


# Serious Men: A Novel

*By Manu Joseph*

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**Serious Men: A Novel** By Manu Joseph

A poignant, bitingly funny Indian satire and love story set in a scientific institute and in Mumbai's humid tenements.

Ayyan Mani will not be constrained by Indian traditions. Despite working at the Institute of Theory and Research in Mumbai as the lowly personal assistant to a brilliant but insufferable astronomer, he dreams of more for himself and his family.

Ever wily and ambitious, Ayyan weaves two plots: the first to cheer up his weary, soap-opera-addicted wife by creating outrageous fictions around their ten-year-old son; the other to sabotage the married director by using his boss's seeming romance with the institute's first female—and very attractive—researcher. Meanwhile, as the institute's Brahmins wage a vicious war over theories about alien life, Ayyan sees his deceptions intertwining and setting in motion a series of extraordinary events he cannot stop. Unfailingly funny and irreverent, *Serious Men* is at once a hilarious portrayal of runaway egos and ambitions and a moving portrait of love and its strange workings.

One of 2010's "First Novels to Savor." —*Sunday Telegraph*

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Joseph, an editor of magazines in India, sets up in his debut a subtly wicked satire of subterfuge and ambition that bounces between the Mumbai tenement where low-caste Ayyan Mani lives, and the esteemed research institute where he labors as the assistant of top researcher Arvind Acharya. Forever spiteful toward his privileged superiors, Ayyan is deviously mischievous and pulls off a stunt that ends with his half-deaf (but otherwise ordinary) son being proclaimed in the local news as a boy genius. Meanwhile, Arvind is obsessed with proving his theory that extraterrestrial microbes are raining down on Earth from the upper atmosphere. While his theory is promising, an affair with a seductive astrobiologist threatens to cost him his life's work. Naturally, the conniving Ayyan is involved there as well. While Ayyan's inspired smalltime villainy drives the narrative and provides more than its share of humor, it's occasionally undermined by overheated prose and uneven pacing that spirals into a panicked blitz near the end. Overall, though, this is a sharp, au courant satire, like a more mannered White Tiger.
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From Booklist
This ambitious debut cleverly weaves diverging plots of love, knowledge, class, and ambition. Low-caste Ayyan Mani works as an assistant to the director of the Institute of Theory and Research, where he carefully observes the interactions of the institute’s scientists. At night he returns to his small Mumbai tenement apartment, which he shares with his anxious wife and ten-year-old son Adi. Yearning for a better life for his family, Ayyan begins to spin a series of fabricated tales about his handicapped son, stories that slowly propel a series of life-changing events. Meanwhile, Ayyan’s hard-nosed genius boss, Arvind Acharya, is fixated on his theory of alien existence, and puts his professional reputation on the line. Arvind’s credibility is further complicated by the arrival of the institute’s first female researcher, a young woman who is attractive and manipulative. As Arvind’s professional ambitions give way to personal desire, Ayyan’s carefully constructed fictions begin to arouse suspicion. Joseph’s finely portrayed characters exude wit and warmth in this engaging and introspective tale. --Leah Strauss

Review
“*Serious Men* goes beyond genre. It is indeed satirical but foremost, it is an amazingly accurate depiction of reality. Joseph is an acute, sensitive observer and his writing accumulates the myriad circumstantial details of everyday life which makes it real. … It’s been a very good year for South Asian English novels and *Serious Men* could be the pick of the crop.” (Pratik Kanjilal - Hindustan Times)

## Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**James Baron:**

Why? Because this Serious Men: A Novel is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap it but latter it will shock you with the secret the idea inside. Reading this book next to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such amazing way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you because of not hesitating having this anymore or you going to regret it. This unique book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book have got such as help improving your skill and your critical thinking method. So , still want to

hesitate having that book? If I ended up you I will go to the book store hurriedly.

**Marcy Madison:**

Are you kind of occupied person, only have 10 or maybe 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind proficiency or thinking skill also analytical thinking? Then you are having problem with the book than can satisfy your short period of time to read it because this time you only find publication that need more time to be read. Serious Men: A Novel can be your answer given it can be read by you who have those short extra time problems.

**David Rutherford:**

In this age globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of personal references to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The actual book that recommended to you is Serious Men: A Novel this publication consist a lot of the information on the condition of this world now. That book was represented how can the world has grown up. The vocabulary styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some analysis when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book suitable all of you.

**Veronica Shriner:**

As a pupil exactly feel bored to be able to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library as well as to make summary for some e-book, they are complained. Just very little students that has reading's internal or real their interest. They just do what the educator want, like asked to go to the library. They go to at this time there but nothing reading seriously. Any students feel that reading is not important, boring along with can't see colorful pics on there. Yeah, it is being complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we know that on this age, many ways to get whatever we would like. Likewise word says, many ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Serious Men: A Novel can make you feel more interested to read.


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