

# chad harbach the art of fielding

Chad Harbach The Art of Fielding: A Deep Dive into Baseball and Beyond

chad harbach the art of fielding is more than just a phrase—it's an invitation into a world where baseball meets literature, where the nuances of the sport become a canvas for exploring human nature, ambition, and friendship. Harbach's debut novel, *\*The Art of Fielding\**, has captivated readers with its rich storytelling and heartfelt depiction of college life centered around a small Midwestern university baseball team. If you're curious about what makes this novel stand out or want to understand its themes and impact, this article will take you through everything from its plot to its literary significance.

## Understanding Chad Harbach The Art of Fielding

When you hear "Chad Harbach," the first thing that likely comes to mind is *\*The Art of Fielding\**, his critically acclaimed novel published in 2011. Set at fictional Westish College, the story revolves around Henry Skrimshander, a gifted young shortstop whose extraordinary talent changes the dynamics of his team and the lives around him. Harbach's writing beautifully captures the tension and beauty of baseball, while simultaneously weaving a narrative about personal growth, relationships, and the delicate balance between success and failure.

What truly sets *\*The Art of Fielding\** apart is how Harbach uses baseball as a metaphor for life. The precision required to master the "art of fielding" mirrors the challenges the characters face off the field, including mental health struggles, identity, and the pressure to live up to expectations.

## The Plot in a Nutshell

At its core, the novel follows Henry Skrimshander's rise as a promising athlete who joins Westish College's baseball team. Alongside him are other key characters:

- Mike Schwartz, Henry's best friend and team captain
- Owen Dunne, the college president's son and aspiring writer
- Guert Affenlight, the team's coach grappling with his own past

As Henry's career soars, an unexpected error during a critical game triggers a downward spiral, affecting everyone connected to him. The story delicately explores themes of failure, redemption, and the intricacies of human connections.

## **Why Chad Harbach *The Art of Fielding* Resonates with Readers**

One reason *The Art of Fielding* has resonated so strongly is Harbach's ability to appeal to both baseball enthusiasts and readers who might not be familiar with the sport. His prose is accessible, passionate, and layered with emotion, making the novel a compelling read regardless of your familiarity with baseball terminology.

### **Baseball as a Literary Device**

Harbach's use of baseball extends beyond mere setting. The sport becomes a framework for exploring the characters' inner conflicts. For example, Henry's impeccable skill and subsequent struggles on the field symbolize the fragility of talent and the unpredictability of life. The "art of fielding" itself—catching, throwing, and positioning—becomes a metaphor for how individuals navigate their own emotional and psychological fields.

This approach has been praised for bringing new depth to sports fiction, often overlooked as lightweight or purely entertainment. Harbach proves that sports stories can carry profound philosophical and emotional weight.

## Character Development and Relationships

Another standout feature is the rich character development. Harbach doesn't just focus on Henry; the novel gives equal attention to Mike, Owen, and Guert, highlighting their ambitions, flaws, and transformations. Their friendships and romantic entanglements create a nuanced picture of college life and the pressures young adults face.

The dynamics between these characters reveal how success and failure ripple through communities. The camaraderie on the baseball team contrasts with personal insecurities and societal expectations, making the narrative feel authentic and relatable.

## Exploring Themes in Chad Harbach *The Art of Fielding*

Beyond baseball, *The Art of Fielding* tackles several universal themes that contribute to its lasting appeal.

### The Pursuit of Perfection

Harbach examines the human desire for perfection through Henry's journey. His initial flawless performance sets a high bar, but the pressure to maintain that perfection leads to anxiety and self-doubt. This theme echoes beyond sports, touching on how people often define themselves by their achievements and struggle when those achievements falter.

### Friendship and Loyalty

The novel also celebrates the strength and complexity of friendship. Mike's unwavering support for Henry, despite setbacks, demonstrates loyalty that transcends competition. Their bond highlights how

human connections can provide stability amid uncertainty.

## Identity and Self-Discovery

Owen Dunne's subplot as an aspiring writer adds another layer, exploring creativity and the search for personal identity. His relationship with his father, the college president, adds tension and depth, illustrating the challenge of carving out one's own path.

## Chad Harbach The Art of Fielding in Contemporary Literature

Since its release, *The Art of Fielding* has become a staple in the genre of sports literature, often cited alongside classics like Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* and W.P. Kinsella's *Shoeless Joe*. Harbach's fresh voice and insightful storytelling have helped elevate the status of baseball novels in the literary world.

## Critical Acclaim and Awards

The novel received widespread praise from critics and readers alike. It was a finalist for several awards and featured on numerous "best books of the year" lists. Reviewers highlighted Harbach's lyrical prose, well-rounded characters, and the novel's ability to transcend sports fiction clichés.

## Impact on Readers and Writers

For readers, *The Art of Fielding* offers both an emotional journey and a celebration of baseball's subtleties. For aspiring writers, Harbach's success story—publishing a debut novel that became a bestseller—serves as inspiration. His meticulous research and deep empathy for his characters show

the value of blending passion with craft.

## Tips for Readers Diving into Chad Harbach *The Art of Fielding*

If you decide to pick up *\*The Art of Fielding\**, here are some tips to enhance your reading experience:

- **Embrace the Baseball Terminology:** Even if you're not a baseball fan, Harbach's explanations are woven naturally into the narrative, helping you understand the game's intricacies without feeling overwhelmed.
- **Focus on Character Arcs:** Pay attention to how the characters evolve throughout the story—their growth is as compelling as the plot itself.
- **Reflect on the Metaphors:** Consider how the “art of fielding” represents more than just playing baseball—it's about how people handle challenges in life.
- **Discuss with Fellow Readers:** Joining book clubs or online forums can deepen your appreciation by hearing different perspectives on the novel's themes.

## The Legacy of Chad Harbach *The Art of Fielding*

Nearly a decade after its publication, *\*The Art of Fielding\** remains a beloved novel, cherished not only for its portrayal of baseball but for its universal messages about resilience and connection. Harbach's work continues to inspire new generations of readers and writers, proving that the art of storytelling is much like the art of fielding—requiring skill, heart, and a willingness to catch whatever life throws your way.

Whether you come to the book as a sports enthusiast or a literary lover, Chad Harbach's *The Art of Fielding* offers a beautifully crafted narrative that stays with you long after the final page.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Who is Chad Harbach, the author of 'The Art of Fielding'?

Chad Harbach is an American writer known for his debut novel *The Art of Fielding*, which explores themes of baseball, friendship, and personal growth.

### What is the main plot of 'The Art of Fielding'?

The novel follows Henry Skrimshander, a talented college baseball player at Westish College, and delves into his struggles with pressure, relationships, and his love for the game.

### What themes are explored in 'The Art of Fielding'?

The book explores themes such as ambition, failure, friendship, identity, and the impact of sports on personal and communal life.

### How has 'The Art of Fielding' been received by critics?

The novel received widespread acclaim for its rich character development, lyrical prose, and insightful portrayal of baseball and human nature.

### Is 'The Art of Fielding' based on real events or purely fictional?

The story is a work of fiction, though it incorporates realistic elements of collegiate baseball and human experience.

## What inspired Chad Harbach to write 'The Art of Fielding'?

Harbach was inspired by his own love of baseball and the complexities of sports culture, aiming to capture the emotional and psychological challenges athletes face.

## What role does baseball play in 'The Art of Fielding'?

Baseball serves as both the setting and a metaphor for life's challenges, highlighting themes of teamwork, failure, and redemption.

## Are there significant secondary characters in 'The Art of Fielding'?

Yes, characters such as Mike Schwartz, a talented pitcher and Henry's roommate, and Owen Dunne, a college president, play crucial roles in the story's development.

## Has 'The Art of Fielding' won any awards or recognitions?

While it did not win major literary awards, the novel was widely praised, became a bestseller, and was included in several 'best of' lists in 2011 and 2012.

## Additional Resources

Chad Harbach's *The Art of Fielding*: A Deep Dive into Baseball and Human Complexity

chad harbach the art of fielding has emerged as a notable literary work that intricately weaves the nuances of baseball with profound explorations of identity, ambition, and human vulnerability. Since its publication in 2011, Harbach's debut novel has garnered critical acclaim and a devoted readership, praised for its elegant prose and multidimensional characters. This article offers a comprehensive analysis of *The Art of Fielding*, placing the novel within the broader context of sports literature while examining its thematic richness and narrative craftsmanship.

# Exploring \*The Art of Fielding\*: Synopsis and Context

Set at the fictional Westish College, a small liberal arts institution in Wisconsin, \*The Art of Fielding\* centers on Henry Skrimshander, a gifted shortstop whose extraordinary talent promises a bright future in baseball. As Henry navigates the pressures of athletic excellence alongside personal insecurities, the novel concurrently follows the lives of other central characters, including Mike Schwartz, the team captain and catcher; Owen Dunne, a freshman with an unrequited love for Mike; and Guert Affenlight, the college president grappling with his own past and the institution's future.

Harbach's narrative transcends the typical sports novel archetype by emphasizing psychological depth and emotional complexity. The novel's focus on baseball serves as a metaphorical framework to explore themes of perfectionism, failure, friendship, and the pursuit of meaning.

## Thematic Depth and Character Development

At its core, \*The Art of Fielding\* examines the fragility of human ambition. Henry's journey is a compelling portrait of a young athlete confronting the loss of control when a sudden injury threatens to derail his career. This grappling with vulnerability is emblematic of a broader human experience, resonating beyond the confines of sports enthusiasts.

Mike Schwartz's character adds another layer, depicting leadership and loyalty under strain. His dynamic with Henry underscores the complexities of friendship, mentorship, and the shifting boundaries within competitive environments. Meanwhile, Guert Affenlight's narrative arc highlights themes of redemption and the weight of personal history, enriching the novel's emotional landscape.

By intertwining these character trajectories, Harbach crafts a tapestry that reflects the intricate interplay between personal aspirations and external pressures.



# Literary Style and Narrative Techniques

Harbach's writing style in *\*The Art of Fielding\** is characterized by lyrical prose and careful attention to detail. The author employs a third-person omniscient point of view that allows readers intimate access to each character's thoughts and feelings. This narrative choice fosters empathy and facilitates a multifaceted exploration of the novel's central themes.

The pacing of the novel balances moments of intense action on the baseball diamond with reflective, introspective passages. Harbach's descriptive prowess brings the technical aspects of baseball to life without alienating readers unfamiliar with the sport. His detailed portrayal of the game's mechanics complements the psychological depth of the characters, making the sport an integral part of the narrative rather than a mere backdrop.

Moreover, Harbach's use of symbolism—such as the recurring motif of the baseball glove—serves to reinforce the novel's meditation on control, skill, and the human desire for mastery.

## Comparative Analysis: *\*The Art of Fielding\** within Sports Literature

When compared to other prominent sports novels, *\*The Art of Fielding\** stands out for its literary ambition and emotional resonance. Unlike straightforward sports biographies or inspirational tales, Harbach's work delves into the existential dilemmas faced by athletes, aligning more closely with novels like Bernard Malamud's *\*The Natural\** or Michael Shaara's *\*The Killer Angels\** in its complex characterization and thematic depth.

While many sports novels focus on triumph and glory, *\*The Art of Fielding\** offers a nuanced examination of failure and recovery, positioning it as a modern classic in the genre. Its appeal extends beyond baseball aficionados, attracting readers interested in character-driven stories about growth and self-discovery.

# Strengths and Limitations of \*The Art of Fielding\*

## Strengths

- **Rich Characterization:** The multidimensional portrayal of characters allows for a profound emotional connection.
- **Authentic Baseball Details:** Harbach's insider knowledge provides an immersive experience for readers.
- **Universal Themes:** The novel transcends sports to explore themes relevant to a broad audience.
- **Elegant Prose:** The writing style is both accessible and artistically refined.

## Limitations

- **Slow Narrative Pacing:** Some readers may find the introspective passages overly detailed or sluggish.
- **Predictability:** Certain plot developments align with conventional coming-of-age tropes.
- **Limited Diversity:** The cast of characters is primarily homogeneous, which may narrow perspectives.

Despite these critiques, *\*The Art of Fielding\** maintains its status as a compelling exploration of the human condition framed within the arena of collegiate baseball.

## Impact and Cultural Significance

Since its release, *\*The Art of Fielding\** has influenced both literary circles and sports culture. The novel has been celebrated for reinvigorating the baseball novel genre, inspiring discussions about the intersection between athletics and artistry. Its success also propelled Chad Harbach into the spotlight as a significant contemporary American novelist.

The book's appeal lies in its ability to resonate with readers who appreciate the intricate balance between physical skill and emotional resilience. Its presence in academic syllabi and book clubs attests to its enduring relevance and capacity to provoke thoughtful analysis.

Furthermore, *\*The Art of Fielding\** has contributed to a broader appreciation of sports literature as a vehicle for serious literary inquiry, challenging stereotypes that often marginalize athletic narratives.

## Chad Harbach's Contribution to Modern Literature

Harbach's debut novel showcases the potential for sports-themed literature to engage with complex social and psychological issues. His meticulous character development and narrative layering position him alongside authors who transcend genre boundaries.

By merging the specifics of baseball with universal human experiences, Harbach crafts a literary work that appeals to a diverse readership. His success underscores the evolving landscape of contemporary fiction, where genre blending and thematic depth are increasingly valued.

In the context of 21st-century American literature, Chad Harbach's *\*The Art of Fielding\** exemplifies how sports narratives can serve as profound examinations of identity, ambition, and the fragility of

dreams.

## **Chad Harbach The Art Of Fielding**

**chad harbach the art of fielding:** *The Art of Fielding* Chad Harbach, 2011-09-07 A disastrous error on the field sends five lives into a tailspin in this widely acclaimed tale about love, life, and baseball, praised by the New York Times as wonderful...a novel that is every bit as entertaining as it is affecting. Named one of the year's best books by the New York Times, NPR, The New Yorker, Los Angeles Times, Washington Post, Wall Street Journal, Christian Science Monitor, Bloomberg, Kansas City Star, Richmond Times-Dispatch, and Time Out New York. At Westish College, a small school on the shore of Lake Michigan, baseball star Henry Skrimshander seems destined for big league stardom. But when a routine throw goes disastrously off course, the fates of five people are upended. Henry's fight against self-doubt threatens to ruin his future. College president Guert Affenlight, a longtime bachelor, has fallen unexpectedly and helplessly in love. Owen Dunne, Henry's gay roommate and teammate, becomes caught up in a dangerous affair. Mike Schwartz, the Harpooners' team captain and Henry's best friend, realizes he has guided Henry's career at the expense of his own. And Pella Affenlight, Guert's daughter, returns to Westish after escaping an ill-fated marriage, determined to start a new life. As the season counts down to its climactic final game, these five are forced to confront their deepest hopes, anxieties, and secrets. In the process they forge new bonds, and help one another find their true paths. Written with boundless intelligence and filled with the tenderness of youth, *The Art of Fielding* is an expansive, warmhearted novel about ambition and its limits, about family and friendship and love, and about commitment -- to oneself and to others. First novels this complete and consuming come along very, very seldom. --Jonathan Franzen

**chad harbach the art of fielding: The Art of Fielding** Chad Harbach, 2011-09-27 A baseball star at a small college near Lake Michigan launches a routine throw that goes disastrously off course and inadvertently changes the lives of five people, including the college president, a gay teammate, and the president's daughter.

**chad harbach the art of fielding:** *The Art of Fielding* Chad Harbach, 2011-09-01 A wonderful, warm novel from a major American voice.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: The Art of Editing** Tim Groenland, 2019-02-21 The place of the editor in literary production is an ambiguous and often invisible one, requiring close attention to publishing history and (often inaccessible) archival resources to bring it into focus. In *The Art of Editing*, Tim Groenland shows that the critical tendency to overlook the activities of editors and to focus on the solitary author figure neglects important elements of how literary works are acquired, developed and disseminated. Focusing on selected works of fiction by Raymond Carver and David Foster Wallace, authors who represent stylistic touchstones for US fiction of recent decades, Groenland presents two case studies of editorial collaboration. Carver's early stories were integral to the emergence of the Minimalist movement in the 1980s, while Wallace's novels marked a generational shift towards a more expansive, maximal mode of narrative. The role of their respective editors, however, is often overlooked. Gordon Lish's part in shaping the form of Carver's early stories remains under-explored; analyses of Wallace's fiction, meanwhile, tend to minimise Michael Pietsch's role from the creation of *Infinite Jest* during the mid-1990s until the present day. Drawing on extensive archival research as well as interviews with editors and collaborators, Groenland illuminates the complex and often conflicting forms of agency involved in the genesis of these influential works. The energies and tensions of the editing process emerge as essential factors in the creation of fictions more commonly understood within the paradigm of solitary authorship. The mediating role of the editor is, Groenland argues, inseparable from the development, form, and

reception of these works.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *The Routledge Companion to Masculinity in American Literature and Culture*** Lydia R. Cooper, 2021-12-26 Recently, the U.S. has seen a rise in misogynistic and race-based violence perpetrated by men expressing a sense of grievance, from incels to alt-right activists. Grounding sociological, historical, political, and economic analyses of masculinity through the lens of cultural narratives in many forms and expressions, *The Routledge Companion to Masculinity in American Literature and Culture* suggests that how we examine the stories that shape us in turn shapes our understanding of our current reality and gives us language for imagining better futures. Masculinity is more than a description of traits associated with particular performances of gender. It is more than a study of gender and social power. It is an examination of the ways in which gender affects our capacity to engage ethically with each other in complex human societies. This volume offers essays from a range of established, global experts in American masculinity as well as new and upcoming scholars in order to explore not just what masculinity once meant, has come to mean, and may mean in the future in the U.S.; it also articulates what is at stake with our conceptions of masculinity.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *The Brightness*** Chad Harbach, 2023-06-08

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *Danger on the Page*** Brian Shawver, 2015-04-07 Although fiction writers must concern themselves with big picture issues such as plot, theme, and character development, much of the day-to-day work of writing involves finding answers to seemingly minor questions: How should I describe the exterior of a house? How can I construct the voice of a historical narrator with authenticity? How should I depict a physically atypical character? Few books on the market address the problems and opportunities present in these and other questions, yet they are the ones that most writers grapple with on a daily basis. *Danger on the Page: A Fiction Writer's Guide to Sex, Violence, Dead Narrators, and Other Challenges* identifies and explores some of the more common and intractable situational challenges of fiction writing, with chapters grouped into the general subject areas such as scenes, characters, points of view, and settings. Shawver delves into the pitfalls and opportunities of writing about sex, violence, sports, and love; he examines writing from the perspective of a different race, gender, or species; he interrogates conventional beliefs about the use of brand names, the description of architecture, and the portrayal of nature. Throughout, he gives dozens of examples from both literary and commercial fiction so readers can borrow (or reject) other writers' techniques and explore the myriad challenges of fiction writing on their own. A lively and witty approach to a diverse range of specific writing issues, Shawver's book will appeal especially to intermediate-level writers seeking to bring their craft to the next level.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2015-2016*** William M. Simons, 2017-03-24 Widely acknowledged as the preeminent gathering of baseball scholars, the annual Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture has made significant contributions to baseball research. This collection of 15 new essays selected from the 2015 and the 2016 symposia examines topics whose importance extend beyond the ballpark. Presented in six parts, the essays explore Biography: From Mythology to Authenticity, Gender and Generations, Race and Ethnicity on the Base Paths, Ballparks Abandoned and Envisioned, Baseball Cinema, and Business, Law and the Game.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *A Literary Cavalcade—III*** Robert A. Parker, 2012-09-27 Author Robert A. Parker has compiled here his critique of hundreds of novels he has read. This is the third of six volumes that cover authors alphabetically, in this case from George Gissing to Milan Kundera. More than 85 authors are represented, including Greene, Hawthorne, Hemingway, Hersey, Horgan, James, Joyce, Kazantzakis, Kafka, Kennedy, and King. They reflect a broad range of writing styles, cultural influences, and moral philosophies. All works are rated on their literary achievement, the effectiveness of plot, character, and setting, plus their recognition of the moral, ethical and spiritual values of mankind. Here is a unique critical perspective that measures the meaning of literature against the meaning of life.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: *The Next Time You See Me*** Holly Goddard Jones, 2013 A

brilliantly nuanced, psychologically astute crime debut that explores the fault-lines of a small community - their hidden desires and their other, secret selves.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: The Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture, 2019 and 2021** William M. Simons, 2022-05-16 Selected from the two most recent proceedings of the Cooperstown Symposium on Baseball and American Culture (2019 and 2021), this collection of essays explores subject matter centered both inside and beyond the ballpark. Fifteen contributors offer critical commentary on a range of topics, including controversial decisions on the field and in Hall of Fame elections; baseball's historical role as a rite of passage for boys; two worthy catchers who never received their due; the genesis and development of the minor leagues; and baseball's place in popular culture.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: The Bestseller Code** Jodie Archer, Matthew L. Jockers, 2016-09-20 When a story captures the imagination of millions, that's magic. Can you qualify magic? Archer and Jockers just may have done so.—Sylvia Day, New York Times bestselling author Ask most people about massive success in the world of fiction, and you'll typically hear that it's a game of hazy crystal balls. The sales figures of E. L. James or Dan Brown seem to be freakish—random occurrences in an unknowable market. But what if there were an algorithm that could reveal a secret DNA of bestsellers, regardless of their genre? What if it knew, just from analyzing the words alone, not just why genre writers like John Grisham and Danielle Steel belong on the lists, but also that authors such as Junot Diaz, Jodi Picoult, and Donna Tartt had telltale signs of success all over their pages? Thanks to Jodie Archer and Matthew Jockers, the algorithm exists, the code has been cracked, and the results bring fresh new insights into how fiction works and why we read. The Bestseller Code offers a new theory for why *Fifty Shades of Grey* sold so well. It sheds light on the current craze for dark heroines. It reveals which themes tend to sell best. And all with fascinating supporting data taken from a five-year study of twenty thousand novels. Then there is the hunt for the one—the paradigmatic example of bestselling writing according to a computer's analysis of thousands of points of data. The result is surprising, a bit ironic, and delightfully unorthodox. This book explains groundbreaking text-mining research in accessible terms and offers a new perspective on the New York Times bestseller list. It's a big-idea book about the relationship between creativity and technology that will be provocative to anyone interested in how analytics have already transformed the worlds of finance, medicine, and sports. But at heart it is a celebration of books for readers and writers—a compelling investigation into how successful writing works, and a fresh take on our intellectual and emotional response to stories.

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**chad harbach the art of fielding: Holism and the Cultivation of Excellence in Sports and Performance** Jesus Ilundain-Agurruza, 2018-02-02 Skillful Striving is a multi-methodological and cross-cultural examination of how we flourish holistically through performative endeavors, e.g., sports, martial and performing arts. Relying primarily on sport philosophy, value theory, phenomenology, philosophy of mind, pragmatism, and East Asian philosophies (Japanese and Chinese), it espouses thick holism. Concerned with an integrative bodymind gradually achieved through performance that aims at excellence, the process of self-cultivation proper of thick holism

relies on an ecologically rich epistemic landscape where skills are coupled to virtues in pragmatic contexts. Ultimately, this process results in admirable performances and exemplary character. Japanese dō (practices of self-cultivation) are prominent modes and models of such flourishing. A holistic and radically enactive approach that advances contentless capacities in lieu of representations transparently accounts for the kind of action that characterizes such expert performances. Importantly, these performer-centered endeavors unfold within communities that foster the cultivation of our abilities as lifelong quests for human excellence. Each chapter can be read independently but still forms part of a continuous argumentative and narrative thread. This book was previously published as a special issue of *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy*.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: Memory in the Twenty-First Century** Sebastian Groes, 2016-03-29 This book maps and analyses the changing state of memory at the start of the twenty-first century in essays written by scientists, scholars and writers. It recontextualises memory by investigating the impact of new conditions such as the digital revolution, climate change and an ageing population on our world.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: Dive Deeper** George Cotkin, 2012-08-01 An easy-to-navigate guide to Herman Melville's epic American novel, *Dive Deeper* consists of 135 brief chapters, along with Etymology, Extracts, and Epilogue, each keyed to a phrase, issue, image, sensibility or notion in corresponding chapters of the original.

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**chad harbach the art of fielding: Becoming Bestsellers: John Grisham and Danielle Steel (Sample from Chapter 2 of THE BESTSELLER CODE)** Jodie Archer, Matthew L. Jockers, 2016-08-16 This sneak peek teaser - featuring literary giants John Grisham and Danielle Steele - from Chapter 2 of *The Bestseller Code*, a groundbreaking book about what a computer algorithm can teach us about blockbuster books, stories, and reading, reveals the importance of topic and theme in bestselling fiction according to percentages assigned by what the authors refer to as the "bestseller-ometer." Although 55,000 novels are published every year, only about 200 hit the lists, a commercial success rate of less than half a percent. When the computer was asked to "blindly" select the most likely bestsellers out of 5,000 books published over the past thirty years based only on theme, it discovered two possible candidates: *The Accident* by Danielle Steel and *The Associate* by John Grisham. The computer recognized quantifiable patterns in their seemingly opposite, but undeniably successful writing careers with legal thrillers and romance. In Chapter 2, Archer and Jockers analyze this data and divulge the most and least likely to best sell topics and themes in fiction with a human discussion of the "why" behind these results. *The Bestseller Code* is a big-idea book about the relationship between creativity and technology. At heart it is a celebration of books for readers and writers—a compelling investigation into how successful writing works.

**chad harbach the art of fielding: Peripheral Desires** Robert Deam Tobin, 2015-09-11 In *Peripheral Desires*, Robert Deam Tobin charts the emergence, from the 1830s through the early twentieth century, of a new vocabulary and science of human sexuality in the writings of literary authors, politicians, and members of the medical establishment in German-speaking central Europe—and observes how consistently these writers, thinkers, and scientists associated the new nonnormative sexualities with places away from the German metropolises of Berlin and Vienna. In the writings of Aimée Duc and Lou Andreas-Salomé, Switzerland figured as a place for women in particular to escape the sexual confines of Germany. The sexual ethnologies of Ferdinand Karsch-Haack and the popular novels of Karl May linked nonnormative sexualities with the colonies and, in particular, with German Samoa. Same-sex desire was perhaps the most centrifugal sexuality of all, as so-called Greek love migrated to numerous places and peoples: a curious connection between homosexuality and Hungarian nationalism emerged in the writings of Adalbert Stifter and Karl Maria Kerbeny; Arnold Zweig built on a long and extremely well-developed gradation of associating homosexuality with Jewishness, projecting the entire question of same-sex desire onto the physical territory of Palestine; and Thomas Mann, of course, famously associated male-male desire with the fantastically liminal city of Venice, lying between land and sea, Europe and the Orient. As Germany—and German-speaking Europe—became a fertile ground for homosexual subcultures in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, what factors helped construct the sexuality that emerged? *Peripheral Desires* examines how and why the political, scientific and literary culture of the region produced the modern vocabulary of sexuality.

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