

## The Organs of Sense: A Novel

Adam Ehrlich Sachs

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"[An] intellect with the timing of a borscht belt comedian" (*Publishers Weekly*), acclaimed author Adam Ehrlich Sachs brings his unique comic and philosophical sensibilities to his first novel, *The Organs of Sense*, an intricate nested fable equating our inability to truly understand the world with our inability to understand our own messy families.

In 1666, an astronomer makes a prediction shared by no one else in the world: At the stroke of noon on June 30 of that year, a solar eclipse will cast all of Europe into total darkness for four seconds. This astronomer is rumored to be using the largest telescope ever built, but he is also known to be blind—both his eyes have been plucked out under mysterious circumstances. Is he mad? Or does he, despite this impairment, have an insight denied the other scholars of his day?

These questions intrigue the young Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz—not yet the world-renowned polymath who would go on to discover calculus, but a nineteen-year-old whose faith in reason is shaky at best. Leibniz sets off to investigate the astronomer's claim, and in the three hours before the eclipse occurs—or fails to occur—the astronomer tells the scholar the story behind his strange prediction: a tale that ends up encompassing kings and princes, family squabbles, insanity, art, loss, and the horrors of war.

### The Organs of Sense: A Novel Details

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### **Bandit says**

This was more of an experimental read or unconventional, if you prefer, and boy, did it not work for me. In fact, it should have had really added non in its title for a more accurate description. It was easy enough to get what the author was going for...an absurdist historical comedy, but...but it was mainly just absurd. The plot was like a one punch joke stretched out too long, it's in fact quite difficult to adequately describe and since the book summary did the work, I'll leave it at that. The comedy came from a sort of repetetiveness best demonstrated by the muffin man...Do you know the muffin man? The muffin man? The muffin man...etc. But with a more time appropriate vocabulary, so words like glockenspiel. It goes on and on in seemingly unending serpentine sentences, virtually paragraph and dialect free. Characters ramble on in meandering monologues. The book moves like a drunk and reads like a fugue state. I mean, objectively it is the sort of thing someone might enjoy, but at best it is very, very much an acquired taste. And otherwise it's just a complete waste of time. An eclectic selection that didn't pan out really. I don't especially like the saying, but this one might have been too clever for its own good. Although it seems to have gotten great reviews everywhere. Thanks Netgalley.

#### **James Beggarly says**

I was lucky enough to win this in a Goodreads Giveaway. An astronomer with both eyes missing has predicted a solar eclipse and a very young Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, future father of calculus, travels from Germany to Bohemia to meet this astronomer in person. In the hours leading up to the predicted eclipse, the astronomer tells Leibniz the story of his life with his artist father, to serving his disturbed King and his equally disturbed children to his old age in the mountains where he studies the stars with ever larger telescopes. This is a very historically rich comedy told with great pathos throughout. A wonderful tale.