



# Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class

*Ross Gregory Douthat*

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# Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class

Ross Gregory Douthat

**Privilege: Harvard and the Education of the Ruling Class** Ross Gregory Douthat

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**perpetuate** Ross Gregory Douthat arrived at Harvard University in the fall of 1998 carrying an idealized vision of Ivy League life. But the Harvard of his dreams, an institution fueled by intellectual curiosity and entrusted with the keys to liberal education, never materialized. Instead, he found himself in a school rife with elitism and moneyed excess, an incubator for the grasping and ambitious, a college seduced by the religion of success. So Douthat was educated at Harvard, but what Harvard taught him was not what he had gone there to learn. Instead, he was immersed in the culture of America's ever-swelling ruling class--a culture of privilege, of ambition and entitlement, in which a vast network of elite schools are viewed by students, parents, administrators, and professors more as stepping-stones to high salaries and coveted social networks than as institutions entrusted with academic excellence. *Privilege* is a powerfully rendered portrait of a young manhood, a pointed social critique of this country's most esteemed institutions, and an exploration of issues such as affirmative action, grade inflation, political correctness, and curriculum reform.

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