



# A Gambler's Anatomy: A Novel

*Jonathan Lethem*

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**A Gambler's Anatomy: A Novel** Jonathan Lethem

**The author of *Motherless Brooklyn* and *The Fortress of Solitude* returns with a devilishly entertaining novel about an international backgammon hustler who thinks he's psychic. Too bad about the tumor in his face.**

Handsome, impeccably tuxedoed Bruno Alexander travels the world winning large sums of money from amateur "whales" who think they can challenge his peerless acumen at backgammon. Fronted by his pasty, vampiric manager, Edgar Falk, Bruno arrives in Berlin after a troubling run of bad luck in Singapore. Perhaps it was the chance encounter with his crass childhood acquaintance Keith Stolarsky and his smoldering girlfriend Tira Harpaz. Or perhaps it was the emergence of a blot that distorts his vision so he has to look at the board sideways.

Things don't go much better in Berlin. Bruno's flirtation with Madchen, the striking blonde he meets on the ferry, is inconclusive; the game at the unsettling Herr Kohler's mansion goes awry as his blot grows worse; he passes out and is sent to the local hospital, where he is given an extremely depressing diagnosis. Having run through Falk's money, Bruno turns to Stolarsky, who, for reasons of his own, agrees to fly Bruno to Berkeley, and to pay for the experimental surgery that might save his life.

Berkeley, where Bruno discovered his psychic abilities, and to which he vowed never to return. Amidst the patchouli flashbacks and Anarchist gambits of the local scene, between Tira's come-ons and Keith's machinations, Bruno confronts two existential questions: Is the gambler being played by life? And what if you're telepathic but it doesn't do you any good?

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