



## Since We Fell

*Dennis Lehane*

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*Since We Fell* follows Rachel Childs, a former journalist who, after an on-air mental breakdown, now lives as a virtual shut-in. In all other respects, however, she enjoys an ideal life with an ideal husband. Until a chance encounter on a rainy afternoon causes that ideal life to fray. As does Rachel's marriage. As does Rachel herself. Sucked into a conspiracy thick with deception, violence, and possibly madness, Rachel must find the strength within herself to conquer unimaginable fears and mind-altering truths. By turns heart-breaking, suspenseful, romantic, and sophisticated, *Since We Fell* is a novel of profound psychological insight and tension. It is Dennis Lehane at his very best.

## Since We Fell Details

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Author : Dennis Lehane

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## From Reader Review Since We Fell for online ebook

### Emily May says

I am really disappointed with how Since We Fell turned out. It started okay. I've seen some other reviewers mention the slowness of the first half but, to be honest, I didn't mind so much because I assumed it was leading up to something bigger; something important. Unfortunately, though, it kind of wasn't.

The first part turns out to be an **overlong and elaborate backstory** about Rachel's childhood, adolescence, her mother's death and the subsequent search for her absent father, her career in investigative journalism, and her first failed marriage. Many characters come into the book and leave just as quickly, never to be mentioned again. Then Rachel meets the wonderful, perfect Brian who is willing to help her through her personal issues, and she settles into a second marriage.

The second part of the book is one of confusion and suspicion, as Rachel stumbles upon a secret that will change everything. And, lastly, the third part is a ludicrous stream of action that requires a suspension of disbelief I seem to be incapable of.

Gillian Flynn said that this book contains two different stories, but I would argue that it contains several. All of them failing to come together successfully. **It's like Lehane pooled all of his notes and shoved them together, regardless of whether they fit or not.** And I say this as a fan of several of Lehane's books.

The later chapters of Since We Fell are really quite ridiculous. I felt like I'd been transported into a cheesy action movie like *Mr and Mrs Smith*, or something like it. The plot twists are somehow both predictable and seriously farfetched. Lehane drops huge hints earlier in the story that **something is not quite right** so the big "oh my gosh" probably won't come as a surprise, and one hint is only subtle if you're American (view spoiler)

I think, perhaps, that many feel this book gains its strength not from its thrills and surprises, but from its character exploration, but I can't say I liked anyone. Rachel was bland to me, and every other character was either outright bad, or so unbelievably great that I could only assume they were hiding something.

The comically dramatic action scenes of the later chapters felt so cheesy. Even the dialogue seemed to lose something towards the end of the book, feeling scripted and unrealistic. I can almost see the movie already. Lehane finishes with an open ending, so I didn't even get any closure on this disappointing story. No surprises. No suspense. No resolution.

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### Diane S ? says

Rachel has the world in her grasp, a successful journalism career, marriage to an equally successful man, and then in a very public way it and she falls apart. Until she reconnects with Brian.....

The first part of this book is slowly paced as we get to know Rachel, her search for the birth father she never knew, her career, marriage and her breakdown and it's after effects. I enjoyed this first part, it was well

written and I had a great deal of sympathy for Rachel. Then this story does almost a complete 360 and takes off like a runaway train, morphs into a whole different thing. I have thought about this for days and let's just say that though I was almost convinced this could happen, make sense, that someone with all the problems Rachel had could act in this manner, I couldn't quite make myself get there. Not that I wasn't entertained, I was, this is a very readable story but in my readers mind, too much didn't hang together.

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### **Amanda says**

It pains me to do this, but I am going to have to go with two stars. I fell in love with Dennis Lehane's writing ever since I first read *A Drink Before the War*, but this one just didn't do it for me. The first half of this book is bogged down with so much back story that you have no idea what the point of the book is. The second half of the book is a bad Katherine Heigl movie. Period.

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### **Sam Quixote says**

Rachel hasn't had the best life: her dad left when she was a baby and her manipulative, cruel mother took his identity with her to the grave. Her cold husband divorced her after she had a mental breakdown covering the Haiti earthquake, the trauma causing her to lose her job as a journalist as well as turning her into a shut-in. By chance she meets her future second husband and the love of her life, Brian, who slowly helps turn things around for her. Until she realises he's been lying to her since Day 1 about who he is and what he does. So who is "Brian" really and what does he do? Deadly consequences await Rachel as she begins to look into her beloved husband's secret life...!

I love me some Dennis Lehane. *Shutter Island* is an insanely brilliant mystery thriller and up there with anything Agatha Christie ever wrote (the undisputed master of the genre) and *Moonlight Mile* was a great crime story too. While *The Drop* put me off Lehane for a couple years, I'm pleased to say he's found inspiration again with a new high quality novel: *Since We Fell*.

Here's the biggest problem with the book, which might be a deal-breaker for some: the novel is a smidge over 400 pages and roughly the first 200 pages is irrelevant build-up. Yeah. That's a lotta build-up! You know what it is? I think it's Lehane trying to have his cake and eat it too. The first half is a literary character portrait of a troubled woman: we follow her quest to find her long-lost dad, the scenes of devastation in Haiti, becoming agoraphobic and slowly overcoming it. Then the second half is gloriously pure trashy airport thriller as Rachel gets caught up in the mystery of the husband she never knew. Lehane's playing to both the arty and populist crowds in the same book.

That's not to say I hated the first half. The entire book is well-written and Lehane finds the raw emotional humanity in the Haiti scenes which were very powerfully realised. I wasn't caught up in the missing father story or her first marriage but I wasn't totally bored either – Lehane did just enough to keep me turning the page. But it's also not the book I wanted to read. And comparing the first half to the second? It's like night and day, the contrast is so sharp. I mean, Lehane's in second gear for 200 pages and then suddenly he finds fifth gear! I read the first 200 pages in a week and a half and the second 200 in less than 24 hours. Lehane knows exactly how to hook the reader and take them on a breathlessly thrilling ride, executing the second half of this book in the genre style flawlessly.

I think I understand why he wrote the book like this. Firstly it invests you in Rachel's character more so that when things kick up exponentially you care about what happens to her. But that structure also plays into the duality theme of the story: Rachel is looking for a man she didn't know, her father, and then she's doing the same in the second half with her husband. Unfortunately that doesn't make the first half any less sluggish to read though and I'd have been happier with the literary pretensions excised completely, leaving us with a white-hot 200/250-page read instead.

Aside from an abrupt ending, which was the only part of the book that could've used more pages, the second half of the book was so good that it mostly made up for the slow, meandering first half. It's asking a lot for mystery/thriller fans to endure 200 pages of build-up but, if you're willing, you get an awesome payoff. I definitely fell for Since We Fell – Dennis Lehane is BACK!

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### **Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says**

Just no for me. Not this one

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### **\*TANYA\* says**

The story was not very remarkable, but it kept my interest. I didn't love it but I didn't hate it either. The authors writing style was fantastic.

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### **Elyse says**

My first question when I finished the last page was...."has a movie already been made"?

What stands out more than anything to me is the creation of "Rachel Childs". In the same way that Lisbeth Salander is synonymous with the Steig Larsson's Millennium Series ....Rachel Childs is with "Since We Fall".  
NOT that these two women are alike - or behave the same -but she's one hell of a fascinating female protagonist.

When Paul asked me what I was reading.... I replied Dennis Lehane's new book -"Rachel Childs". I kept forgetting the books name "Since We Fell".... but it's clear once finishing this thriller.

What made this story thrilling were the jolting twisted shifting paths it took. Especially the first surprise .... One minute I was Sunday driving -the next I was race car driving. The momentum and complexity moved into high gear a little past half way through the novel.

Through it all -- with unique supporting characters - is Rachel Childs!!! She is sensitive, often contemplating her own issues.....( fears, pessimism, loss, trust, and love)....  
As we take a journey with Rachel..... she discovers some insights about herself....but 'not' before troubling excitement. It's not "Mystic River", but it's good. I'd go see the film.

Suspenseful - sensitive -psychological thriller!!!!

## Larry H says

I'd rate this 4.5 stars.

Dennis Lehane is truly one of my most favorite contemporary authors. He electrified me the minute I read the first Kenzie-Gennaro mystery (and all of the others that followed) and dazzled me with *Mystic River*, and while not every subsequent novel has been a home run, the indisputable fact is, I love the way he writes.

Needless to say, I pounced on *Since We Fell*, his newest novel, practically at midnight the day it came out. I've decided that how you feel about this book may very well depend upon whether you've been led to believe it's a thriller or a novel. As a novel, it's definitely thrilling, particularly the last third or so, but as a thriller, it's not quite as pulse-pounding as you would probably expect it to be. Expectations. Tricky things, no?

Rachel Childs had a difficult childhood. Raised by a single mother who refused to give her any information about her father, Rachel was simultaneously nurtured and bullied by her mother, smothered and neglected. After her mother's death, her search for her father leads her to meet some interesting people, and learn just how difficult and controlling her mother really was.

Given her dogged investigative thirst, Rachel finds success first as a print journalist, then a television news reporter. She is being groomed for major success when, covering the aftermath of the Haiti earthquakes, she has a breakdown on the air. Her career in ruins, she becomes a virtual shut-in, barely leaving her apartment, licking her wounds. And then one day a chance encounter with someone from her past, someone who has always intrigued but confused her, makes her realize that happiness might not be totally out of her grasp.

Rachel and her husband live a relatively quiet, reasonably ideal life. He travels a bit for work, and encourages her to overcome her agoraphobia, little by little, but doesn't push too hard. He wants her to find the strength to thrive on her own. But then one afternoon, as she decides to venture out on her own, she makes a shocking discovery that throws her for a bit of a loop. As she tries to make the puzzle pieces fit, she uncovers a web far more tangled than she could ever imagine. She isn't sure whether she should let her panic attacks consume her again or if she should battle back for the first time in a long time. And she's not even really sure what she's battling against.

*Since We Fell* takes a while to build up steam, but it's still a well-told, compelling story about a woman driven to uncover secrets, first about her father, and then about the news stories she covers. It's a story about a woman knocked back on her heels, and whether she should try to find the strength to knock back, or if she should just be content with being a has-been more famous for appearing crazy than the work she did. It's also a story about how an unexpected relationship might not save you, but it may give you the courage you need to save yourself.

Lehane's storytelling is in fine form here, and once he kicks the book into thriller mode, the engine just takes off, leaving you breathless at times. There are a lot of twists and turns here, some I saw coming, some surprised me. It's not necessarily new ground, but it's kind of like having a familiar dish prepared by a master chef—everything is just a little bit better.

Years ago, a few days after *Mystic River* was released, I met Lehane at a reading and book signing. When I told him I had already read the book, he said, "But the book came out Tuesday. It's Friday, man. I don't think I can write that fast!" I offered to sharpen his pencils if that would help. Needless to say, I've done it again, and I know I may have to wait a few years until Lehane's next book. But Dennis, if you're reading this, I'd be glad to sharpen some pencils if it will help.

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blogspot.com>....

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### **Jennifer says**

★★★½

Since *We Fell* encompasses two parts. They aren't labeled but you'll know immediately when the switch occurs. I had to investigate my library-rented audiobook to ensure there hadn't been a mistake. It's that kind of switch. Part one is well-written character, family, and culture/class development. It's slow but good. The second part breaks into a mysterious barrel-roll of a thriller. It's also good. It just doesn't flow well from part one to part two...not at all in my opinion. It's like they're two different books. It was confusing but once I invested myself in the latter, it ended up being a fun ride. After all is said and done, I can see how the two parts compliment each other but I felt at a disadvantage during my reading experience. But I guess sometimes it's the retrospect that makes it all worth while. I literally cannot say anything about this plot line without fear of giving away a spoiler, so I'll casually stop here. I can say that the thriller portion of this book was my favorite. Although I have watched many adaptations of this author's work, *Since We Fell* was my first Dennis Lehane book that I have read. I plan to play a bit of catch-up in the near future. Check it out.

### **My favorite quote:**

*"The only people who ask questions like, 'Did he want to be something besides a bartender,' are people who can become whatever they want. The rest of us are just Americans."*

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### **Jessica says**

I don't read a lot of thrillers. I feel like it can be a hard genre to do really well. A lot of times, the stories are excessively complicated in an attempt to confuse the reader. Other times, so much emphasis is put on shocking the reader that the characters don't feel like actual people. Or, it can go the opposite way and the thing that's meant to shock us is telegraphed so clearly that it sucks all the tension out of the story.

So, yeah, I don't read a lot of straight-up thrillers. But I do think Dennis Lehane is pretty great and now I think this might be one of his best. It's the kind of book that made me clench my ass so tightly in anticipation that I might never loosen up again.

It's about Rachel, a young woman who was raised by a semi-famous self-help author who refused to disclose the identity of her daughter's father. Rachel grew up to become a journalist, but she suffers from debilitating panic attacks. After experiencing one live on air, she essentially becomes a shut-in, afraid to leave her home. Luckily, her husband is full of empathy and willing to help her through this experience. But then things start happening that cause her to begin questioning...well, everything. In some ways, this almost felt like three separate books: Rachel's youth and the build up to her fragile psychological state, her life after her breakdown and her baby steps towards recovery, and then her getting plunged into a straight-up thriller.

To be honest, the first third of the book felt like *a lot* of set-up and I know many readers may not have the patience for that. But it's also an incredible, thoughtful examination of how Rachel's panic disorder has developed. I appreciate that Lehane didn't take the easy route and just tell us "this woman has panic attacks," that he laid out the difficult personal history that led to these panic attacks and, as someone who struggles with anxiety, although at a much lower intensity, it felt very honest and real instead of a gimmick. I was a little disappointed we didn't get resolutions to all of these biographical details, that Lehane doesn't bring us back to them that much in the second half, but I appreciated that he'd taken the time to make the character feel so three-dimensional and complex. It did help increase the tension in the second half of the book—Rachel doesn't trust her perception of events due to her mental health, but it never feels like a cheap trick to pull the rug out from under the reader.

The actual thriller elements were pretty solid, too. Yeah, Lehane takes the plot into some pretty bonkers places that strain credulity a bit, but he keeps it exciting and he kept me guessing. I had no idea where things were going to go and I definitely wanted to find out. I wanted to find out because I'd become so invested in Rachel as a character that I couldn't look away from her. And that's really what matters the most when you're reading a thriller.

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## Kemper says

This is going to be one of those pain in the ass books to review because you can't really talk about it without spoiling it, and the things that really need to be discussed all happen later in the plot. Yet there's so much wrong that I really want to get into all of it. It's quite a dilemma.

Here's what I can safely tell you: Rachel Childs' mother refused to tell her who her father is which leads to a troubled childhood and rebellious teenage years. After her mother's death Rachel follows up on various clues as she finishes school and becomes a rising star in TV journalism. While reporting in a disaster zone she experiences some terrible events that lead to the derailment of her career and crippling panic attacks that leave her a shut-in almost completely unable to deal with the world outside her apartment. Then some other things happen...

This really seems like two different books. The opening sentence tells us immediately that Rachel is headed for big trouble, but then it jumps way back to her childhood. We spend a lot of time with her growing up and being obsessed with tracking down her long lost father. This goes on for so long that it fools you into thinking that the book is more of a character drama/romance type of thing instead of a straight-up mystery/thriller, and I was actually enjoying this part.

After the turn we know is coming happens it seems like we're in the territory of a *Lifetime* movie, but the book still had its head above water at this point. That's when this plot which had been looking like a psychological suspense thriller turns into something else completely which stretches the suspension of disbelief way past the manufacturer's recommended limits, and it shatters completely.

I yelled "Oh, bullshit!" so many times during this second part that I sounded like someone walking across a cow pasture wearing his best shoes. (view spoiler)

I'm a huge fan of Dennis Lehane so this is really disappointing. Now I know how a teacher feels when their favorite student hands in a rotten paper, and they have to give it an F. I suspect that a lot of readers will find

the first half boring and pointless compared to the second half, or like me, they'll be more intrigued by the character based first part and think the rest is complete nonsense.

Lehane just got way too cute for his own good here as well as not seeming to have a good handle on what kind of book he was doing. While the writing itself is solid and Rachel is a pretty decent character it's like he tried to make a peanut butter and tuna fish sandwich, and the results taste about as good as that sounds.

**Any untagged spoilers in the comments will be deleted.**

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## **Pouting Always says**

Rachel Child's mother, Elizabeth, was a famous writer, known best for her book on relationships and spent the rest of her career trying to recapture the success from her first book. Even more ironically Elizabeth spent her whole life unable to be in any healthy relationship, spending all of Rachel's life emotionally manipulating her and with holding any information about her birth father. Eventually after her mother's death Rachel sets out to search for her birth father. She decides to hire a PI to help her look and meets Brian, who tries to aid her in finding her father.

Might be spoilers from this point on, even though it's a general summary skip reading from here if you don't want to know anything.

Rachel struggles with questions about her identity and her constant feeling of loneliness and isolation as she continues the endless search for her father. Meanwhile she puts herself through school and starts a career on broadcast news. Eventually she figures out her father's identity, only to be left with more questions and loose ends, which only make her pervasive issues with anxiety worse. Though she gets married to Sebastian, their relationship comes second for both, so that when Rachel is sent on assignment to Haiti to cover the earthquake and devastation leading to an eventual breakdown on live television, he is quick to leave. Rachel's disastrous breakdown not only ends her marriage but her career as well; she becomes viral and secludes herself inside for good.

On the day of her divorce finalizing Rachel takes a rare outing to go to the bar. At the bar she reconnects with Brian, who she has been in touch with on and off for years. The two eventually get into a relationship, making Rachel think for once things are going her way and will be okay. Then when Brian begins to do small things that don't quite add up, Rachel can't help but begin to question their whole life together, leading her to confront her own issues and anxieties, especially her fear of abandonment.

I really enjoyed this one. I didn't want to put it down even when I went to pee. I really got pulled into the story and the writing was wonderful. I even loved the ending which doesn't happen often. Brian and Rachel were really adorable and when Rachel begins to look into Brian I was really rooting for them. I honestly had no clue where the plot was going and I was pretty invested all the way through. Definitely one of my favorites and I'd say 4.5 stars. I would have given it 5 but the two parts of the story didn't mesh together that smoothly and also the whole thing where Brian was shot and had planned the whole thing just felt a little bit too much of a stretch.

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## Manju says

Rachel was an only child, raised by a single mother. Her mother, Elizabeth Childs, died in a car accident leaving everything to Rachel except her father's name. Rachel wanted to know who her father was as she thought somehow knowing about his identity would fill the hole in her heart. Even after a turbulent childhood, Rachel managed to make her life as a news presenter. She got married to man, she thought she was in love with. When she was about to make a big in her professional life, few panic attacks on a live coverage ruined her. She confined herself to her apartment and refused to go out, face the world. Enter Brian, an acquaintance she met after her mother's death and who kept contact with her through few mails for decade. She married him and he helped her in facing her fears and brought her out in the world. Brian was a Lumber scion and was out of States once in a month. But one day when Rachel was coming back after meeting her friend, she saw Brian in same city when he was supposed to be in London. After that life turns upside down for Rachel.

The above description is almost first 40% of the book and it moves at a speed slower than a snail. Lehane has taken every step necessary to make me know Rachel inside out. Her fears, weakness, effect of her mother on her, her panic attacks, and how would she react in certain circumstances. But things suddenly picks up after she finds about Brian's lies and we get the trademark Lehane story. One thing keeps happening after other, and I was suddenly wide awake, unable to grasp everything. Lehane kept throwing secrets and lies at me, and poor me failed at every turn as all my guesses were proved wrong as the story progressed.

It was a good story but I have read Lehane and surely he can spin better tales than this. It didn't sit well with me that Rachel was always on a search. If first half was about father, second was about husband. I had a hard time believing how our scared little Rachel turned into all confident woman telling lies to a cop, make fool of professional killers, and didn't hesitate in pointing a gun at someone and press the trigger. End was an abrupt one and could have used some more pages.

Definitely not the best Lehane for me. Hope he'll fare better with *Gone, Baby, Gone* which I will be picking soon.

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## Susanne Strong says

4.5 Stars\* (rounded up).

**“Since We Fell” by Dennis Lehane is the story of Rachel Childs. Though her life seems ordinary at first, it is anything but.** She is complicated and smart. At times she may seem frail, though she is stronger than even she realizes. Her life experience has caused her to hide from the world, until one day, when hiding is no longer an option.

Rachel was raised by a single mother, Elizabeth, who kept the “mother” of all secrets from her daughter: she refused to tell Rachel who her father was. Elizabeth Childs was a tough woman to love, she appeared cold, unemotional and angry one minute, and mental the next. Their relationship was a tumultuous one and that relationship shaped Rachel's entire life, as she struggled to find herself, felt a need to find the father she never knew and continued to seek out a love she never had.

After years of a successful career in Broadcast Journalism, and a so-so marriage to Sebastian, a man who

cared more about himself and his career than Rachel, things fell apart and Rachel became almost reclusive. Then she met Brian, a man from her past, and he became her future. Her safety net. They married and their relationship consumed her. He took care of her, brought her out of her shell and helped her conquer her fears. Then one day, Rachel discovered that things were not as they seemed. Her life changed on a dime and she was caught in a web so tangled that there appeared to be no way out. It became a life of terror, deceit and insane intrigue – all of which made my breath catch in my throat and caused my chest to get tight.

For me, none of this was surprising, for Rachel Childs was a woman who grew up in a house of lies, experiencing familial dysfunction. Therefore, it was only natural that, that was what she gravitated towards. In realizing all of this, somehow, Rachel was able to dig deep and finds something inside of herself that she thought was lost forever.

Rachel is an interesting, multi-faceted character. I liked her from the get-go. She is not perfect, far from it actually, but she is real and that is what made her so likeable. Dennis Lehane did a great job creating masterful characters whose pain and suffering I felt in my core. The drama and intrigue that was in play towards the last half of the book was first rate and kept me glued to the story. I listened to the audiobook and thought the narrator, Julia Whelan did a particularly spectacular job.

**In my opinion, “Since We Fell” is a book that you immediately invest in. The reason? Rachel Childs.** Her personal journey is the reason for this book. Her life becomes an unexpected psychological thriller. It was a rollercoaster I didn’t expect to take, but it is one, whose genesis I understood. It was fascinating. I hope you explore it my friends and I hope you find it as interesting as I did.

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### **Rebbie says**

I can see why people are divided on their opinion of this book, especially with the writing format being split into two (or is this just my imagination?). The first half was good, but more of a stream-of-consciousness style of writing that is not at all what fans have come to expect from Dennis Lehane.

Not a lot happens in the first half; mostly it's about Rachel Childs and her search for her father, her relationship with her mother, her love life, her career, her emotional issues, you know, the whole shebang.

But somewhere just past the halfway point of the book, BOOM! It kicks into overdrive like a race car driver on speed. This is the Dennis Lehane that we've grown to love and appreciate. It was such a far cry from being the quiet, unassuming first half of the book that it made my heart race and was thus unable to put it down until it was finished.

For those who have DNF'd it, maybe try to pick it back up again and get to the great part. It's totally worth it imo.

Unimportant side note: Is it just me, or are his books written like they should all be movies? I love this about his writing style, and it makes me wish that this would become a movie, like some of his other books. I feel the same way about The Given Day, which was the first in the Coughlin series. The second book in the series, Live By Night, became a movie in 2016. So this probably means that the first book is going to be passed over completely by Hollywood. :(

Oh well, a girl can dream.

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