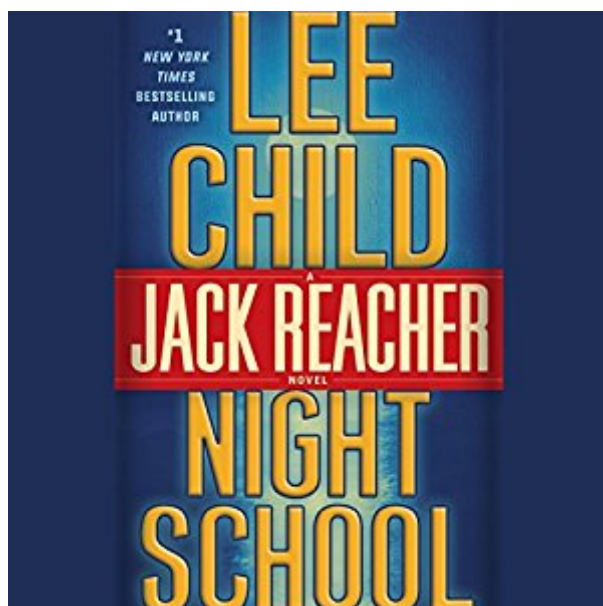


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Night School: A Jack Reacher Novel, Book 21



Synopsis

Discover the thriller series that The New York Times calls "utterly addictive". After 11 straight global number one best sellers, Lee Child sends listeners back to school with the most explosive Jack Reacher novel yet. It's 1996, and Reacher is still in the army. In the morning they give him a medal, and in the afternoon they send him back to school. That night he's off the grid. Out of sight, out of mind. Two other men are in the classroom - an FBI agent and a CIA analyst. Each is a first-rate operator, each is fresh off a big win, and each is wondering what the hell they are doing there. Then they find out: A jihadist sleeper cell in Hamburg, Germany, has received an unexpected visitor - a Saudi courier seeking safe haven while waiting to rendezvous with persons unknown. A CIA asset undercover inside the cell has overheard the courier whisper a chilling message: "The American wants a hundred million dollars." For what? And who from? Reacher and his two new friends are told to find the American. Reacher recruits the best soldier he has ever worked with: Sergeant Frances Neagley. Their mission heats up in more ways than one while always keeping their eyes on the prize: If they don't get their man, the world will suffer an epic act of terrorism. From Langley to Hamburg, Jalalabad to Kiev, Night School moves like a bullet through a treacherous landscape of double crosses, faked identities, and new and terrible enemies as Reacher maneuvers inside the game and outside the law.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I've read all 20 Jack Reacher novels, written by Lee Child. I jumped at the chance to evaluate copy of his newest book. You don't read 20 of anything unless you really like the

characters, and "Night School" is no different. Taking place back in the mid-90s Military Police Major Jack Reacher is reassigned to go back to school "but it isn't what anyone thinks. It's really just a cover to investigate a possible act of treason and terrorism. Reacher teams up with his old colleague Sgt. Frances Neagley and a group of new folks representing the FBI, CIA and the national Security Council to find out what is happening and how to stop it. The best part of a mystery is finding out what happens, so I won't spoil anything, but Jack Reacher does his usual thing and in the end prevails in the usual Reacher fashion. The interaction between Neagley and Reacher, along with the other team members is entertaining. That's the good part, now the part that isn't quite as good. I like Reacher novels because over the years he has been consistent - Jack Reacher is a really interesting character who keeps a clock in his head and always knows exactly what time it is. Calculates the physics of a punch before he throws it, etc. In this book, Reacher is a bit more superficial. There is a lot less of Reacher's thought process in this book and I felt it made the book a bit less fun to read. In fact, I can only give it 4 Stars because it's good, very good, in fact, but it lacks a bit of what makes Reacher novels so enjoyable. Reacher fans will love it. Folks new to the series will enjoy it, as well. I enjoyed it. I just wish Lee Child done a bit more to keep Reacher's character as unique and entertaining as he has done in the past.

Lee Child, in "Night School," takes us back to 1996, when Jack Reacher was a thirty-five year old army major who had served his country for twelve years. His superior officer, General Garber, orders him to report to the Pentagon, where he is supposed to take a continuing education course. However, this is merely a ruse to keep anyone from knowing that the President of the United States wants Jack and a select group of agents from the CIA and FBI to prevent a catastrophe. Alfred Ratcliffe, the National Security Adviser, and Ratcliffe's deputy, Dr. Marion Sinclair, inform Reacher and his colleagues that an Iranian spy working for the CIA in Hamburg, Germany, has learned that Middle-Eastern extremists are about to make a major purchase from an unidentified American. We are off to the races, and fortunately, Reacher is on our side. In addition to his prowess in hand-to-hand combat (he is six feet five and two hundred and fifty pounds of muscle), Jack is a thinker who analyzes data, makes critical decisions, deploys resources as needed, and uses his uncanny instincts to excellent advantage. He recruits the intelligent and competent Sergeant Frances Neagley to assist him. Jack and company face a daunting challenge: They must identify the key players in this proposed exchange; find out where and when the sale is supposed to take

place; and stop it from happening. All of this must be accomplished without alerting the public. Reacher ignores orders and sidesteps the law when it suits him. He knows that if he succeeds, he will be forgiven, but if he fails, he will be blamed and perhaps face prosecution. "Night School" is a diverting throwback to the days before 9/11. The Internet and supercomputers had not yet changed the world. In addition to Reacher, a man who makes every word and deed count, the cast includes a German chief of detectives who has good reason to help Jack; a band of Aryan racists eager to pursue their own nefarious agenda; and the shadowy American who intends to enrich himself at the expense of countless innocent lives. This plot-driven story has the usual clichés (a race against time, highly-charged romantic encounters between Jack and his sexy lover, and a final violent confrontation), and the author makes no attempt to delineate his characters with any degree of subtlety. "Night School" may not be great literature, but Child doesn't pretend to be Tolstoy. He delivers a fast-paced novel of action-adventure that has enough thrills to entertain fans of this long-running series.

The answer is mostly because of his character Jack Reacher. I find it interesting that Mr. Child twice reiterates Jack's physical description at 6' 5" and 250 lbs. It's almost like Lee Child is trying to reclaim his character as he has been presented in the past 20 novels -- as opposed to having the "movie" Jack Reacher represented by 5' 7" Tom Cruise. No offense to Tom Cruise but I have known Jack Reacher for almost 20 years. And you are no Jack Reacher. In 1997 Lee Child presented Jack Reacher as a main character in "Killing Floor". Jack is not just a rugged and competent physical specimen, he is highly trained, has great instincts, can calculate numbers (and odds) rapidly in his head, is very intelligent, and can apply his skills immediately and with very little remorse (if any). This combination of attributes also makes him attractive to women. Jack represents what most manly men probably want to be. I have always been interested in the use of "chaos theory" as a problem solving tool. Chaos theory is a method of problem solving in the field of mathematics that deals with complex systems whose behavior is highly sensitive to slight changes in conditions, often small alterations can give rise to strikingly great consequences. Jack Reacher in combination with his main supporting cast are skilled at tossing out random thoughts that helps them leave no stone unturned. Peoples' minds often work in different ways and sometimes the solution that appears obvious to one person just turns out to be a "head fake". And so they move on to explore other potential outcomes. But while Jack Reacher is a fascinating character, and reason enough to read any (or all) of the Reacher novels, Lee Child really excels at being a highly gifted story teller. His plots are relevant and timely, the story is often presented from several points of view, and any

thriller/detective novel reader will find himself/herself rapidly sucked into the story and given a front row seat to watch the plot unfold. The writing is tight, his descriptions on point, and his use of humor is both cynical and sarcastic. The brilliance that it takes to put such a complex plot together, while still making it interesting and entertaining, is a trait shared by few authors. My wife always smiles when I laugh out loud while reading. Sometimes the direction the humor comes from is unexpected and in your face, providing an instant surprise that causes your brain to "burp" before it understands what the verbiage really means. When your brain comprehends the message and context, the result is a spontaneous and explosive laugh -- often followed by another one immediately. I love that when it happens! Like most people, I probably don't laugh enough anymore. So "kudos" to Lee Child and his character. I'd be interested in a poll given where the main objective would be to identify which of these two names are most recognizable -- Lee Child or Jack Reacher? Given the popularity of the novels and movie, I would place my bet on Jack. If you are a fan of detective novels and thrillers, don't miss out on the Jack Reacher series.

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