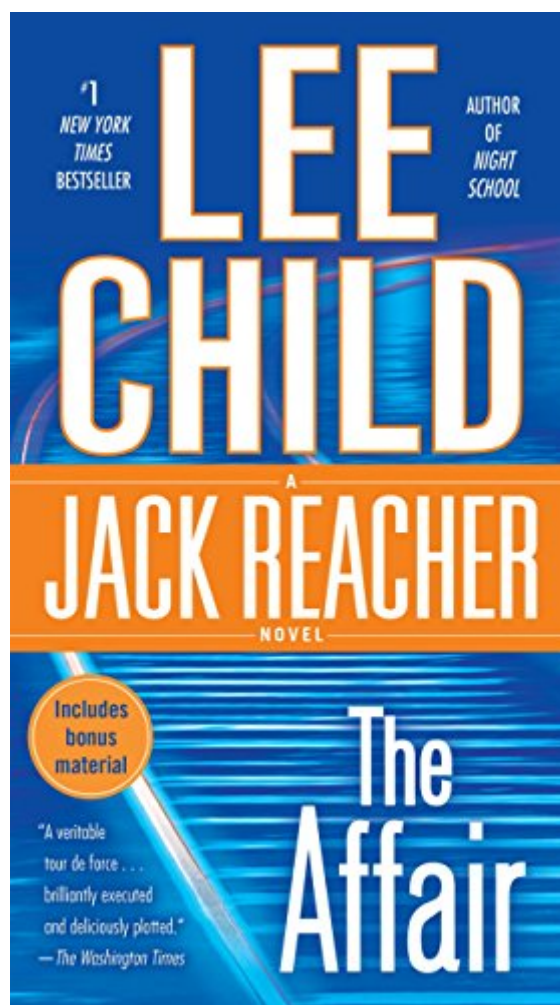


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The Affair: A Jack Reacher Novel



Synopsis

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER Everything starts somewhere. For elite military cop Jack Reacher, that somewhere was Carter Crossing, Mississippi, way back in 1997. A lonely railroad track. A crime scene. A cover-up. A young woman is dead, and solid evidence points to a soldier at a nearby military base. But that soldier has powerful friends in Washington. Reacher is ordered undercover to find out everything he can and then to vanish. But when he gets to Carter Crossing, Reacher meets local sheriff Elizabeth Deveraux, who has a thirst for justice and an appetite for secrets. Uncertain they can trust each other, they reluctantly join forces. Finding unexpected layers to the case, Reacher works to uncover the truth, while others try to bury it forever. The conspiracy threatens to shatter his faith in his mission and turn him into a man to be feared. Don't miss Lee Child's short story "Not a Drill" and an excerpt of his novel, Make Me, in the back of the book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're a fan of the Jack Reacher series, you already know that Lee Child is currently the

undisputed master of the unputdownable thriller. When it comes to narrative momentum and expertly wrought tension, his only rival is the late, great Dick Francis. However, the last two Reachers - though good - left me a bit cold because I was getting tired of the "Reacher stumbles into small-town corruption" formula. Fortunately, *THE AFFAIR* flashes back to his army career, where he faces his true arch-nemesis, the military bureaucracy, and we learn why he decided to drop out and become a toothbrush-packing drifter. Even though the novel is mainly set in yet another bleak small town, I'm happy to report that Reacher is back to form. This latest adventure delivers the expected page-turning excitement, plus a few other bonuses: * Both the beginning and the end are better than usual. Child tends to be too abrupt for my taste. Here he takes the time to set the scene at the Pentagon and ease past the climax in a very satisfying way. * The love interest, the ex-marine sheriff Elizabeth Deveraux, is Child's most entertaining female character so far. She's not just there to be Reacher's girl. She has an extra dimension and is important to the story. * The "midnight special" train that roars past Carter Crossing every night is an ingenious device Child uses to ratchet up the suspense, provide a menacing undercurrent, and structure the complicated action in a clear way. It's the most impressive example yet of Child's narrative skill. Plus, choo-choos are just plain cool. A new reader to the series may find the staccato rhythm of the sentences a bit off-putting at first, and Reacher's tough-guy terseness here and there verging on self-parody. But they're essential ingredients in Child's hugely enjoyable, impressively consistent franchise. Overall, I rank *THE AFFAIR* with the best of the series, up there with *PERSUADER*, *ONE SHOT*, and *THE ENEMY*.

Like I just said in a review of a Grippando novel, with his and Lee Child's novels, by the time I get to write my review, everybody else has already said what I wanted to say. That didn't stop me then, and it's not going to stop me now! This extremely exciting novel, set in the late '90's but with knowledge of the events of 2001, takes us back to the time when Jack Reacher was still a Major in the Army. He's sent to Mississippi to do some clandestine investigating into a murder committed near an Army base, supplementing the investigation being conducted on the base itself. His charge is to make sure that the Army is clear of blame, and to make sure that local law enforcement doesn't try to pin it on someone on the base. The local sheriff immediately figures out who he is and why he's there, and then has sex with him six times in the next several days. Did I mention that the sheriff is a beautiful female former Marine? Anyway, in true Lee Child fashion, Reacher outthinks and outfights all kinds of bad guys, saves the day for the Army's reputation, and solves the crime(s). Problem is, he kind of ticks off the Army base while he's doing his heroics, so instead of kudos

being bestowed upon him (he was expecting a medal or a memorial), he's put on the involuntary separation list from the Army. His commanding officer could have pulled strings to get him off the list, but his name would have been mud for the rest of his career. So the novel ends with him submitting his resignation, stepping into the road, and sticking out his thumb....This is a really good novel, certainly one of Child's best, and it's refreshing that it doesn't start out with Reacher getting off a bus and stepping into the middle of a coincidental international situation. Wherever you are in reading the Jack Reacher series, you should read this one next. And then, if you're reading the Kindle version, you should read the bonus short story "Second Son". The intro says " 'The Affair' took you back to the beginning, when Jack Reacher left the Army. Now go back even further." It's 1974, and Jack (13), brother Joe (15), dad Stan (a Captain in the Marines) and mom Josie have just arrived in Okinawa, like the fortieth place they've lived in during Stan's military career. Even at age 13, Jack "was always called by his last name only. No one knew why, but the family was Stan and Josie, Joe and Reacher, and it always had been." And, even at 13, he's already beating up the bigger kids, kissing the girls, and solving mysteries for the Marines Intelligence officers and MP's. Like the latter-day Reacher, his intuitive leaps are both outlandish and defensible, once he explains everything. After reading this short story, I wanted to read an entire book about Reacher's high school years! A delightful dessert on top of the epicurean dinner "The Affair"!

caution: the following review may contain mild spoilers For a late-in-the-series Jack Reacher novel (number 16) this has been a bland and uneventful novel, which felt somewhat drawn out a lot of the time. The "surprise twist" shared among the Reacher series books did not possess the wow-factor typically found in earlier novels. Majority of the character time was spent going from one place to another within a small town, Mississippi, "investigating" - a word enclosed in quotations as the bulk of the investigative work was spent drinking coffee, and eating hamburgers and peach pies with the local sheriff. The Affair supplies a small portion of Reacher's past, as it's written in a flashback style (book goes back to 1997), references few static characters found in numerous novels, though introduces none additional ones that are of any interest. If you're a fan of the Reacher series and must read every book, then by all means pick this one up - you're likely to go through it very quickly. If you're looking to pick up a Reacher novel at random, then I would advise to avoid this one.

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