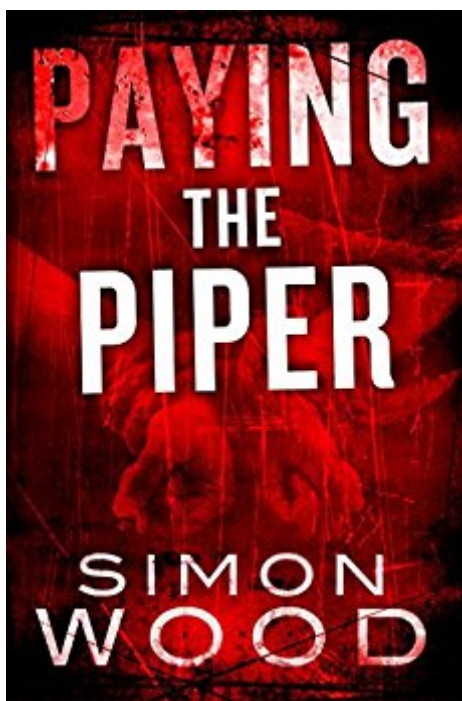


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Paying The Piper



Synopsis

For years, the serial kidnapper known as the Piper got rich by abducting children from San Francisco's wealthiest families. When crime reporter Scott Fleetwood gets a call from a man identifying himself as the Piper and offers an exclusive interview, Fleetwood jumps at the chance. But the caller turns out to be a fake, and the rash decision costs the life of the real Piper's latest victim. For eight long years, Fleetwood has lived with unbearable guilt and the enduring disdain of the entire Bay area. Now he hears from the real Piper and it's not for an interview. The kidnapper has the reporter's son. But he doesn't want money—he wants blood. And he's going to use Fleetwood to get it. In the tradition of Harlan Coben and Gregg Hurwitz, Simon Wood weaves a plot thick with suspense and heavy with action. Paying the Piper grabs hold from page one and doesn't let go until new debts are paid and old scores settled.

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Customer Reviews

Eight years ago, a kidnapper dubbed the "Piper" began kidnapping children. Once the ransoms were paid, the children were returned, unharmed. During the last kidnapping, the Piper contacted Scott Fleetwood, a reporter with the San Francisco Independent. Only, the man Scott was talking to

wasn't the real Piper. To teach the public, Scott, and the FBI a lesson, the real Piper murdered Nicholas Rooker and left the body in a park. Not a day goes by that Scott doesn't think about Nicholas Rooker. And now the unthinkable has happened... Scott's own son, Sammy, has been kidnapped right in front of the school. It's the Piper - and it's payback time. A ransom is demanded, and Scott and his wife Jane, don't have the funds. But Charles Rooker, Nicholas's father, pops up at the most unexpected time and saves the day, putting up the ransom; he swears he harbors no ill will toward Scott and his family; he wants the Piper caught, once and for all. And now the Piper has Scott running in circles and through hoops - for Scott has a lot to answer for. Scott has to do what the Piper wants him to do or the Piper will hurt Sammy. And if things couldn't get any worse, in the middle of the night, their other son, Peter, is taken right from his own bed, with Jane unable to stop it. And a new ransom is demanded; Charles Rooker swoops in once again. He doesn't care about the money - he wants the Piper caught. And now the Piper has made a new demand: Scott is given a deadline - he has to find the Piper. But FBI Agent Tom Sheils is on the case. He still holds contempt towards Scott, but regardless, he's determined to take down the Piper and bring the boys home. But he knows that Scott is keeping secrets, and he's determined to get to the bottom of it.

I could not put this book down; I read it in 2 days. This was my second book by this author I read his book "The One That Got Away" thanks to the Kindle First Program and loved it so I thought I'd try another one and this one grabbed me just as fast as the first one I read. If you are a fan of Harlan Coben I think you will like Wood's books too. This book had some edge of your seat moments and also a lot of What ifs? Or What would you do? I also figured something out early, but thought it was a great red herring then got blindsided by being right! 8 years ago Scott Fleetwood was an up and coming reporter when he gets the call of a lifetime from the man known as The Piper who has kidnapped 8 children and is offering Scott an exclusive, but what he thinks is his big break turns out to be a crank call that causes the death of the Pipers current victim. The Piper has never killed before and there is a note on the boy's chest saying "You're to Blame". And everyone blames Scott including the FBI, the public, the family and The Piper. And now 8 years later one of Scott's twin boys has been kidnapped by the Piper but this isn't the Piper's MO this is revenge and it's personal. This book had a lot of twists and turns, and since this time it's personal the Piper is asking a lot more than money of Scott he wants him to pay in more ways than one. I really liked how strong of a relationship Scott had with his wife, Jane and I truly felt the pain of poor Peter whose twin was fooled into getting into a car with a stranger while he was told he couldn't come, so heartbreaking. All of the side characters in this book were very well

developed including all the FBI people I especially like the way Agent Guerra handled matters with the family and how good she was with Peter.

Plot/Storyline: 4 Stars This is a kidnapping plot with more than one smart twist to it. Just when I thought I had it figured out, another monkey wrench was thrown into the story to get me off target. There were a couple of obvious red herrings that irritated me when I thought back on them. By that, I mean thoughts of a character that were meant to throw the reader off the trail. When it bothers me is when the author keeps certain thoughts very generic, and you look back at them later thinking that the author made a mistake, but then realize that the author just worded the information in such a way as to make the reader think the wrong thing on purpose. A rather unrealistic portion of the storyline was that the FBI let the father work so closely in the investigation at the very end. I am pretty certain that's not standard FBI protocol in kidnappings. However, I can see where it might have been necessary for the sequence of the story, so the author can claim poetic license here. I also noticed that Mr. Wood did not delve too deeply into the past kidnappings. I think this was because the most difficult part of getting away with the crime of kidnapping for ransom is the actual collection of the ransom. The Piper not only gets away, but he manages to get away multiple times.

Character Development: 4 Stars As the father of the kidnapped boy, Scott is a very well-developed character. His remorse and determination to save his son bleed from the page into the heart of the reader. I found the mother to be an unbelievable side character. I just couldn't swallow her not even once blaming her husband, even though everyone, including her, knew that the kidnapping was a personal strike against him.

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