



## **Purgatory Road**

*Samuel Parker*

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**Named one of *Library Journal* 's Best Books of 2017**

**"Exceptional first novel."**--*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

**"Will grip suspense aficionados from the first page."**--*Library Journal*, starred review

**"A skillfully written, gripping thriller."**--*Booklist*

**"Action-packed with breakneck pacing."**--*Foreword Reviews*

When a day trip out of Las Vegas with his wife takes a turn for the worse, Jack is sure that he has the ability to get them home. But he drove into something far beyond reason.

Rescue comes in the form of a desert hermit, but hope fades as the couple comes to realize that the nomad has no intention of letting them leave. A chance encounter with a kidnapped runaway and her crazed abductor leads them all farther into the wilderness--and closer to the cold brutality that isolation brings.

At the edge of his sanity, Jack begins to learn that playing by another's rules may be the only way to survive.

In a voice that is as hypnotizing as a desert mirage, debut novelist Samuel Parker entices readers down a dangerous road, where the forces of good and evil are as crushing as the Mojave heat. This is suspense in its purest, most unfiltered form.

## Purgatory Road Details

Date : Published January 3rd 2017 by Revell

ISBN :

Author : Samuel Parker

Format : Kindle Edition 306 pages

Genre : Thriller, Fiction, Suspense, Horror, Christian, Contemporary

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## **From Reader Review Purgatory Road for online ebook**

### **Faith says**

The most exceptional read for awhile! Kept me riveted...definite page turner, love the short chapters. I was almost sad when I was finished but will definitely be looking for and reading this author's next book and soon! This book had everything I enjoy most. Suspense, strong emotions (multiple emotions...ranging from love to hate and back...) . Can't wait for more from this author.

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### **Kelly Bridgewater says**

I love a good suspense or mystery that takes me away for a couple of hours. When I first read the synopsis for debut author Samuel Parker's book Purgatory Road, I really couldn't wait to read the book. When reading a mystery, I liked the suspense to be high with me wanting to flip the pages because I can't wait to see what happens next. I want to yearn for the victims to come out unharmed on the other end. But, unfortunately, with Parker's book, I didn't feel this way.

While his writing is okay, I did have a hard time with the suspense element of the novel. It was the most disturbing part of the story. First, when Jack and his wife wander in the desert, they get stranded and have to wait until almost death to be rescued. Then the story just stalled for a long time. They were stuck at this elder man's trailer with nowhere to go. Why they didn't leave when they got better is beyond me? Yes, I know they were in the middle of the desert, but they didn't even attempt to leave at all. On the other hand, the suspense element with Colten felt a little odd. It seemed more for shock value than anything else. I believe, and I could be wrong, that Parker wanted to Colten to seem horrible, so he made him taunt Molly, not allowing me to see what was really going on. It just read like a slow-moving, yet moments of horror stuck in gross out the reader. I really didn't like it.

The story moved at a slow pace, and only sped up when Parker was coming to the end of the novel. As for the characters of Jack and Laura, they were one-dimensional with really no personality at all. Their marriage even seemed fake to me. Why would Laura put up with a man like Jake? He only became a hero at the climactic moment. Not before. There really was no romance between Jake and Laura. They really showed no affection to each other or had secret meetings on how they were going to escape, except that one time, and it failed.

With the unpredictable ending and original storyline, I really didn't enjoy this book. Because of the violent nature of some of the scenes, I would not recommend giving Purgatory Road to younger readers. As a fan of suspense novels, I would not recommend this book to others. Pass on this one and spend your time with something more gripping. These are my opinions and other have a right to completely disagree with me.

I received a complimentary copy of Purgatory Road from Revell Publishing and the opinions stated are all my own.

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### **Diane Cuipers says**

4,5\* Heb echt genoten van dit boek heel goed debuut ga zeker meer van deze schrijver lezen

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### **Lizzy Bueckert says**

This was a refreshing change and I loved it! I usually give 4 stars for books I love and 5 is super rare from me. I'm giving this one 5 stars because the entire time I was never quite sure what was going on. Great story. Great characters. Can't wait for the next book!

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### **Chris Jager says**

I have heard this book described a couple different ways. It was described as The Shack only scarier, and as a new Frank Peretti style book. To me it fits either and yet stands completely on its own. It doesn't seek to mirror either author, Samuel just brings a book that will not leave you the same.

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### **Robert Grieco says**

I thought this book to be a fantastic read! The characters and story were extremely interesting. A refreshing story to say the least. There are some nice "life lessons" to be learned here as well. I now know who my favorite author is: Samuel Parker!

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### **P.e. lololo says**

A very interesting story between good and evil, and the turns you take in life and where they could lead you. First it begins with a young girl who has run away from her home in Ohio because really it was ok, no excitement. Just routine and she was looking for an adventure. She was not upset with her parents or any one thing she was looking for what she thought would be an adventure. After getting all the way to Vegas she accepts a ride from a truck driver who she thinks is going to take her to L.A. that does not happen. Now the second part of the story is about a couple who has traveled from Chicago to Vegas for a weekend and their marriage is ok at least for the both of them in their mind. The husband decides that for fun let's take a ride out in the desert, not to a local place like Red Rock Canyon, or go out to Hoover Dam. No let's drive out to the desert. Having grown up in the desert I for one know that this is a bad idea and is not going to end well. Now is when the story changes after an old man rescues the couple. But the husband is still being a jerk and just for good measure the old man lets him try to walk out to find help even the husband does not know where he is going and for being so upset with the old man he leaves his wife with the man. First if you're a city person don't go walking in the desert by yourself with idea where you're going when in a few hours it will be 120 degrees, second if he didn't like the old man why did he leave his wife with him? The husband really pissed me off. You go back and forth between the couple, and their situation and girls. The author takes you the reader to look at all their lives before they got to this point and you are wondering how is this going to end. The ending is very climatic so I won't go into it, but I will say that this is a very good book with very strong characters. Overall I really liked the story. I got this book from Netgalley.com I gave it 4 stars. Follow us at [www.1rad-readerreviews.com](http://www.1rad-readerreviews.com)

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## Susan says

WOW WOW This is a book that should become a great movie thriller. I want to hand this over for a friend to read yet I want to keep my copy in a safe place so I can devour it again.

I won an ARC from Goodreads.

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## Ilyssa Wesche says

I had some trepidation about this because for one, I don't usually read suspense thrillers - they make me too anxious about HOW WILL IT END and I end up reading too fast to get there. And for two, as an atheist & considering this is published by Baker, I was a little worried that God would creep in somehow. And I can see that for some readers He will, but one of the strongest points of this novel to me is that God doesn't have to creep in. Rather it doesn't have to be God. I thought that took real talent, and was perhaps the reason I liked the book so much, making either thing possible. I can envision a lively book club discussion around this. (I don't want to reveal too much!)

I wished for a little backstory on Jack & Laura - maybe on Cole too - but I don't think the story was wanting for that.

Samuel Parker has such a great way of writing, at turns succinct and witty but with a lovely turn of phrase - at one point a spider walked on "eight points of creepiness" which made me laugh out loud and cringe in fear at the same time. I got a *The Stand* meets *A Christmas Carol* vibe from this, and there aren't too many books I love more than *The Stand*. Take that as high praise!

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## C-shaw says

This is good! And a real bargain at \$1.59 US for the e-book.

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I enjoyed this book, but would someone please tell me what in the world the last section meant???

Some favorite quotations:

". . . they admired the amazing views that they could not see at home: the valley floor butting up against mountain walls; the streaks of reds and tans that told the history of the world. The sun was in its full glory and the heat began to abuse the ground."

"Loneliness is the acute sensation of realizing that you are on nobody's mind."

"At different times through the years she thought of it [her engagement ring] as her disengagement ring. A symbol that marked the last day Jack pursued her. Focused his attention on her. Prioritized her. . . . They had

been married for five long, slow years."

"In her youth she had secretly resented her mother for passively supporting her father. Resented her for being the Xeroxed copy of June Cleaver. A woman without her own dreams."

"Two old farts growing old together in misery's outpost."

"Why does a dark road grip the heart in fear? When on foot, a person quickens their pace at night as fears of stalking boogeymen come haunting up behind them. A flash of headlights causes the muscles to tense in anticipation of complete terror."

"She had longed to live without restraint, not realizing she was incapable of living without support."

"His western shirt sported the timeless fashion of the discount thrift store. . ."

"'Don't see much out here'--he smiled--'that's why it's called OUT HERE.'"

"He fought for sleep and won no prize."

"I've seen it before. Man who can't sit down ain't never happy. Always got to be going somewhere."

"'How'd you get out here?' Jack piped in. 'I don't know,' she whispered. 'I don't know where here is.'"

"Molly suffered the fate of the typical teenage suburbanite. No matter how domesticated a young heart is, it still seeks a harder edge, not realizing how sharp that edge actually cuts."

"The things we hate in others are the things we hate about ourselves. . ."

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## **Bailey Skye says**

### ***4/5 Stars***

*I received an advanced reading copy of this publication in exchange for an honest review.*

I know somebody is going to end up giving me hell for this comment, but this book actually gave me subtle *American God* vibes. And if being compared to Neil Gaiman isn't praise, than I'm not quite sure what is.

Jack & Laura are a married couple who have decided to take a trip out to Las Vegas in a hopes to rekindle their relationship. One afternoon, they decide to rent a car and drive out into the desert to explore and see what they can find. Jack's need to push things just a little bit further have them headed out to a secluded area, and when their car stalls, the two begin to panic. With just two bottles of water to share between them, Jack and Laura wait in their vehicle, hoping that someone will wander down the highway and help them before the desert heat claims their lives.

Just when they have nearly give up, help comes in the form of Boots, a hermit living in the desert in a small shack. He takes the couple back to his home and nurses them back to health, but it seems as though he has no

intention of letting the two leave. The situation only intensifies when they stumble upon a teenage runaway who claims she was being held captive in the desert hills.

"Is it the actual blow that causes so much suffering, or the anticipation of it? The waiting for the strike of pain that we know is coming and every fiber in our body tenses in macabre expectation. The road before him was the physical embodiment of the question. He could not will himself to the end of the story; he had to walk the gauntlet of fear."

Samuel Parker knows how to turn a phrase. His writing is completely illustrative, and it's initially what drew me into this story. There is so much going on in Purgatory Road, and yet one of the biggest themes here is definitely man vs. self. Jack is not a perfect man, and his insecurity in himself is leading to the destruction of his relationship without his even realizing. Even when he is rescued, Jack fails to relinquish control over the situation he finds himself in and constantly feels the need to prove himself.

"Maybe the old man would come crashing through the door with an axe in his hand. Maybe Jack would leap up and beat the life out of the old man, saving his wife from dismemberment, and saving the day. They would ride off on horseback, she with her arms around his waist, in love again with her brave hero.

Either that or he would be chopped to bits while Laura cowered in the corner waiting her turn, a look of shame on her face as she realized she had cast her lot with such a horrible protector."

The suspense is real, and the alternating perspectives really help to increase that edge of your seat feeling. There is just enough of a supernatural element to make the whole story still feel plausible while also continuing to raise questions in your mind. My confusion and lack of fully understanding the situation is what pushed me through each chapter. I had to understand, the pieces had to finally come together. And they do, in a way, but they're also left a little open ended. Great discussions will be had about this book!

One hell of a debut novel, I look forward to seeing what else Samuel Parker has in store for us.

**Read more reviews on [Bibliotique](#).**

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## **Bandit says**

Found this on Netgalley, nice cover, interesting premise, sure, why not. Turned out to be a fairly decent thriller in desperate need of proper editing. Not just checking for typos and commas, but actual context editing. Someone to point out that the clunky similes (stars burning like orphans in the lack field of the night, seriously, all those flammable orphans...what) didn't work and in fact looked incongruous in the otherwise matter of fact writing style, short sentences, simple sentiments, etc. Or maybe someone to mention that Ansel Adams didn't draw, but took photos and in his youth was in fact a piano player. Or someone to bring author's attention to that fact that repeatedly describing a man who lives in a trailer in a desert as a desert nomad

doesn't work because nomad is by definition someone who doesn't have a permanent abode. The plot itself was actually compelling enough to see what happens for the most part, though the morality of it was laid on much too thickly as the forces of good and evil battled it out small scale on a desert (purgatory, yes, get it, purgatory) road. There was a low budget straight to dvd movie with a similar concept not too long ago. This book was well paced, well intentioned, but overly simplistic and under edited with a general quality of being slightly above an average kindle freebie. Thanks Netgalley.

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### **Jackie Rogers says**

Another good and evil battle. Is an exciting mystery with supernatural thrown in. Jack and his wife are on vacation in the desert when the car breaks down and they run out of water. A hermit comes along and rescues them by taking them to his trailer on a horse. No phones and no electricity. So their adventure begins. In the mean time there is a serial killer on the loose. The supernatural beings are at work for the good or evil. Keeps one guessing as to what these characters will do with the events unfolding them. This novel is released in January. Thanks to Goodreads.

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### **Staci says**

I devoured this spiritual warfare debut novel in 24 hours. The reason that I read it so quickly is because the chapters are very short, which enticed me to read "just one more" many, many times and because I just HAD to know what was going to happen to the three main characters: husband and wife Jack and Laura from Chicago whose marriage has lost its luster and teenage runaway Molly from Ohio. The novel is set in the middle of nowhere outside of Las Vegas. The cover is perfect for the story.

As I was reading the novel, I wasn't LOVING it, but was super motivated to find out what was going to happen. In reflection, I can see the messages and symbolism of the story. This isn't my typical genre to read and I was a little frustrated with not understanding some of the pieces until the novel was over.

It was a good novel and I would read future works by the author. I recommend this one for readers that enjoyed This Present Darkness by Frank Peretti.

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### **Allie says**

Honestly, this book confused me more than it satisfied my need for a solid story. Obviously, not everyone feels this way, but that's fine. Here's why I'm not going to recommend this book:

There's a multitude of characters, all of which get their time in the spotlight, but some almost felt absolutely unneeded. In my opinion, PJ wasn't introduced or talked about well enough for her death to resonate so badly with Red. I didn't really empathize with any of the characters, either. Laura was annoying because she mentally complains about how Jack treats her THE WHOLE TIME and ends up still staying with him because he just happens to be forced to save her life AFTER he decided it was perfectly okay to leave her behind. Jack is just a stuck up prick. That's all that needs to be said about him. Red is basically the epitome of a small outskirt town sheriff who has had alcohol problems in the past. (He's not a bad character, but overall, his details have been written time and time again by author after author.) The other cop, James, is



just useless other than finding PJ's body and then staring at a full bottle of alcohol that Red had out on his table. Boots is probably the only character I was semi-okay with simply because he didn't put up with Jack's self-righteous crap. His mystery felt really forced, especially at the end when almost nothing was ever revealed about him at all. Colten is a terrible villain, honestly. He didn't strike any amount of fear into me at all. He was too unhinged to even plan out decent attacks which just left me feeling bored. Seth just makes no sense whatsoever, seeing as in some scenes, all characters can see and interact with him, and in others, only Colten can see him with no explanation as to how or why. He barely fits into the story at all and then is suddenly SUPER important in the battle scene between him and Boots.

What annoys me most is nothing gets said about Seth and Boots and their powers, their seemingly everlasting battle that's apparently been going on for centuries. This is really obnoxious because Colten is apparently a type of trainee or something for Seth, but you never get told why, or for what purpose, or anything. That made the whole entire book feel absolutely pointless due to the fact that it was basically the driving point for everything that happened.

Long story short, I was pretty disappointed because it seemed as if it was going to be a decent suspense novel with a solid story, but ultimately fell very short with me. Plus, there's only so many times you can describe someone wearing a shirt with "pearl buttons" before it's like OKAY, I GET IT, THEY ARE ALWAYS WEARING PEARL BUTTONS.

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