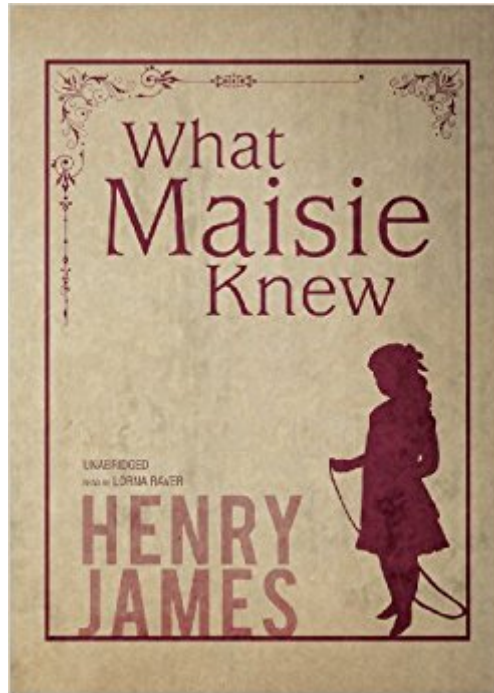


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# Chaos (Playaway Adult Fiction)



## Synopsis

#1 New York Times bestselling author Patricia Cornwell returns with the remarkable twenty-fourth thriller in her popular high-stakes series starring medical examiner Dr. Kay Scarpetta. In the quiet of twilight, on an early autumn day, twenty-six-year-old Elisa Vandersteel is killed while riding her bicycle along the Charles River. It appears she was struck by lightning--except the weather is perfectly clear with not a cloud in sight. Dr. Kay Scarpetta, the Cambridge Forensic Center's director and chief, decides at the scene that this is no accidental Act of God. Her investigation becomes complicated when she begins receiving a flurry of bizarre poems from an anonymous cyberbully who calls himself Tailend Charlie. Though subsequent lab results support Scarpetta's conclusions, the threatening messages don't stop. When the tenth poem arrives exactly twenty-four hours after Elisa's death, Scarpetta begins to suspect the harasser is involved, and sounds the alarm to her investigative partner Pete Marino and her husband, FBI analyst Benton Wesley. She also enlists the help of her niece, Lucy. But to Scarpetta's surprise, tracking the slippery Tailend Charlie is nearly impossible, even for someone as brilliant as her niece. Also, Lucy can't explain how this anonymous nemesis could have access to private information. To make matters worse, a venomous media is whipping the public into a frenzy, questioning the seasoned forensics chief's judgment and "a quack cause of death on a par with spontaneous combustion."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Reading Henry James is like putting a new faculty to the test. This is the true

morality. --Anita Brookner --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Founded in 1906 by J.M. Dent, the Everyman Library has always tried to make the best books ever written available to the greatest number of people at the lowest possible price. Unique editorial features that help Everyman Paperback Classics stand out from the crowd include: a leading scholar or literary critic's introduction to the text, a biography of the author, a chronology of her or his life and times, a historical selection of criticism, and a concise plot summary. All books published since 1993 have also been completely restyled: all type has been reset, to offer a clarity and ease of reading unique among editions of the classics; a vibrant, full-color cover design now complements these great texts with beautiful contemporary works of art. But the best feature must be Everyman's uniquely low price. Each Everyman title offers these extensive materials at a price that competes with the most inexpensive editions on the market-but Everyman Paperbacks have durable binding, quality paper, and the highest editorial and scholarly standards. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Henry James' story of a little girl who is shunted around, used by her parents as a bludgeoning tool, denied what's right for her years (academic and art education), and schooled instead in her adult friends' sexual soap operas, vile attitudes and standards of conduct, moved me greatly. It's been a long time since I felt so emotionally connected to my own extreme youth. The book caused me to reflect that perhaps this is at bottom how most children are reared - perhaps why the world is full of so many terrible people. Maisie's knowing plays out in several ways. I won't spoil it for you. I read a couple of James's novels in grad school; they did nothing for me. I think I wasn't mature enough for them. What *Maisie Knew* has made me a James fan, eager to re-read those two and more. By pure luck I've fallen into a *Wings of the Dove* reading group. It comes to me exactly at the right time.

(less)

I have finally finished this book. I decided to read a second Henry James novel just to see if it was the book or if I just was not a fan of his work. I can now say I am not a fan of his work. The story line is the raising of a small girl by her divorced parents. Both parents dislike each other and use the child to find out what each other is doing and use that information to further their mutual dislike and share their feelings with the young child whenever the child is residing with one of the parents. The parents remarry and the child is introduced to her step-parents. The step-parents each develop a relationship with the child. They become more caring and concerned with her well-being and enjoy

spending time with her, unlike her biological parents. There is also a governess in the cast. She also develops relationship with the child and each of the step-parents. James' writing style is quite verbose and makes it difficult to understand the relationships and what each adult is trying to accomplish in their relationship with the child. James writes in long, winding sentences that seem to go forward and then double back on themselves to add extra information or explanation of what the meat of the sentence is. I have read Anthony Trollope, Charles Dickens and others and enjoyed them. Perhaps if I had read this while attending a lit class focused on James I might have a better opinion of his work. As it is...this is my last attempt at reading Henry James.

James's middle-period style is less complex than the prose of his 'major phase,' but still may be off-putting to those who want a crisply told tale. But it is his style that makes for the richness of this narrative. Imagine: he uses language appropriate to a mature, well educated, cultivated adult, but limits his perceptions to those of which a girl of ten would be capable. We see what she sees, and infer what she misses, as she is shunted back and forth as the result of an increasingly messy divorce. Tender and heartbreaking, it is also artistically exhilarating.

Rich in detail, but difficult to read because of many very long sentences with ambiguous references. For example, a sentence would mention two female characters by name and then refer to one as "she" and the other as "her companion" (or something like that), and I couldn't tell which character was "she" or which was "her companion."

I read a lot of Henry James when I was young. I had not read this one and tried to read it, but gave up. It reminded me of Oscar Wilde's quip that Henry James writes prose as if it were a painful duty.

Perhaps the fault was mine but though I thoroughly enjoyed James' exploration of the uses a child is put to when her parents divorce amid absolute hatred, I also found the resolution disappointing. The plot would be more at home in the late 20th century rather than the late 19th in which it is set as Maisie is passed back and forth between her parents and their new spouses and is used as a weapon of war in the marital struggle. As her parents are revealed to care not a whit for their child the new spouses come to seem more likely than not to provide what care and comfort Maisie can expect in the future. James' famous reticence to commit himself is very much in evidence here as he even keeps it uncertain what age the child is and how much time has passed in the novel's journey. And of course, the ambiguity extends to what and when Maisie knew of the discussions

that go on around her. For me though I'll remember a feeling at novel's close of not being sure I particularly cared what Maisie knew perhaps due to the fact that no villain receives his or her comeuppance and Maisie at last failed to gain my sympathy.

Wow! Henry James is always an amazingly astute observer. This novel, which kept me racing along until I got to the very end reminded me of his other wonderful novel *The Turn of the Screw* in which young children are put into a truly unhappy situation. Maisie's point of view manages to convey the whole emotionally dreadful world that the adults around her create for each other and for Maisie. James is the master story teller and this is gripping.

James, without using any familiar jargon, explores the subtle and not so subtle dynamics between a young, growing child and the confusing sexualities of the adults present and not present. Masie develops her personality as an adaptation to these confusing and infusing dynamics. Very enlightening for us all!

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