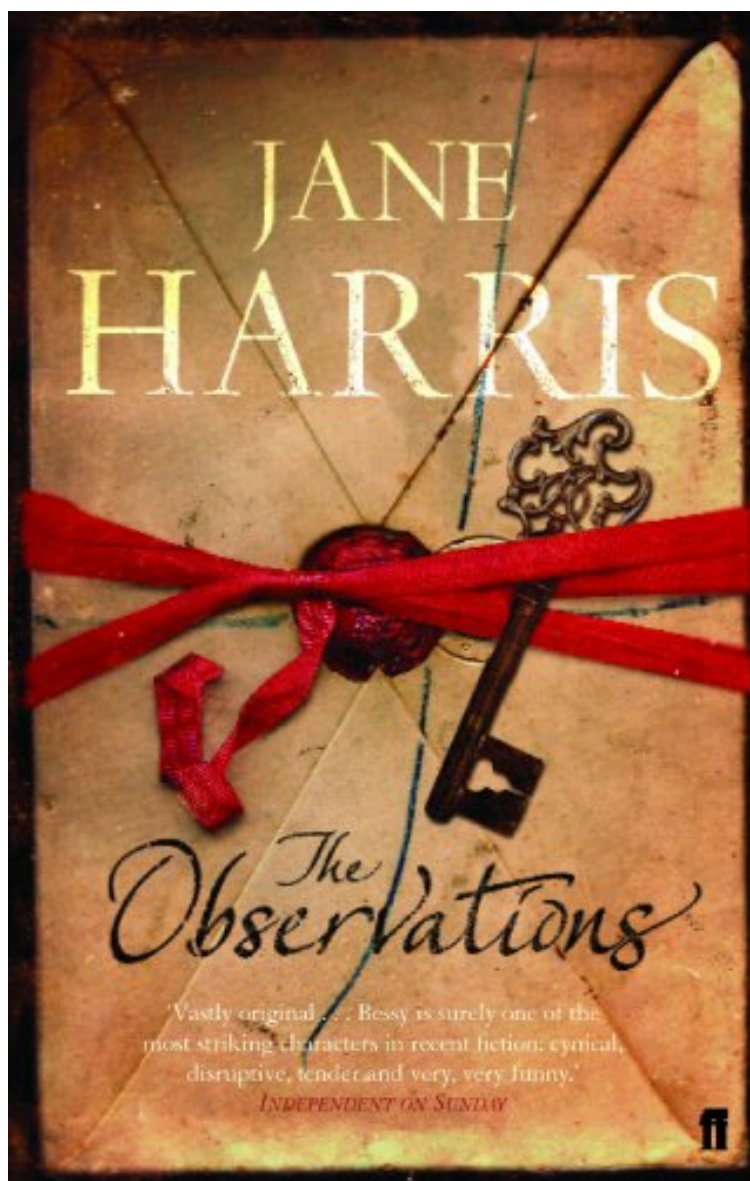


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## The Observations (English Edition)



*Par Jane Harris*  
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[Free] The Observations (English Edition)

**Par Jane Harris : The Observations (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Observations (English Edition):

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**Description :** Description du produit An extraordinary historical novel about a peculiar friendship between the mistress of a Scottish estate and her irresistibly appealing housemaid Winner of the Book of the Month Club First Fiction Prize Scotland, 1863. In an attempt to escape her not-so-innocent past in Glasgow, Bessy Buckley—a wide-eyed and feisty young Irish girl—takes a job as a maid in a big house outside Edinburgh working for the beautiful Arabella—the "missus." Bessy lacks the necessary scullery skills for her new position, but as she finds out, it is her ability to read and write that makes her such a desirable property. Bessy is intrigued by her new employer but puzzled by her increasingly strange requests and her insistence that Bessy keep a journal of her mundane chores and most intimate thoughts. And it seems that the missus has a few secrets of her own, including her near-obsessive affection for Nora, a former maid who died in mysterious circumstances. Giving in to her curiosity, Bessy makes an infuriating discovery and, out of

jealousy, concocts a childish prank that backfires and threatens to jeopardize all that she has come to hold dear. Yet even when caught up in a tangle of madness, ghosts, sex, and lies, she remains devoted to Arabella. But who is really responsible for what happened to her predecessor Nora? As her past threatens to catch up with her and raise the stakes even further, Bessy begins to realize that she has not quite landed on her feet. *The Observations* is a brilliantly original, endlessly intriguing story of one woman's journey from a difficult past into an even more disturbing present, narrated by one of the most vividly imagined heroines in recent fiction. This powerful story of secrets and suspicions, hidden histories and mysterious disappearances is at once compelling and heart-warming, showing the redemptive power of loyalty and friendship. A hugely assured and darkly funny debut, *The Observations* is certain to establish Jane Harris as a significant new literary talent.

Presentation de l'auteur 'Vastly original. Bessy is surely one of the most striking characters in recent fiction: cynical, disruptive, tender and very, very funny.' Independent on Sunday Shortlisted for the Orange Prize Scotland, 1993. In an attempt to escape her past, Bessy Buckley takes a job working as a maid in a big country house. But when Arabella, her beautiful mistress, asks her to undertake a series of bizarre tasks, Bessy begins to realise that she hasn't quite landed on her feet. In one of the most acclaimed debuts of recent years, Jane Harris has created a heroine who will make you laugh and cry as she narrates this unforgettable story about secrets and suspicions and the redemptive power of love and friendship. From Publishers Weekly Bessy Buckley comes upon Castle Haivers on her way to Edinburgh in 1863. An Irish girl, she's in "Scratchland" to improve her station, and ends up a scullery maid to a strange, lovely mistress, Arabella Reid (on whom she develops something of a crush), despite her lack of experience. Bessy's discovery of Arabella's book, *The Observations*, which she is writing about servants she's had and their cooperativeness, tests her loyalty to Arabella ("the missus") five-fold and sets in motion a tragedy (complete with supernatural elements). Bessy learns that being above-stairs is no guarantee of happiness, and others may have as much to hide as she does. Sharp, funny and tender-hearted, Bessy is an accomplishment for Londoner and first-time novelist Harris, who also manages the pace, period and book-within-a-book conceit nicely. (June 19) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Booklist Harris' debut, set in Scotland in 1863, is narrated by the lively, sharp Bessy Buckley, who leaves Glasgow and happens into a job as a maid at Castle Haivers, an estate nowhere near as grand as its name suggests. Her mistress, Arabella, takes a personal interest in Bessy and encourages her to write her thoughts and experiences in a journal. She also subjects Bessy to odd experiments, but Bessy goes along with them because she is flattered by the attention and quickly growing attached to her mistress. Things change when Bessy snoops in Arabella's locked desk and discovers the book Arabella has been writing, *The Observations*, a study of the "habits and nature of the Domestic Class." Bessy is incensed to read some less-than-favorable things about herself in the account, as well as to learn of her mistress' affection for one of her predecessors, a girl who died under mysterious circumstances. Bessy concocts a revenge that ends up having consequences far more lasting than she ever envisioned. Bessy's unique, witty voice distinguishes this boisterous novel. Kristine Huntley Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved