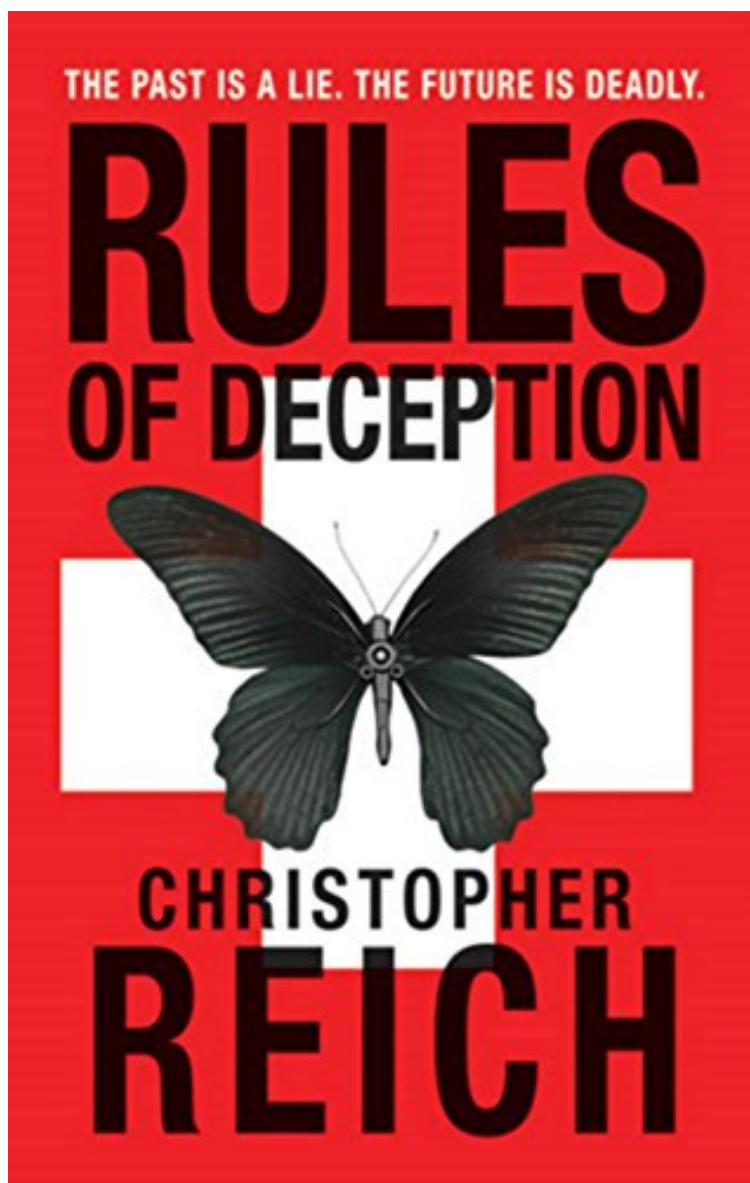


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Rules of Deception



*Par Christopher Reich
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurDoctor Jonathan Ransom thought he knew everything about his wife Emma until she was killed in a tragic skiing accident in the Swiss Alps. They had been married for eight years, eight blissful years in which they had travelled the world together. But the day after her death a mysterious letter addressed to her arrives at their hotel. When he opens it, his beliefs begin to unravel -- fast. . In the envelope is a railway baggage check to a suitcase that reveals an Emma far removed from the down-to-earth nurse who has been his constant and loyal companion all those years. In it he discovers the clues to a double life. Was she having an affair? When is your wife not your wife? And when she is not your wife, who is she?The

answers begin right outside the train station where two policeman are waiting - to kill him. There are more answers as Jonathan escapes and the action sweeps him through Switzerland on a quest to discover the truth about Emma. He is pursued by ruthless killers, entangled in an international conspiracy that touches all the world's Security Services and which will end in a denouement which is as breathtaking as it is totally unexpected..com

Lee Child on Rules of Deception Lee Child has crafted one of literature's most popular anti-heroes in the form of Jack Reacher, the iconic ex-military policeman of his bestselling novels. The author of Nothing to Lose talks about what makes a good thriller -- and why Christopher Reich is a novelist worthy of a gold medal. I discovered Christopher Reich exactly ten years ago. His first book came out around the same time my second book was published. The modest prosperity that ones first book deal brings allowed me to pick up hardcovers that caught my eye. And Numbered Account caught my eye. And it lived up to its promise. It was fast, fresh, glossy, and very exciting. I thought: Reich is a keeper. And then he got better. It was always clear that he had talent to burn, but he chose to accompany it with a real work ethic. His second, third and fourth books built and built until the release of the next one was an event to be anticipated. (And right there is my only complaint: Reich doesnt write fast enough.) His fifth book - The Patriot's Club - was a real achievement. It was a slam-dunk winner of the International Thriller Writers first annual Best Novel award. Awards are often awkward. Theres usually a measure of grumbling, because often people dont agree with the choice of winner. But not a word was heard against "The Patriots Club." In fact nothing was heard, because the applause was too loud. So I was really looking forward to Rules of Deception. I got an advance copy. I cracked it open. I started reading. Mostly I read like any other reader, but a small part of me reads like a writer. I think all writers experience the same thing. We sense things between the lines, especially energy and inspiration. And ambition. Rules of Deception starts with a short prologue, and then the first chapter introduces Jonathan Ransom, the main character. Two pages, and then nine pages. The prologue is a teaser. It baits the hook. Its a two-page masterpiece. Its intriguing, and then its really intriguing. It promises big things ahead. Then chapter one introduces the guy whos going to have to deal with them. And why, indirectly. Eleven pages. The reader in me wanted to race ahead. But the writer in me had to pause a moment. Because between the lines I was sensing something. Maybe because its an Olympic year I can only explain it like this: picture the high jump event. Six competitors are still in. Then five, then four. Then three. Then the gold, the silver, and the bronze are settled. But the rules of track and field allow the winner to go on. The bar is raised. A personal best. The Olympic record. The bar is raised again. World record height. The stadium goes quiet. The jumper stills himself on the runway. Intense concentration. The gold medal is already in the bag. Uncharted territory. The jumper rocks from foot to foot, his mind on nothing except jumping higher than he has ever jumped before. Thats exactly the between-the-lines feeling I was getting from Reich, eleven pages into Rules of Deception - a world-class writer preparing to accomplish something truly noteworthy. There are a further 377 pages. They live up to the promise. --Lee Child Exclusive Essay: Christopher Reich on Thrillers Name your five favorite books. For me theyre all thrillers. The Day of the Jackal, Eye of the Needle, The Bourne Identity , Noble House, and The Spy Who Came in From the Cold. My life stopped when I picked up each of those books and it didnt start again until I finished the last page. I didnt actually read them so much as disappear between their covers. That was me trying to catch the Jackal before he assassinated Charles De Gaulle, and me again at the wheel of a Jaguar XKE convertible racing down the Peak in Hong Kong. The fact is that for me life is somehow better when Im reading a great book. Richer, more excitingheck, I dont know, just better. About two years ago, I decided that it was my turn to write the thriller Id always wanted to read. I knew exactly where to start. All I had to do was "write what I know." These days, I know a lot about the intelligence community. Not the stuff you read about in the papers -- the stuff you never read about. Over the years, Ive made a lot of friends in Washington and overseas. Diplomats, spies, soldiers, politicians men and women at the highest levels of government. And, I can assure you that what theyve taught me about how the world really works is a lot more interesting and a lot more frightening than youd ever imagine. Thats where my newest book, Rules of Deception, comes in. Its a story about an honest and courageous doctor named Jonathan Ransom. Hes a surgeon who works for Doctors Without Borders in some of the toughest parts of the world. Hes a happily married man with a big heart and a beautiful English wife he deeply loves named Emma who works with him. What Jonathan doesnt know is that nothing about his life is what it seems. In fact, its all a web of lies and hes caught in the middle of something extraordinarily dangerous. I cant say more than that, and I shouldnt have to, because if Ive done my job right, when you get to page five youll be hooked and you wont come up for air until its all said and done. --Christopher Reich Extrait

PROLOGUEThe cold breeze swept across the plain, carrying the

butterfly on its drafts. The remarkable insect flitted about, climbing, diving, arcing high and low. It was a beautiful specimen, its wings colored a vivid yellow with a latticework of black, and unlike any in the region. It had an unusual name, too: *Papilio panoptes*. The butterfly flew over the custodial road, over the electrified security fence, and over the rolls of barbed wire. Beyond the fence lay a field of wildflowers, stunning in their variety and color. There were no structures anywhere to be seen: no houses, no barns, no buildings of any type. Only the mounds of freshly impacted soil, barely distinguishable beneath the flower canopy, gave evidence of the recently completed work. Despite its long voyage, the butterfly ignored the flowers. It did not seek their richly scented pollen or feast on their sweet nectar. Instead, it chose to fly higher, seeming to gain its sustenance from the air itself. And there it stayed, a shimmering yellow flag against the pale winter sky. It did not land on a lavender bush to rest. It did not drink from any of the rushing streams that descended from the harsh, majestic mountains and ran across the fertile grasslands. In fact, never once did it venture outside the fences precisely established one-square-kilometer perimeter. Content to hover over the colorful fields, it flew back and forth, day after day, night after night, never eating, never drinking, never resting. After seven days, a fierce wind, the *nashi*, visited from the north. The wind roared down the mountain passes and hurtled across the plains, gathering velocity and force and pummeling everything in its path. The butterfly could not fight the relentless drafts. Its circuits inside the perimeter had left it worn and vulnerable. A swirling gust picked it up, spun it round, and dashed it to the ground, shattering its fragile body. A guard patrolling the custodial road caught the flash of yellow lying in the dirt and stopped his jeep. He approached cautiously, kneeling in the ankle-deep grass. It was not like any butterfly he had seen before. First of all, it was larger. Its wings were rigid, with jagged bits of a paperthin metal protruding from the silken skin. The fuzzy thorax was split in two and connected by a green wire. Mystified, he picked it up and examined it. Like all those who worked at the facility, he was first and foremost an engineer, and only reluctantly a soldier. What he saw left him shaken. Inside the thorax was an aluminum-cased battery no bigger than a grain of rice, and attached to it, a microwave transmitter. Using his thumbnail, he sheared away the antennae's skin to reveal a cluster of fiber-optic cables, thin as human hair. No, he argued to himself. It could not be. Not so soon. Suddenly, he was running back to the jeep. Words tore through his mind. Explanations. Theories. None made sense. An exposed stone caught his foot and he crashed to the ground. Clambering to his feet, he hurried toward the jeep. Every minute was vital. His hand shook as he radioed his superiors. They have found us. Jonathan Ransom knocked the ice from his goggles and stared up at the sky. If this gets any worse, he thought to himself, we're going to be in trouble. The snow was falling harder. A snarling wind snapped ice and grit against his cheek. The craggy, familiar peaks that ringed the high alpine valley had disappeared behind an armada of threatening clouds. He lifted one ski, then the next, leaning forward as he climbed the slope. Nylon sealskins attached to the underside of his skis gripped the snow. Touring bindings granted him a walking stride. He was a tall man, thirty-seven years old, slim at the waist and broad-shouldered. A snug woolen cap hid a thatch of prematurely graying hair. Glacier goggles shielded wine black eyes. Only a determined mouth and cheeks rough with a two-day stubble were visible. He wore his old ski patrolman's jacket. He never climbed without it. Below him, his wife, Emma, clad in a red parka and black pants, labored up the mountainside. Her pace was erratic. She climbed three steps, then rested. Two steps, then rested. They'd only just passed the halfway point and already she looked done in. Jonathan turned his skis perpendicular to the hill and rammed his poles into the snow. Stay put, he shouted through cupped hands. He waited for an acknowledgment, but his wife hadn't heard him over the howling wind. Head lowered, she continued her unsteady ascent. Jonathan sidestepped his way down the slope. It was steep and narrow, bordered on one side by a sheer rock face and on the other by a plunging ravine. Far below, perched on a sweeping hillside, the village of Arosa in the eastern Swiss canton of Graubünden was intermittently visible, winking from beneath the strata of fast-moving clouds. Was it always this hard? Emma asked when he reached her side. Last time you beat me to the top. Last time was eight years ago. I'm getting old. Yeah, thirty-two. A regular dinosaur. Just wait till you're my age, then it's really all downhill. He dug into his daypack for a bottle of water and handed it to her. How are you feeling? Half dead, she said, hunching over her poles. Time to call the Sherpas. Wrong country. Here they have gnomes. They're smarter, but not half as strong. Were on our own. Sure about that? Jonathan nodded. You're just overheating. Take your cap off for a minute and drink as much as you can. Yes, Doctor. Right away. Emma removed her woolen cap and drank thirstily from the bottle. In his mind, Jonathan had a picture of her on the same mountain eight years earlier. It was their first climb together. He, the newly minted surgeon fresh from his first posting in Africa with Doctors Without Borders; she, the willful English nurse he'd brought back as his

bride. Before they started out, hed asked her if shed climbed much before. A little, shed answered. Nothing too serious. In short order, shed clobbered him to the top, showing off the skills of an expert alpinist. Thats better, said Emma, running a hand through her untamed auburn hair. You sure? Emma smiled, but her hazel eyes were rimmed with fatigue. Im sorry, she said. For what? For not being as fit as I should be. For slowing us down. For not coming with you these last few years. Dont be silly. Im just glad youre here. Emma lifted her face and kissed him. Me, too. Look, he said more seriously. Its getting ugly out here. Im thinking maybe we ought to turn back. Emma tossed the bottle to him. No way, buster. I beat you up this hill once. Watch me do it again. You willing to put money on that? Something better. Oh yeah? Jonathan took a drink, thinking that it was good to hear her talking trash again. How long had it been? Six months? A year even, since the headaches had begun and Emma had taken to disappearing into dark rooms for hours at a time. He wasnt sure of the date. Only that it was before Paris, and Paris had been back in July. Pulling back his sleeve, he ran through the functions on his Suunto wristwatch. Altitude: 9,200 feet. Temperature: 10 Celsius. Barometer: 900 millibars and falling. He stared at the numbers, not quite believing his eyes. The pressure was dropping through the floor. What is it? Emma asked. Jonathan stuffed the water bottle into his rucksack. The storms going to get worse before it gets better. We need to make tracks. You sure you dont want to go back? Emma shook her head. No pride this time. Just resolve. Alright then, he said. You lead. Ill be on your tail. Give me a second to adjust my bindings. Kneeling, Jonathan watched as a track of snow tumbled over the tips of his skis. In seconds, the skis were covered. The tips began to quiver and he forgot all about the bindings. Warily, he rose. Above his shoulder, the Furga Nordwand, a wall of rock and ice, shot a thousand feet to a craggy limestone summit. Prevailing winds had piled loose snow against the base of the wall, forming a high, broad embankment that appeared choked and unstable. Loaded, in the mountaineers parlance. Jonathans throat went dry. He was an experienced mountaineer. Hed climbed in the Alps, the Rockies, and even for a season, the Himalayas. Hed had his share of scrapes. Hed come through when others hadnt. He knew when to be worried. Do you feel it? he asked. Its getting ready to rip. Did you hear something? No. Not yet. But . . . Somewhere out there . . . somewhere above them . . . the sound of distant thunder rolled across the peaks. The mountain shuddered. He thought of the snow on the Furga. Days of unremitting cold had frozen it into a mammoth slab weighing thousands of tons. It wasnt thunder he heard, but the noise of the slab cracking and breaking free from the older, crustier snow beneath it. Jonathan stared up at the mountain. Hed been caught in an avalanche once before. For eleven minutes hed lain beneath the surface, entombed in darkness, unable to move a hand, even a finger, too cold to feel that his leg had been yanked out of its socket and tw...