



## The Geneva Decision

*Seeley James*

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Pia Sabel plays to win.

Until a few weeks ago, she was an international soccer star. But now she's taken the helm of her billionaire father's private security company, and she's playing against a whole new set of opponents: the kind who shoot to kill.

On her first day on the job, Pia's client is assassinated in front of her. There's no time for training, so Pia must trust her instincts and athletic skills to unravel the complicated maze of money laundering and piracy that will take her from Swiss mansions to the jungles of Cameroon.

Her battle-hardened employees suspect she's just a spoiled rich girl with a mean corner kick. But Pia's got some unexpected moves of her own. Will they be enough to bring her team through its mission?

## The Geneva Decision Details

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Author : Seeley James

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## From Reader Review The Geneva Decision for online ebook

### Eric Wright says

This review is of an e-book copy provided to me by the author via the Goodreads Group Making Connections, in return for my fair and impartial review. 978-0-9886996-0-1

James tells the kind of story I enjoy, one with a strong protagonist struggling against heavy odds in a contemporary and realistic setting slotted into an intricate plot that shifts between exotic destinations. The story is fast paced and well written.

The heroine is unusual, a young soccer star, Pia Sabel, who inherits Sabel Security from her very wealthy step-father. Early in her life, her parents were assassinated and she was adopted. Growing up in this privileged environment she thrived in sports and became a star. The confidence and insights she developed on the soccer field stand her in good stead in her new position.

When the banker her team is protecting is killed in Geneva, she is propelled into an international chase involving other murdered Geneva bankers, millions in missing money and hijacked tankers. The team of hardened men and women she gathers around her to chase the elusive foe view her as a neophyte who may compromise their safety and the success of the mission. Her father urges her to come home and accept a desk job running the business. She refuses. Along the way she makes mistakes and some enemies.

The shifts in action from Geneva to the Cameroons to Vienna make it an interesting read. The only quibble I have with the book is some unrealistic aspects of Pia, the protagonist. The book chronicles many fights in which she performs almost super-human feats, albeit tempered by realistic emotions of fear. In my opinion the author should have reduced the number of these encounters, and deepened those threads that sketched her character. Nevertheless, a good holiday read.

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### Lance Charnes says

*The Geneva Decision* does a lot of things that are different from the run-of-the-mill action thriller. For one thing, its protagonist and dominant personality is a woman; she's not a guy with breasts, nor a cartoon ultravixen, nor does she wear Spandex unless she's working out. She even keeps her clothes on through the entire book. (That may be a spoiler.) The good guys don't work for some ultra-secret government agency; they're private security contractors, and although well-heeled, they don't have all the resources of the Earth behind them. The bad guys aren't some other ultra-secret global cabal with limitless reach and resources; they're bad, yes, they get around, but they're human. The fate of the world doesn't even hang in the balance.

So how does it all work? Very nicely, thank you. *Geneva* is a fast, satisfying read that won't have you thinking "Haven't I read this before?" after every chapter.

Let's start with Pia Sabel, the aforementioned heroine. Not only is she *not* token eye-candy, she's also not the standard Special Forces refugee. She's an athlete – a former Olympic soccer player – dragooned by her fabulously wealthy adoptive father into running the family business. Except for whatever she's picked up from being surrounded by bodyguards for most of her life, she's a rookie at this game. She's not even a very

good shot. Being an athlete, though, she's fit, can run like hell, can beat the crap out of lesser mortals, and has a very casual attitude toward her own mortality. Yes, she has the requisite Painful Past™, but it doesn't involve alcoholism, gambling, a long-lost love, dead children or serial divorces. If you're an action-thriller fan, you can already see how this kind of protagonist might change up the genre.

Fittingly, Sabel Security is an unusual lead agency for this kind of story. For one thing, it's not the standard everybody-united-against-the-dark-enemy place (except for the Dastardly Enemy Mole™ or Butthead Political-Weasel Boss™, natch). This firm came undone upon Our Heroine's ascension to the CEO's chair, with mass resignations and much political backbiting. This, too, is a refreshing change; it sounds like reality.

The story has twists and turns that flow organically, and a series of action set-pieces that are realistically messy and often inconclusive (again, just like in life). In fact, both good and bad guys miss their shots more often than hit, another touch of reality in a genre in which the heroes regularly pull off amazing feats of marksmanship against moving targets in the dark while riding upside down on cropdusters. The dialog is naturalistic and believable. No one can accuse James of picking overused settings; if you're struggling to find a novel set in Cameroon to complete your around-the-world-mysteries challenge, this is your book. Not only are the locations fresh, but the author makes good use of fairly esoteric parts of those locales, such as Geneva's water system (!).

As you can tell, I like this book. So what happened to the fifth star?

It's gone not for any one big reason, but a collection of little ones. Pia is a dear and I enjoyed my time with her, but she's *such* a Girl Scout, and the third or fourth time this quality puts her people at deadly risk I just wanted to slap her. Also, I kept waiting to see her dark side, (view spoiler). While the bad guys are described early and economically, Pia's accomplices aren't; for instance, it took quite a while before I realized Pia's chief lieutenant and minder is black (it became a plot point, leaving me wondering what I'd missed). For that matter, I still don't know what Pia herself looks like. (I imagined a Brandi Chastain/Hope Solo mashup, which worked well enough for me.) As befits a spoiled rich girl – something she gets called at least a hundred times during the story – Pia is stubborn and reckless and doesn't take coaching well, which made me wonder (a) how she managed to get on an Olympic *anything* team, and (b) how she expects to keep the rest of her employees from walking out. Finally, I'm truly on the fence about using (as the author does in places) text-embedded links to online photo galleries instead of baking place descriptions into the narrative. On one hand, it does give the reader a vivid picture of the setting, but on the other hand, I can think of many reasons why my Kindle might not be connected to the Internet, and what happens with the printed book?

Like I said, these are minor gripes, and your mileage may vary. *The Geneva Decision* is a refreshing departure from the increasingly calcified norms of action-thriller fiction, a solid read with a unique protagonist, an array of engaging supporting characters, and a plot that keeps you hooked. Author James' handling of so many difficult-to-nail elements while also breaking multiple conventions is remarkable for a debut novelist; many veterans don't always manage it (I'm looking at you, Patterson). So if you're on the prowl for a fresh take on the action-thriller genre, you're suffering from testosterone overload from too much Reacher, or you just want to see girls kick butt, give *The Geneva Decision* a try. You won't be sorry.

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### Bharadwaj says

I would like to start saying that I am a big fan of "Jack Reacher". I was introduced to him 10 years ago and I followed all his past and current travels since then. So its obvious that a post on FB caught my eye "Is Pia

Sabel the next Jack Reacher".

I am glad that I had a chance to meet Pia on her first mission in Geneva. Thanks to author Seeley James, I have one more hero who took my sleep for reading their adventures. The thought of a professional gold medal footballer turned head of security group surprised me.

The story starts with a race of all intellectual conclusions from Pia on her yet to start first adventure. The way story unravels, the space and action costed me sleepless nights to continue the read.

I am very pleased to have a chance to meet Pia and I am looking forward to travel with her in all adventures.

Who knows, Mr. James might think of first hand speech where Pia narrates the story for us :)

With Enthusiasm,

B.

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### **Juno says**

Overall I thought this was a good fun read. Pia is a believable and likeable character. Book was fast paced. Looking forward to the next one.

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### **Steve says**

I loved The Geneva Decision. The main character, Pia Sabel has taken on a job where she may very well be in over her head. But she's not willing to admit defeat and she is not going to give up. This is a refreshing change to the mystery/thriller concepts where the protagonist can't do anything wrong. Pia is new at this. She makes mistakes. She learns as she goes along. She makes friends and enemies along the way, and people get hurt. All of this adds up to a reading experience that is both fun and engrossing. The title indicates that this is only book one of a series. I'm looking forward to book #2!

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### **Robert says**

Full disclosure - I was provided a copy of this book by the author.

This is an enjoyable book however I did feel that it lacked a central direction. This sort of made it feel to me like a number of incidents some what loosely connected together. Each scene in itself is well written and grabs the reader, however when they are over there just isn't that impetus to turn the page and keep reading.

The characters are engaging and distinct which make the book more enjoyable. What I would have liked to have seen is a underlying motive for the actions that drives the story along and provides the glue that binds the whole thing together. To me the reader simply isn't driven from scene to scene they are simply following. An enhanced sense of mission throughout would provided greater engagement I feel.

None the less, if you like stories that involve modern action and espionage themes then this book is a

worthwhile read. It is somewhat unique to have a action female lead but the author does make that character work along with the other around her. The writing is crisp and engaging and does not get bogged down and the action sequences are well written and keep the reader's attention while maintaining vivid imagery. Never too much or too little detail here, which is sign of write who knows their craft.

In summary, a good read for those who enjoy action and international intrigue, however a more defined central direction through out may have improved the story in my mind.

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### **Andrew Montooth says**

Great thriller featuring a woman character (heroine?) with other women in prominent roles. And none of them discuss shoes or men. These women actually strategize and discuss plans with each other. Then she goes off and kicks ass better than any other female lead in literature today. Highly recommended. More at [SeeleyJames.com](http://SeeleyJames.com)

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### **Dana Delamar says**

"The Geneva Decision" is an action-packed, never-a-dull-moment thriller with an interesting protagonist. Pia Sabel is a professional soccer player who ends up running a security company. Her skills and background make her well-suited to the task in some ways, but she has a steep learning curve, and it's entertaining to see how she grows into the role.

Although the story flowed well and I was entertained throughout, I found myself shaking my head and yelling at Pia several times for her pig-headedness and seeming inability to listen to others with more experience. In life-and-death situations, there's really no room for such antics, and I found it stretched credulity that experienced ex-military pros would follow her after such behavior instead of walking off the job. I expected a lot more resistance (and some outright defections) from her team members after some of the stunts she pulled. Yes, she's the boss, but I find it highly unbelievable that these people would add additional risk by having such a loose cannon in charge.

(view spoiler)

So high marks for entertainment value, fast pacing, great use of setting (particularly in Cameroon), and twists and turns galore, but I had to drop a star because I was rolling my eyes in disbelief at some of the decisions Pia and other characters made. That said, I'll check out more books in this series because it was certainly a page-turner!

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### **Werner says**

The length of time it took me to read this fast-paced action novel is deceptive. I started reading it as a free e-book, having taken the author up on an offer he made in one of my groups, and I read in that format only intermittently; it doesn't fit into my schedule well. Some time later, he generously offered me a signed paperback copy (with no request for a review!); and I was delighted to accept, since I already knew I wanted a hard copy! From that point on, it flew pretty quickly; the narrative drive and suspense kept me turning

pages as fast as I could. It's easy to imagine many readers finishing it in a few days --less time if they're able to read it nonstop, and most would want to!

Brave, principled action-oriented heroines are an enormous draw for me in fiction, and Pia Sabel is one of the most outstanding characters of this type that I've ever encountered. Seeley's skill in bringing her to life is unquestionably the key to the novel's success; she's an intriguing, fully round character with a complex past that shapes her. (Not all of this past is revealed here --the author has stated elsewhere that he wanted to spread the revelations out over three books-- and what is revealed is exposed gradually, sometimes in a way that can create a bit of confusion; but stay with it.) Even as a young child, her life was impacted by violence; her (adoptive) father is an enormously wealthy business tycoon with a drive and determination that he's passed on to her; she's rich in her own right from stocks he settled on her, gifted with a tall, strong physique developed as an athlete, and highly trained as a boxer. She's not a superwoman, and not without her inner demons; she's also lacking in security and combat experience, despite growing up around security operatives, and she can be dangerously brash and impulsive; but she has believable strengths that counterbalance these weaknesses. (One is native smarts, which she's used to applying in competitive situations, and an ability to read people --though she doesn't always realize when she needs to let these skills kick in.) Above all, she's a caring, highly ethical person who genuinely wants to help others, whether it's with her money or with her fighting ability.

Around her, the author has created an edge-of-the-seat plot which opens with a man's head being blown off on the second page, and keeps up the pace until the end. As the Goodreads description notes, piracy and money laundering are the engines that drive the action (though Seeley thankfully doesn't dwell on the intricacies of the latter!), and it includes life and death jeopardies for our heroine, along with plenty of gunfighting and hand-to-hand combat on land and water. I'd characterize it primarily as action-adventure, but it has elements of the mystery genre too, with a criminal mastermind whose identity is hidden through much of the book, and will take some twists and turns to reveal. (I guessed one of Seeley's secrets early on, but not all of them.) Although Pia stands out, other characters are well-drawn also, and Seeley gives us two other strong female characters in action roles: Sabel Security's Major Jonelle Jackson, and Agent Tania (no last name given) both of whom I expect we'll see more of in later books. He develops the geographical settings -- Geneva, Cameroon, Lyon, Vienna-- with an assurance and vividness that suggests that he's actually been to these places; and there's none of the awkwardness here in handling language that's so often associated with first-time, self-published novelists. He also knows soccer, and he knows about guns, high-tech communication equipment, etc. (Some of the terms, like "Bluetooth," were new to me, but that's not a flaw; most readers of this type of fiction are more familiar with this sort of technology, and I could either get the meanings from context or muddle through anyway.) IMO, most of the plot developments and motivations stand up well to examination. As an added plus, there's no sex; and though some of the characters sometimes do use profanity and obscenity (the phrase "swear like a trooper" has a basis in fact, and several Sabel Security people got their start in the military; Tania, who has the worst mouth, also grew up in inner-city Brooklyn, where we can surmise that clean language wasn't universally modeled), I could tell that the author used some restraint in this area. Of course, action adventure is going to be about violence, but Pia's no homicidal maniac; while she packs bullets as a last resort, her Glock, like other Sabel security firearms, is equipped to shoot quick-acting tranquilizer darts, and one of her first acts as head of the company is to require these to be used as a first resort in all cases. That's a feature which is unique in my reading experience, and I think it's pretty cool!

If I could give half stars, this would be a solid four and a half; I debated long and hard whether to round up or round down. What flaws did I find in the book? First, the descriptions of action scenes were often, for me, hard to follow visually; that is, from the language used, I couldn't always exactly picture the action in my mind without it seeming awkward (that may be because I haven't engaged in that sort of fighting, and don't

have the experience to picture it with), or because I couldn't get the physical layout of the setting, as in the floor plan, etc. Second, a feature of Seeley's writing style here is that he suddenly drops bits of information that Pia or other characters have known before (but we haven't) into the mix at moments when they can be useful, in a way that sometimes makes them come across as confusing, or as a *Deus ex machina*, or both. It would have made the narrative smoother, IMO, to introduce these earlier, and I don't think it would have required info-dumps to do so. There's also a basic credibility problem; under the circumstances, I don't think Alan Sabel would realistically have sold her the control of his security firm, and I don't think it's realistic to imagine the top leadership of the firm being involved in field operations with nobody minding the store at headquarters. (Of course, the author's purpose demands that Pia be in the field; and the premises of action heroine fiction not infrequently do strain believability a bit.) But these weren't deal-breakers; and in the end the strength of Pia's character made me round up. She's a stellar action heroine for the 21st century, and I'm already a committed fan who wants to read every book she ever stars in! My recommendation doesn't carry the weight that genre author Zoe Sharp's does; but nevertheless, I'm proud to add my endorsement to hers. If you're an action-fiction fan, you need to make Pia's acquaintance ASAP, and I think you'll be glad you did!

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### **Miekey Rodriguez says**

An heiress wants to know who killed her customer and goes all over the world to find out. I always hear people say "gripping story" but in this case it fits. She's a spoiled rich kid who retired from soccer (although we don't know why). I've never seen a soccer player in a thriller before. The first move she made is one I've done on the pitch (you will get a yellow card though) so I know it works. After that, she's pretty resourceful in using her strengths against a bunch of killers. What I like about her is she makes time to help people. She's a nice person.

The story starts out a little slow for my taste but gets into the action about a third of the way in and never stops after that. The battle in the jungle had me speed reading to see what happened. I can't say without a spoiler, but it was good. The ending was pretty amazing too. Fast and furious.

If you like women in lead roles, this is a great book.

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### **Zoë Sharp says**

After a slightly hesitant start, this book really got into its stride and kept going strong. I loved the character of Pia Sabel - there's a girl Charlie Fox would team up with any day!

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### **Giacomo says**

I read a lot of crime novels. One of my favorite authors is John Sandford, and it's because his character, Lucas Davenport, is different from most of the other detectives out there. I picked up *The Geneva Decision* based on a recommendation and I'm glad I did. I ended up liking Pia Sabel, the female lead, for the same reasons I like Lucas; she's different. It took me a while to buy into Pia Sabel, but once I did, I found myself liking her.

The pacing was good and the story moved along nicely, although at times I would have liked a few of the

secondary characters to have had a little more page time.

Seeley James does a good job of creating the setting and taking the reader to new places. The story starts off in Geneva, but the chase leads the reader to Africa and Vienna also. There are a lot of nice specifics, especially in Geneva, that help transport you there and make you feel more of a part of the story. His writing style makes for an easy read, and the book isn't riddled with errors like so many books are. I think James is a writer to keep your eye on, and I'm looking forward to the next Pia Sabel book.

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### **Seeley James says**

I wrote the best, most exciting story I could possibly write featuring a female lead, Pia Sabel. I hope you find her an engaging, thoughtful, caring, and (above all) ass-kicking, no excuses heroine.

I attempted to portray women in leadership roles who can plan and execute a complex mission without their primary conversations revolving around sex and fashion. I modeled these women after the women in my life.

If you would like a review copy, please don't hesitate to email me: [seeley@seeleyjames.com](mailto:seeley@seeleyjames.com). If you bought the book and didn't like it, I will refund the money you spent (US only, sorry). If you recommend the book to others, I will love you forever.

Peace, **Seeley**

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### **William Davis says**

Action and Adventure on Every Page

If you're an adrenalin junkie who enjoys breakneck pacing and action on every page, then *The Geneva Decision* is the book for you.

Pia Sabel is young, rich and a gifted Olympic athlete—a true action heroine. She reminds me of heroines in recent movies like Zoe Saldana in *Colombiana* or Angelina Jolie in *Wanted*.

Pia's billionaire father has given Pia the top spot in his international security firm. And what is her first challenge? The assassination of one of her firm's clients, a Swiss banker who is murdered right before her eyes. As more bankers are similarly dispatched, Pia is determined that Sabel Security find their killers despite the attitudes and interference of the local authorities. Her quest takes us from the streets of Geneva and Zurich, Switzerland to the jungles of Africa. Intrigue and gunplay challenge her crew as Pia goes head to head with her firm's seasoned operators. Pia doesn't have all the answers and though she makes mistakes, her dogged determination eventually gains the respect of her more experienced subordinates. In the end they discover a plot involving money laundering and piracy that leads back to the banking community itself.

As the relentless action unfolds, the author's familiarity with European locales is quite evident. If he hasn't lived or visited Geneva, Zurich and Munich then his research of the locations is even more impressive.

Can Pia's intelligence and physical prowess overcome her inexperience? You bet. A great debut for a new

series.

Reviewed by William G. Davis  
<http://www.mikegagethrillers.com>

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### **Lex Allen says**

There are a couple of things that make or break a novel for me. The first is... can the author set the scenes, chapter for chapter, and define the characters without excessive narrative detail; and the second is... can he or she tell a great story that keeps the reader guessing all the way through. Mr. James gets an A+ in both areas.

Pia Sable is a fascinating character and, as an ex-player, coach and life-long fan of the beautiful game, I was transfixed at how Pia used her football skills, both physically and mentally, to win in life and death situations. Here is a unique character, exceptionally well developed and in fact, firmly established, in her first outing, as Mr. James's "brand name". Like most real people, Pia is a bundle of contradictions... she's very rich, but humble, she's egotistical but listens to those who have more experience, she's masculine in a fight, but all female otherwise and, she's a born leader that follows when necessary. I predict that Pia Sable will become a household name for millions of thriller fans.

All of the characters... the good, the bad and the ugly were very well developed through their dialogue and actions, rather than narrative detail. The dialogue was exceptionally well done... believable, funny at times, and true to each individual character. The chase to discover the ultimate villain is torturous in its exquisite route of twists and turns, dead ends and new leads. Mr. James left clues, of course, but they were so covert that they went practically unnoticed because of the intense action that was non-stop to the end. At the conclusion, I (and you will, too) was shaking my head, "Of course! How did I miss that?"

This is the first of a series, but it has a solid ending - as well as a small cliff hanger, opening the way for the next book. I loved The Geneva Decision, the story and the characters, and I'm really looking forward to the next Pia Sable thriller!

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