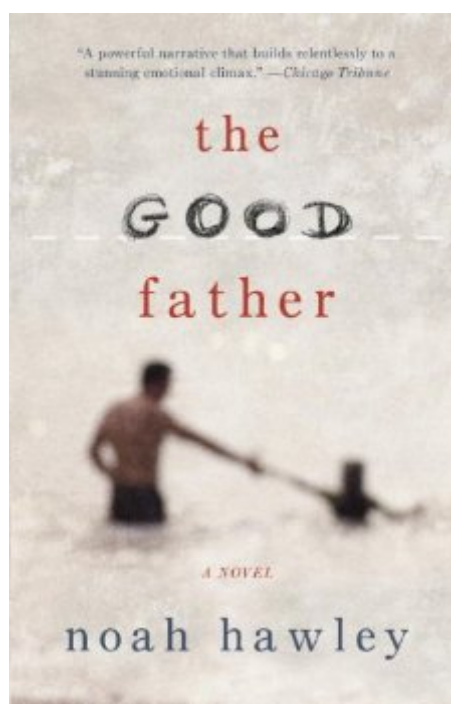


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The Good Father



Synopsis

From the award-winning creator of the TV show Fargo and author of the bestseller *Before the Fall*, an intense, psychological novel about one doctor's suspense-filled quest to unlock the mind of a suspected political assassin: his twenty-year old son. As the Chief of Rheumatology at Columbia Presbyterian, Dr. Paul Allen's specialty is diagnosing patients with conflicting symptoms, patients other doctors have given up on. He lives a contented life in Westport with his second wife and their twin sons—hard won after a failed marriage earlier in his career that produced a son named Daniel. In the harrowing opening scene of this provocative and affecting novel, Dr. Allen is home with his family when a televised news report announces that the Democratic candidate for president has been shot at a rally, and Daniel is caught on video as the assassin. Daniel Allen has always been a good kid—a decent student, popular—but, as a child of divorce, used to shuttling back and forth between parents, he is also something of a drifter. Which may be why, at the age of nineteen, he quietly drops out of Vassar and begins an aimless journey across the United States, during which he sheds his former skin and eventually even changes his name to Carter Allen Cash. Told alternately from the point of view of the guilt-ridden, determined father and his meandering, ruminative son, *The Good Father* is a powerfully emotional page-turner that keeps one guessing until the very end. This is an absorbing and honest novel about the responsibilities and limitations of being a parent and our capacity to provide our children with unconditional love in the face of an unthinkable situation. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Dr. Paul Allen is a good man. As Noah Hawley's novel opens, he is enjoying the family tradition of shouting out Jeopardy questions with his wife and twin sons. The game is interrupted by breaking news. The Democratic candidate--the presumed next President of the United States--has just been shot at a public rally. The coverage is chaotic, with reports and footage coming in from a variety of sources. Finally, some images of the shooter come up on the screen. It's Daniel, Paul's 20-year-old son from his first marriage. So begins a nightmare. I think this premise alone is enough to intrigue most readers. We've experienced these atrocities, seen the breaking news coverage, hoped for the best. Who hasn't spared just a moment to think of the people who love the perpetrators of these crimes? Just because your child turns out to be a monster, doesn't mean you stop loving them. Within moments, Secret Service agents have shown up at Dr. Allen's door. He is taken in for questioning. They need to know everything about Daniel. He is shot, in custody, and branded as a terrorist. Paul is in shock and in denial. Yes, he's seen the footage of his son with gun in hand, but he knows that Danny didn't do it. As events unfold, Danny refuses to speak or defend himself, so it falls to his father. But Dr. Allen is a diagnostician, and even as he consistently proclaims his son's innocence, he mentally searches for the trauma that broke him. This novel is about the people on the periphery of a terrible act. It's about the toll a child's action takes not only on the parent, but on the entire family. The story is realistic, honest, and utterly compelling. Though flawed, Paul is a hugely sympathetic protagonist, even as he's being reviled by the world.

Noah Hawley's book THE GOOD FATHER is filled with descriptive analogies. In fact the physical book (or at least the advanced reader's copy I received) is in itself an analogy as it features a rip mended with scotch tape that slashes across a typical suburban home surrounded by lots of foliage. This cover works well with the book's plot of an affluent and professionally very successful dad who desperately tries to tape his casually treated first born back together after the son is accused of assassinating the leading candidate for United States president. The book is told by Dr. Paul Allen a prominent medical doctor with a New York City practice and an upscale Connecticut home. At age fifty Dr. Allen lives a comfortable life with his ten years younger wife and their elementary school

aged twin boys. Dr. Allen has an unsettled older son from a previous marriage named Daniel who has dropped out of college and drifted rather aimlessly around the U.S. in an attempt to find himself. Daniel has had some conflicts with his immature mother in California and briefly lived with Allen and his younger family while in high school but has not been identified as having any particular worrisome problems. In his journals though Daniel reveals he has always felt like his father's shadow son. The Allen's lives become the stuff of nightmares when Daniel shoots and kills a charismatic Montana presidential contender at a UCLA campaign rally. The bulk of the novel describes Dr. Allen's search to understand what has happened to his son and why. As a trained physician he approaches his task with a scientific mind. He sifts through Daniel's life and reads about true life young men who gained fame through murderous attention grabbing acts.

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