice:

The event that you get from Obedience: A Novel is a more deep you digging the information that hide in the words the more you get serious about reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to understand but Obedience: A Novel giving you buzz feeling of reading. The author conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by means of anyone who read the idea because the author of this book is well-known enough. This particular book also makes your current vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this specific Obedience: A Novel instantly.

Kayla France:

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Jessie Davis:

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