



Derailed. A Novel

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Advertising director Charles Schine is just another New York commuter, regularly catching the 8.43 to work. But the day he misses his train is the day that changes his life. Catching the 9.05 instead, he can't help but be drawn by the sight of the person opposite. Charles has never cheated on his wife in eighteen years of marriage. But then Charles has never met anyone like Lucinda Harris before. Charming, beautiful and a seductively good listener, Charles finds himself instantly attracted. And though Lucinda is married too, it is immediately apparent that the feeling is mutual. Their journeys into work become lunch dates, which become cocktails and eventually lead to a rented room in a seedy hotel. They both know the risks they are taking, but not in their worst nightmares could they foresee what is to follow. Suddenly their temptation turns horrifically sour, and their illicit liaison becomes caught up in something bigger, more dangerous, more brutally violent. Unable to talk to his partner or the police, Charles finds himself trapped in a world of dark conspiracy and psychological games. Somehow he's got to find a way to fight back, or his entire life will be spectacularly derailed for good.

Derailed. A Novel Details

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From Reader Review Derailed. A Novel for online ebook

Sarah Beth says

In essence, Derailed is the story of an affair gone wrong. A rather average husband and father, Charles meets Lucinda on the train and is sucked into a torid affair. Yet when they finally venture to a hotel room, a man follows them, beats Charles up, robs them, and rapes Lucinda. In the aftermath, Charles is blackmailed, a man is killed, and his family is threatened. Yet was Lucinda who she really claimed to be?

If I had to select one word to describe this novel, it would be contrived. Or implausible. The plot was too far-fetched and I was unable to suspend my disbelief. I was further irritated by the complete lack of characterization of every character besides Charles. Every character is one thing - Lucinda is sex, Deanna is devoted, his daughter Anna is ill. It was disappointing. Charles, himself lacks character development for the most part. But of what I do know about him, I don't believe this tale would happen to him. He's too sensible, too loyal, too *average*. He would have called the police. He would not create a new identity. Also - that bomb would not have gone off. I sort of felt as though Charles was recounting a dream to the reader, in which he is suffering from severe delusions of grandeur.

I haven't seen the movie based on this novel, nor do I want to after reading this. And I can't figure out why they wanted to make this into a movie. Even the great plot twist is just not that twist-y.

I will say I was impressed by the frame story of this novel, which begins after the main story has concluded. Charles is teaching english to inmates and one begins writing a third person narration of a story of a man on a train. But it's Charles' story. Someone from his past is threatening him by feeding him his own bio. And eventually he takes over and begins to tell his own story in first person. It was a really interesting and unusual introduction and I applaud the originality.

Jim says

Average thriller. Plot a little slow and meandering and characters were somewhat weakly developed. I really didn't like the conclusion. I would like to read another book from this author before passing judgment. At just over 360 pages this one ran too long.

?Brittany? says

If you're looking for a quick page turner then this is it.

I watched the movie years ago & I remember loving it. I heard from a friend that the book was better so when I finally stumbled upon the book (thanks to paperbackswap.com because I could NOT find this book in all the libraries I checked) I delved right in & could barely put the book down.

There were a few things I wasn't too crazy over (like insinuating Christians are abortion clinic bombers, but whatever, if that is his opinion of Christians then whatever.) I just kind of get annoyed at close mindedness BUT, I'll put that little opinion aside because of the rest of the book was great.

I thought it was very creative & I give it 5 stars!

Paul Rockthief says

My rule is three tries and forget it. I tried three times and forgot this book except to write this review. Sure, I wanted to like it so as not to waste my time. Didn't work. This book is contrived with characters that are mostly names. They don't have much substance. They are shallow and superficial. It's as though the author only tells us a bit about them because he needed people in the story. Emotion seems fake or fabricated. Ugh. So one star from me. Wasted paper, wasted words. Oh, I did not finish the book. Looked at the ending. Meh.

Good reading to you all.

Tamara says

Great read!

Jess The Bookworm says

Charles, a married man with a good job has his life "derailed" when he meets a beautiful woman on the train, and decides to have an affair with her. This affair ends in the most horrible way possible, and his life is turned upside down when he finds himself in a spiral of lies to protect himself and his family.

The only reason that this did not get 5 stars is because I managed to figure out the plot twist very early on, and I am not usually able to do that.

Even though it was somewhat predictable, it was captivating and I couldn't put it down. Some of the details were truly horrific and really knocked me at times.

This is a great short read, that will keep you hooked right until the end.

Patrick O'Neil says

Excuse me - New York Times bestseller? Now a major motion picture?

Page 43 - tosses book across the room.

David Diamantes says

Derailed is a classic, cautionary tale with enough suspense and plot twists, to keep a jaded reader like me turning pages. Charled Schine is is an advertising executive with job troubles, a sick daughter and a

preoccupied wife, trapped on the commuter treadmill. When he meets a dropdead gorgeous woman on the train from Long Island to NYC, sparks fly. She's just what his bruised ego needs. They meet for dinner, have an affair, and then the blackmail starts. Derailed is a well-crafted novel. Siegel throws in enough action, suspense and humor to keep you turning pages. His dialog is flawless. I gave Derailed 5 stars and intend to read more of Siegel's thrillers.

Lucy says

4.5 stars

I loved this! Just a great thriller. Even though I had already seen the movie this book still kept me in suspense. Definitely skip the movie and read the book instead, it's so much better. I felt all sorts of conflicting emotions for the protagonist, Charles. In the end, despite his many faults, I found myself rooting for him. I won't say more since this is best read unspoiled.

Lee says

Loved the movie and have to say loved the book more, great story with plenty of twists and turns keeping it interesting.

Benita says

I was curious about the book because I had watched the movie last year. The book, as always, was much better than the movie. I liked the movie just fine, but the book adds so much more. I plan to read more by James Siegel. Good strong characters and a plot that kept me turning the page.

Sheri Zamot says

It was, just as 2 stars indicate, okay.

I found it very shocking in the beginning. Almost to the point of not wanting to continue. And, believe me, i've read some brutal stuff. But this was kinda just sick.

Then comes the mystery/drama/suspense part... which I actually didn't find all that gripping.

There were twists that were good and some that were ridiculous, but overall it kept my attention and I did read about the last 1/3 in 1 sitting.

There's a second book... I won't be reading it most likely.

Rob says

I read the book first...took two days. Then I saw the movie...took about two hours. Save yourself two hours and just read the book. The book had so many twists and turns that the movie couldn't and didn't convey.

There were a lot of things omitted in the movie and a lot of things totally changed that except for the title and the main characters you wouldn't recognize as the same story. That is why I'm a reader.

Robert Beveridge says

James Siegel, Derailed (Warner, 2003)

I saw the 2005 film version of Derailed a while back, and was unimpressed, to put it kindly. When a friend of mine lent me this novel a couple of months ago, I didn't put two and two together until reading the jacket copy. Of course, I assumed the book would be better, since they almost always are, and dove in anyway.

Charles Schine is an ad executive whose life is going along swimmingly until one fateful week when everything seems to go wrong. He loses the firm's biggest account, for one thing. But what really sends his life spiraling out of control is meeting a beautiful woman one morning when he misses the train. They're attracted to one another, despite both being married, but the stumbling beginnings of an affair are interrupted by a nasty mugging that turns into blackmail. But that's only the beginning...

While the book is most certainly better than the movie, it does break one of the main rules of thriller-writing; there are things that are obvious chance that get woven into the story as if they were planned by the bad guys. There's one painfully obvious place this happens close to the beginning, and it soured a lot of the book for me. Still, Siegel is a very good writer when he's not strangling the conventions of the genre in ways that many have tried and no one has succeeded. He book is well-paced and well-plotted, and the characters are much better drawn here than they are in the film version.

Even if you didn't like the movie, the book is worth checking out. Give it a shot. ***

jamie says

read it before the movie came out. save your time and just read the book. it keeps you hanging.....

Rossy says

Surprisingly, I disagree with most readers: I liked the film best. Still, a great thriller!

fivethousandbooks says

Some books are so good that you can't put them down. But some books are soooo good that you can't continue reading them because you don't want to know what's going to happen next. This one falls in the second category! Brilliant first novel!

Sam Reaves says

Lee Child's blurb for this book says it is "literally impossible to put down"; I did not find this to be the case, having no trouble detaching it from my hand. But I did read it in three or four sittings, which for me is pretty absorbed. It snares you very competently with a tale of a married man, a decent fellow under stress, who in a moment of weakness is drawn into an affair with a beautiful stranger. Bad things ensue and he's off down the slippery slope to mayhem and murder. Very well executed, for me it suffers only from an out-of-left-field deus ex machina sort of plot twist which had me rolling my eyes-- but I finished it. Bottom line, a pretty good read.

PattyMacDotComma says

This is one of those stories where you watch the protagonist dare a bit, then dare some more, then get just a bit too far in to get out, but you sort of hope he will manage. Then he begins to struggle to get on top of things and...it all goes awry. Kept me reading to the end, which is more than some books do these days.

Couple of days after I wrote this, the movie turned up on TV - enjoyed the story again with Clive Owen and Jennifer Aniston. Gets into the action quicker than the book, but still frighteningly faithful.

Hannah Polley says

I picked up this book at a train station, mostly because of the quote on the front from Lee Child 'Literally impossible to put down' as I am a big fan of Child's books and I am pleased to say that it didn't disappoint.

Charles has become a bit discontented in his married family life and one day on the train, he meets a married woman who has also hit that point in her marriage. Charles switches the train he gets each day to match hers and their train journeys turn into drinks, lunches and dinners. Charles and Lucinda both want to stay in their marriages but decide to take their relationship to the next level and book a seedy hotel one afternoon.

When they are ready to leave they discover why you shouldn't book a seedy hotel – a gun man forces them back into their room and robs them. Finding the pictures in their wallets of their spouses and children, he realises that they are having an affair and decides that the money is not enough. The gun man repeatedly rapes Lucinda in front of Charles and he is unable to stop it. At the end, the gunman walks out with their wallets and leaves them both hurt lying on the floor.

Charles and Lucinda consider going to the police but realise they would have to answer awkward questions and their spouses would likely find out about the affair so they agree to put the situation behind them and both move on with their marriages. Unfortunately, the gun man realises they haven't gone to the police and using the business card in Charles' wallet calls him and demands \$10,000 to stay quiet.

Charles decides to pay the money but next time the amount is \$100,000. Charles ropes in an ex con friend from work to help but unfortunately he is killed in the process and Charles ends up disposing of the body. The gun man attacks Lucinda again and Charles can now definitely not go to the police due to the dead body

involvement. Charles pays the \$100,000 and life goes back to normal for everyone. Charles and Lucinda decide not to have anymore contact.

A few weeks later, Charles sees Lucinda out with another man who is not her husband and after some investigation, realises she was in on the whole thing and it is actually a con that her and the gun man do together.

I won't spoil the end but there are a lot of twists and turns in this story and it kept me gripped throughout. I did feel sorry for Charles as he got himself into an absolutely ridiculous situation! I did enjoy the end although some horrible person had randomly ripped out some of the paragraphs at the back of the book so I missed the big finish but I could work out what had happened.

A great book.
