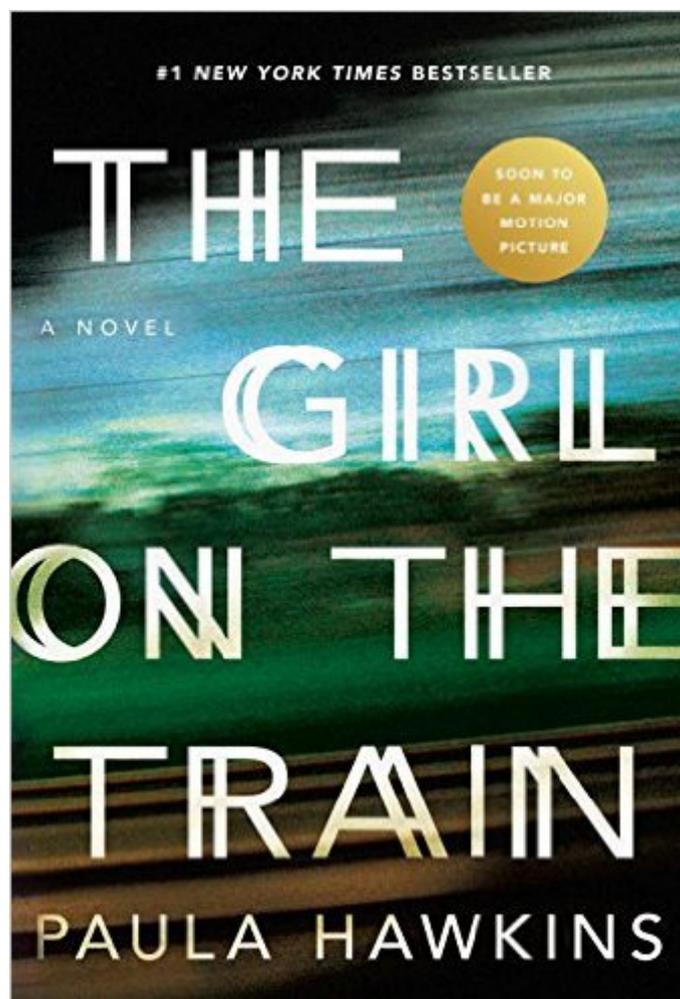


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The Girl On The Train



Synopsis

The #1 *New York Times* Bestseller, *USA Today* Book of the Year, soon to be a major motion picture starring Emily Blunt. The debut psychological thriller that will forever change the way you look at other people's lives. "Nothing is more addicting than *The Girl on the Train*." *Vanity Fair* "The *Girl on the Train* has more fun with unreliable narration than any chiller since *Gone Girl*. . . [It] is liable to draw a large, bedazzled readership." *The New York Times* "Marries movie noir with novelistic trickery. . . hang on tight. You'll be surprised by what horrors lurk around the bend." *USA Today* "Like its train, the story blasts through the stagnation of these lives in suburban London and the reader cannot help but turn pages." *The Boston Globe* "*Gone Girl* fans will devour this psychological thriller." *People* **EVERY DAY THE SAME** Rachel takes the same commuter train every morning and night. Every day she rattles down the track, flashes past a stretch of cozy suburban homes, and stops at the signal that allows her to daily watch the same couple breakfasting on their deck. She's even started to feel like she knows them. Jess and Jason, she calls them. Their life "as she sees it" is perfect. Not unlike the life she recently lost. UNTIL TODAY And then she sees something shocking. It's only a minute until the train moves on, but it's enough. Now everything's changed. Unable to keep it to herself, Rachel goes to the police. But is she really as unreliable as they say? Soon she is deeply entangled not only in the investigation but in the lives of everyone involved. Has she done more harm than good? **À À**

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Customer Reviews

THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN is a dark, haunting and depressing psychological thriller, but it's incredibly effective thanks to the writing skills of author Paula Hawkins. Rachel is a divorced woman who would do anything for a drink, and like a lot of folks consumed by a love affair with the bottle, one might call her a victim of circumstances. Her husband Tom had an affair that resulted in a pregnancy. He divorced Rachel, married the "other woman" and now all three (husband, wife and child) are happily ensconced in the house that was once Rachel's. The train that Rachel rides to London each day takes her past her old neighborhood. From the window of the train she observes not only her old garden that backs up to the tracks, but also the daily activities of another couple who reside down the street from her previous home. In her imagination she has given the couple names and has created a fairy tale love life for them. Real life, however, cannot live up to her fantasy and the couple does not have the picture perfect relationship that Rachel has concocted. When a murder occurs, Rachel becomes entangled in the investigation because of what she has witnessed on her daily commute. This rather bleak story with intersecting timelines is told from the viewpoint of three different women Rachel, Anne and Megan. All the women are unreliable narrators with something to hide. In fact, most of the characters in this novel, including the men, lack veracity, and are a self-serving and unsympathetic group with plenty of skeletons in their closets. Lest I continue and divulge too much of the plot, let me just say that the twists and turns in the story are many and readers will be easily drawn in, making it easy to devour this book in one afternoon.

Rachel is a woman who considers herself worthless. She feels that women are only valued for two things: their looks and their role as a mother. She is barren and rather plain looking. Unbeknownst to her landlady she has lost her job but continues to ride the commuter train twice a day. Unfortunately she must pass the home of her ex-husband Tom and his new wife Anna. They've recently had a child which is something Rachel was unable to produce when she was married to him. He's moved his new family into the home that he and Rachel once shared. Tom posted a picture of himself and his newborn on Facebook with the caption that he's never been happier. Rachel, in her despondency, has taken to drinking to a point where she has blackouts and forgets that she drunk calls her husband many times a night, even shows up at his home. Because of a signal malfunction she often finds her rail car stopped on the tracks next to her former home. She starts to notice another couple who live a few doors down. She refers to them as the golden couple and manufactures a narrative about their lives as she observes them each day. They gradually become important to her. When Megan (of the Golden Couple) disappears Rachel finds herself an integral character in the police investigation. She was seen stalking the neighborhood the

night of the disappearance. She has wounds on her body that can't be explained. Megan and Anna look enough alike that the police feel there may be mistaken identity involved. The book is told in three voices: Rachel, Megan and Anna. The fact that Rachel has a history of drunken blackouts and has a hard time separating fact from fiction makes her overtly suspect, even to herself. Megan has plenty of secrets of her own and Anna - is she the perfect second wife she appears to be? I understand that the option of this book has been picked up by DreamWorks. I can't think of a better Hitchcock style mystery of voyeuristic observation since *Rear Window*.

This was a premise to which I couldn't say no. From the window of her train, troubled, alcoholic commuter Rachel Watson watches the world --including a couple who are frequently out on their terrace at the very point her train stops every day. She names them Jason and Jess and decides their lives are the perfect happy-ever-after that hers has never been. But then Jess, whose name is really Megan, goes missing; and Rachel's memory of the night Megan disappeared is a yawning black hole. Did she see something? Can she help these strangers who continually draw her into their lives? I expected a taut psychological exploration driven by the mystery, but Hitchcock this isn't. None of the characterizations ring true, and the plot is created by withholding information the characters would naturally be thinking about (other than Rachel, who can't think about the plot due to alcohol-induced blackouts). I didn't find a single one of these characters to be genuine in their humanity. They're not merely unlikable; their un-likability is forced and exaggerated. Rachel's convenient blackouts happen so frequently as to become tedious. Even sober, she constantly makes atrocious decisions, all the while acknowledging to herself variations on "I'm stupid" and "I shouldn't be doing this." She has no common sense, no boundaries, no willpower, no emotional fortitude whatsoever. The other first-person narrators are no more believable: Anna, who is married to Rachel's ex-husband Tom and seems to be a mash-up of sociopath and nurturer (what?); and Megan, about whom I really can't say anything without spoiling the mystery. The problem is, Megan's point of view conceals key things about herself as well, to the degree that the reader doesn't even know about the concealing until the climax (at which point there's no "aha," only frustration). In addition, the voices of these women are interchangeable and the climax includes the villain opining about his/her heartlessness using dialogue cliches to disparage the others while everyone sits around on sofas and drinks tea. The characters of *THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN* remind me of those I've met in novels by Gillian Flynn and Chevy Stevens. Fans of those authors will likely eat this book up, too. But neither Flynn nor Stevens are my thing, so it's no surprise Hawkins isn't either. Next time other readers make such a comparison, I'll trust them and avoid.

This book was so poorly written....5 characters.3 abused witless women and two violent men.Who was most painfully abused?The reader.

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