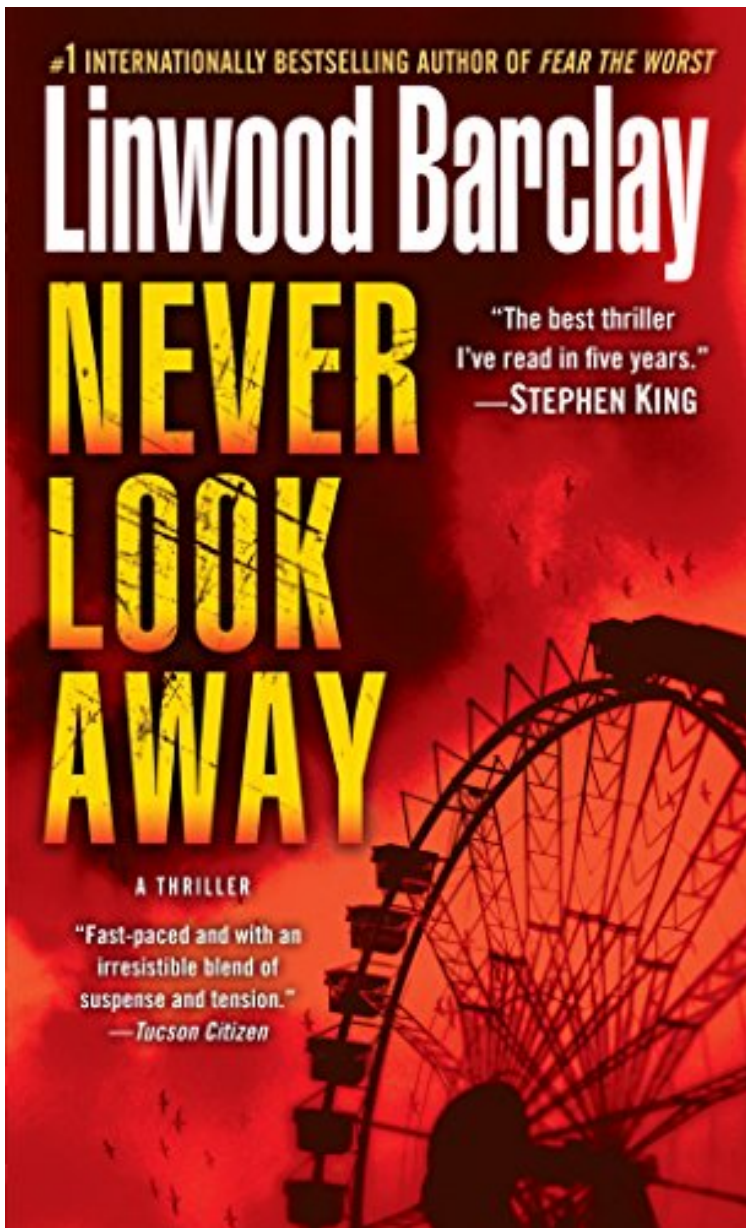


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Never Look Away: A Thriller



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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurBONUS: This edition contains an excerpt from Linwood Barclay's The Accident.A warm summer Saturday. An amusement park. David Harwood is glad to be spending some quality time with his wife and their four-year-old son. But what begins as a pleasant family outing turns into a nightmare after an inexplicable disappearance. A frantic search only leads to an even more shocking and harrowing turn of events. Until this terrifying moment, David Harwood is just a small-town reporter in need of a break. Now the only thing he cares about is restoring his family. Desperate for any clue, David dives into his own

investigation and into a web of lies and deceit. For with every new piece of evidence he uncovers, David finds more questions and moves ever closer to a shattering truth.

Extrait Prologue

Im scared, Ethan said. Theres nothing to be scared about, I said, turning away from the steering wheel and reaching an arm back to free him from the kiddie seat. I reached under the pad where hed been resting his arms and undid the buckle. I dont want to go on them, he said. The tops of the five roller coasters and a Ferris Wheel could be seen well beyond the park entrance, looming like tubular hills. Were not going on them, I reminded him for the umpteenth time. I was starting to wonder whether this excursion was such a good plan. The night before, after Jan and I had returned from our drive up to Lake George and Id picked Ethan up at my parents place, hed had a hard time settling down. Hed been, by turns, excited about coming here, and worried the roller coaster would derail at the highest point. After Id tucked him in, I slipped under the covers next to Jan and considered discussing whether Ethan was really ready for a day at Five Mountains. But she was asleep, or at least pretending to be, so I let it go. But in the morning, Ethan was only excited about the trip. No rollercoaster nightmares. At breakfast he was full of questions about how they worked, why they didnt have an engine at the front, like a train. How could it get up the hills without an engine? It was only once wed pulled into the nearly full parking lot shortly after eleven that his apprehensions resurfaced. Were just going on the smaller rides, the merry-go-rounds, the kind you like, I said to him. They wont even let you go on the big ones. Youre only four years old. You have to be eight or nine. You have to be this high. I held my hand a good four feet above the parking lot asphalt. Ethan studied my hand warily, unconvinced. I dont think it was just the idea of being on one of the monstrous coasters that scared him. Even being near them, hearing their clattering roar, was frightening enough. Itll be okay, I said. Im not going to let anything happen to you. Ethan looked me in the eye, decided I was deserving of his trust, and allowed me to lift the padded arm up and over his head. He worked his way out of the straps, which mussed up his fine blond hair as they squeezed past his head. I got my hands under his arms, getting ready to lift, but he squirmed free, said, I can do it, then slithered down to the car floor and stepped out the open door. Jan was around back, taking the stroller out of the trunk of the Accord, setting it up. Ethan attempted to get in before it had been locked into the open position. Whoa, Jan said. Ethan hesitated, waited until hed heard the definitive click, then plopped himself into the seat. Jan leaned over into the trunk again. Let me grab something, I said, reaching for a backpack. Jan was opening a small canvas bag next to it that was actually a soft-sided cooler. Inside were a small ice pack and half a dozen juice boxes, cellophane-wrapped straws stuck to the sides. She handed me one of the juice boxes and said, Give that to Ethan. I took it from Jan as she finished up in the trunk and closed it. She zipped up the cooler bag and tucked it into the basket at the back of the stroller as I peeled the straw off of the sticky juice box. It, or one of the other juices in the cooler, must have sprung a tiny leak. I took the straw from its wrapper and stabbed it into the box. Handing it to Ethan, I said, Dont squeeze it. Youll have apple juice all over yourself. I know, he said. Jan reached out and touched my bare arm. It was a warm August Saturday, and we were both in shorts, sleeveless tops, and, considering all the walking we had ahead of us, running shoes. Jan was wearing a long-visored ball cap over her black hair, which she had pulled back into a ponytail and fed through the back of the cap. Oversized shades kept the sun out of her eyes. Hey, she said. Hey, I said. She pulled me toward her, behind the stroller, so Ethan couldnt see. You okay? she asked. The question threw me off. I was about to ask her the same thing. Yeah, sure, Im good. I know things didnt work out the way youd hoped yesterday. No big deal, I said. Some leads dont pan out. It happens. What about you? You feel better today? She nodded so imperceptibly it was only the tipping of the visor that hinted at an answer. You sure? I pressed. What you said yesterday, that thing about the bridge. Lets not. I thought maybe you were feeling better, but when you told me that. She put her index finger on my lips. I know Ive been a lot to live with lately, and Im sorry about that. I forced a smile. Hey, we all go through rough spots. Sometimes theres an obvious reason, sometimes there isnt. You just feel the way you do. Itll pass. Something flashed in her eyes, like maybe she didnt share my certainty. I want you to know I appreciate . . . your patience, she said. A family looking for a spot drove by in a monster SUV, and Jan turned away from the noise. No big deal, I said. She took a deep, cleansing breath. Were going to have a good day, she said. Thats all I want, I said, and allowed myself to be pulled closer. I still dont think it would hurt, you know, to see someone on a regular basis. Ethan twisted around in the stroller so he could see us. He stopped sucking on the juice box and said, Lets go! Hold your horses, I said. He settled back into his seat, bouncing his legs up and down. Jan leaned in and gave me a quick kiss on the cheek. Lets show the kid a good time. Yeah, I said. She gave my arm a final squeeze, then gripped the handles of the stroller. Okay, buster, she said to Ethan. Were on our way. Ethan stuck his hands out to the sides, like he was flying. Hed already drained his juice box and handed it to me to

toss in a wastebasket. Jan found a moistened towelette for him when he complained about sticky fingers. We had several hundred yards to get to the main entrance, but we could already see people lined up to buy tickets. Jan, wisely, had bought them online and printed them out a couple of days earlier. I took over stroller duty while she rooted in her purse for them. We were almost to the gates when Jan stopped dead.

Nuts. What? The backpack, she said. I left it in the car. Do we need it? I asked. It was a long trek back to where we'd parked. It's got the peanut butter sandwiches, and the sunscreen. Jan was always careful to goop Ethan up so he didn't get a burn. I'll run back. You go ahead, I'll catch up to you. She handed me two slips of paper: one adult ticket and one child's. I kept one for herself. She said, I think there's an ice-cream place, about a hundred yards in, on the left. We'll meet there? Jan was always one to do her research, and must have memorized the online map of Five Mountains in preparation. That sounds good, I said. Jan turned and started back for the car at a slow trot. Where's Mom going? Ethan asked. Forgot the backpack, I said. The sandwiches? he said. Yeah. He nodded, relieved. We didn't want to be going anywhere without provisions, especially of the sandwich variety. I handed in my ticket and his, bypassing the line to purchase them, and entered the park. We were greeted with several junk food kiosks and about a dozen stands hawking Five Mountains hats and T-shirts and bumper stickers and brochures. Ethan asked for a hat and I said no. The two closest roller coasters, which had looked big from the parking lot, were positively Everest-like now. I stopped pushing the stroller and knelt down next to Ethan and pointed. He looked up, watched a string of cars slowly climb the first hill, then plummet at high speed, the passengers screaming and waving their hands in the air. He stared, eyes wide with wonder and fear. He reached for my hand and squeezed. I don't like that, he said. I want to go home. I told you, sport, don't worry. The rides we're going on are on the other side of the park. The place was packed. Hundreds, if not thousands, of people moving around us. Parents with little kids, big kids. Grandparents, some dragging their grandkids around, some being dragged by them. I think that must be the ice-cream place, I said, spotting the stand just up ahead. I got behind the stroller and started pushing. Think it's too early for ice cream? I asked.