



Glamorous Disasters

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In the glossy private world of Fifth Avenue teens, some millionaire parents will do, pay, or say anything to help their children ace the SATs.

Noah rose from humble beginnings and, through pure grit and resourcefulness, got himself through Princeton. Now staggering under the weight of massive student loans and dazzled by life in the big city, Noah enters the rarefied field of SAT tutoring in Manhattan, working one-on-one with the spoiled, gorgeous children of the American aristocracy.

He takes on the considerable academic challenges that are Dylan Thayer, a dissipated high school athlete-socialite, and his waifish sister Tuscany. Dylan won't lift a finger to do anything but pick up a lacrosse stick, and Tuscany is avidly pursuing her own downfall via drugs and relationships with men more than twice her age. But their mother, a self-medicating pediatrician, has ambitious plans for them in spite of their shortcomings -- and she has plans for their SAT tutor as well.

Trying to build his own life while living on a shoestring in Harlem and flirting with his beautiful roommate keeps Noah busy enough, but the needs of the glamorous, struggling Thayer kids and the inappropriate advances of their mother prove all-consuming. As deadlines for college admissions near and the SAT tension builds, Noah finds himself presented with a Faustian bargain, and he must make a moral decision that will affect him and his students for years to come.

With echoes of *The Devil Wears Prada*, *The Nanny Diaries*, and *Bright Lights, Big City*, *Glamorous Disasters* is an incisive portrayal of a small and privileged world, a cautionary tale written by a Harvard grad who was once an SAT tutor himself -- an outsider who became a magnificently observant insider.

Glamorous Disasters Details

Date : Published February 13th 2007 by Simon & Schuster (first published April 25th 2006)

ISBN : 9780743281683

Author : Eliot Schrefer

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Fiction, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit

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MB says

Can't decide between 3 stars and 4 stars.

It wasn't immediately enthralling, but the more I read, the harder it was to put this book down. I don't think the comparisons are wrong to say this is almost a follow-up to The Nanny Diaries. What happens to those spoiled kids in high school? Read this book and you'll find out.

Four stars for fascinating insights.

Three stars for an awkward balance between the narrator's life and the lives of his clients.

Heather says

This was really disappointing. It was poorly written and badly need a better editor. I imagine that the author was trying to quickly cash in on the success of books like The Nanny Diaries. Which might explain why it reads like he wrote it all in one night...possibly after drinking heavily.

Previous TCL Reviews says

Although this book has more than a fleeting similarity to The Nanny Diaries, it lacks the voyeuristic fun. Schrefer takes the reader to a world most have not seen, SAT tutoring for the offspring of the extremely wealthy of New York City. While this is a definitely fertile material, the book relies on clichés so heavily that it becomes ordinary. The protagonist is reduced to a morality judge, his students represent every kind of vice an Upper East Side teen has access to. Unfortunately, the plot doesn't fare much better. The redeeming quality is that it does offer a glimpse into the New York wealthy, beyond that, there isn't much.

Teton County Library Call No: F SCHREFER

Review by: Susannah Broyles

Sarah says

So not what I thought it would be. Too much language, and I didn't find the main character compelling. I kept reading because I naively thought it would get better. I was extremely disappointed. I love novels about the Upper East Side but this was just kind of bleh.

Katherine says

Told you I was on an NYC kick. I read this at about the same time as Emperor's Children, but it was completely different. The culture described is something foreign to most of us- children raised in New York

City. I can't tell you how ridiculous it is. These kids are often either the poorest or most privileged people you can imagine. And this novel covers that.

About an SAT tutor who works with some of NYC's richest, it follows the life and crime of several teenagers, along with this guy's personal life. Both are on the rocks. He's asked much more of himself than anyone else should ever be, and yet is compelled to deliver. It's funny and an easy read, and while it will probably never be a classic, I'm glad I read it.

Ivannah says

LOVED IT!

S says

The author has a somewhat unpolished writing style - this feels like a book that a middle- or high-school student might read and think that they were very classy for having read. But it's really just kind of depressing reading about these rich New York people who are so bored with life that they're addicted to prescription meds or not eating or are just so jaded with life. I would skip this one.

Erbrand83 says

Think the world of SAT tutoring meets the world of park avenue nannies, this is a funny quick read that lets you into the world of yet another psycho park avenue wife who has a bad a relationship with her husband and therefore focuses everything on her kids, also an insight on how regardless of where you went to college it is ultimately the class system that decides our fate.

Erin says

This is a good book for young adults in their 20s and early 30s who can relate to having college loans and doing what have to do because of those loans. This is not an intellectually stimulating book, but a good summer read when you aren't looking for something with tons of depth.

Carolyn Stanley says

Glamorous Disasters is not as glamorous or as interesting as it sounds. It mostly revolves around this tutor who tutors very wealthy, spoiled city children. Sounds juicy? It's not. The book was weird and very slow moving. It was like pulling teeth just to get through it. A lackluster ending as well. I was disappointed.

Leigh Koonce says

Intriguing plot and interesting characters.

Miko Lee says

Fun read about college prep and the high life. Told thru the eyes of a Princeton grad who worked his way up from a poor Virginia farm boy to a scholar. Now with student loans to pay off he tutors wealthy kids in how to ace college entrance tests. He falls in love with a young immigrant and struggles with his place in the rich society privileged world. Very much reminded me of a male Nanny Diaries.

Lize says

Glamorous Disasters is sort of an erudite of “The Nanny Diaries” with a male protagonist; it’s about a Princeton grad from a humble background who makes his way in Manhattan tutoring the scions of the elite to ensure they pass their SATs with high enough scores to secure their Ivy League birthrights. It’s a quick, charmingly voyeuristic read set in a world I’ll never see. After reading about it, I’m kind of glad of that. ;)

Mark says

Fun

Best awkward description in a book ever.

Situation: Harvard graduate stunned by how tight the clothes his young 13-14ish tutored girl are

He cites her tank top as being too small for a 5 year old

Jenn Toomer says

Is this really how the rich live? Can you really pay someone to take your SAT? Who even takes the SAT? I think it is only an east coast thing, as everyone I know took the ACT. The book is littered with the F word, if you can get past that it was an interesting read and made me think that there is way to many crazies out there, rich or poor!

Spencer Jakab says

The title says it all ... a disaster. The story has potential and the peek into the lives of spoiled Upper East Side

teenagers is a little interesting, but that's about it. Poorly written and filled with two-dimensional characters.

Anderse says

Somewhere there is a template for over educated but scrappy youth who work for the very, very rich in NYC then write a book about it. This is Nanny Diaries for the HS tutor.

This would have been more interesting if it had been non fiction. As fiction, I just couldn't muster up the Care for any of the characters with the possible exception of the younger girl, Tuscany who is just such a train wreck of spoiled vanity.

Overall, this disaster isn't glamorous and not very well written.

Linda says

I was totally caught up in the Upper East Side world of people who will pay \$350 an hour to have someone tutor their children for the SAT. I think teens might like this one, too.

Katy says

If you love/hate the ideas and people of Fifth Avenue New Yorkers - especially the teenagers, you'll enjoy this book. It's very "The Nanny Diaries" but with teenagers and private tutors for the SAT's and other prep exams. One part Drugs, one part clubs, and three parts money! For most part of the book I liked it, but towards the end I really started to enjoy it. Overall it uncovers the privileges of growing up with money and the downfalls of it too.

George Ilsley says

The first few pages are keenly observed and brilliant. The rest is uneven. While I was reading this novel, I happened to read of a scandal in NY where students were paying other people to take their SAT exam (a sub-plot in this novel). Always exciting when life and art happen to enhance each other.
