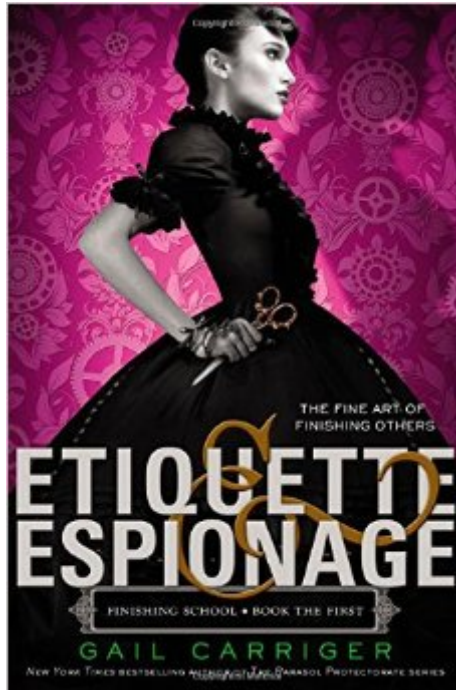


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# Etiquette & Espionage (Finishing School)



## Synopsis

It's one thing to learn to curtsy properly. It's quite another to learn to curtsy and throw a knife at the same time. Welcome to Finishing School. Fourteen-year-old Sophronia is a great trial to her poor mother. Sophronia is more interested in dismantling clocks and climbing trees than proper manners--and the family can only hope that company never sees her atrocious curtsy. Mrs. Temminnick is desperate for her daughter to become a proper lady. So she enrolls Sophronia in Mademoiselle Geraldine's Finishing Academy for Young Ladies of Quality. But Sophronia soon realizes the school is not quite what her mother might have hoped. At Mademoiselle Geraldine's, young ladies learn to finish...everything. Certainly, they learn the fine arts of dance, dress, and etiquette, but they also learn to deal out death, diversion, and espionage--in the politest possible ways, of course. Sophronia and her friends are in for a rousing first year's education. Set in the same world as the Parasol Protectorate, this YA series debut is filled with all the saucy adventure and droll humor Gail's legions of fans have come to adore.

## Book Information

Series: Finishing School (Book 1)

Paperback: 336 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (October 8, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316190101

ISBN-13: 978-0316190107

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars Â Â See all reviews Â (544 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #56,641 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #26 in Â Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Steampunk #33 in Â Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical #41 in Â Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Europe

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Review written for and originally published at [steamingingenious.blogspot.com](http://steamingingenious.blogspot.com) I have been eagerly anticipating this first book in a new series by Gail Carriger, author of the fantastic The Parasol Protectorate series. The book follows the exploits of 14 year old Sophronia Temminnick, a

troublemaking youngest daughter of a middle class Victorian family. Not knowing what to do with a daughter interested in technology and books, her mother is only too happy to send her off to an exclusive finishing school. Except this finishing school teaches more than just deportment. It also teaches the arts of espionage and assassination. This book has all the fun of the first Harry Potter novel; it shows an unsuspecting protagonist encountering a weird and wonderful boarding school, and, in fact, almost an entire new society of which she was previously unaware. So this book takes some pretty familiar "starting a new school" tropes and puts a nice spin on them. Sophonia is an extremely likeable character and her new school provides lots of opportunities for her to show off her daring. This series takes place in the same world as the Parasol Protectorate series, but it's set several decades earlier, in the 1860s, I believe. So fans of that series will enjoy seeing some familiar characters pop up here and there. As for the steampunk elements, while I tend to think of the Parasol Protectorate as a predominantly supernatural series set in a steampunk world, this series seems to be a steampunk series set in a supernatural world. Meaning that this series seems to involve a lot more technology in more important roles than the previous series. There are also vampires and werewolves, but the supernatural elements don't drive the main plot and are pretty much incidental.

I have to say, I was equal parts excited and trepidatious\* when my fave awesome person at Little, Brown asked me if I wanted to be part of the blog tour for this. I loved Carriger's Parasol Protectorate series, but was concerned about how she would make the transition to YA, especially after my friend Elizabeth's reaction... That gave me pause. FORTUNATELY, I have to (politely, maybe) disagree with E. on this one. Yes, it was a little heavy handed at first, and was missing some of the magic that came with Alexia's narration and her fabulous personality - but it worked, and in the end I quite liked it. I'm a pretty firm believer that you don't have to change your style/writing much (if at all) when you change age levels - there's no need to "write down" to kids (especially in this case, as the Parasol Protectorate series was a highly popular cross-over - Pretty much remove the steamy Victorian sexytimes and you're good to go). But the beginning of the book seemed like Carriger was going to write down to her audience and point things out in a really obtrusive way (as if they couldn't possibly put things together all on their own...), and that has got to be my number one I-will-throw-you-against-the-wall-you-just-see-if-I-don't pet peeve. Even as a kid, I found it highly insulting; you've got to have faith in your audience, and faith in yourself as a storyteller that you're doing fine - you don't have to handhold, and if you do feel the need to, you're not telling it right. But either the handholding was just a brief blip, or I got used to it, because the rest

of the book slipped into the quirky, upper-crusty, hilariously Missish storytelling I'd grown to love in the Parasol Protectorate.

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