

<<Jack & Jill (杰克和吉尔)>>

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内容概要

Someone has killed one of the most powerful men in the U.S. Senate- and the whole world is watching. Someone has murdered a small black girl on the mean streets of Washington - and no one seems to care. But only D.C. homicide cop Alex Cross suspects that the evil striking down both the high and the lowly wears the same shocking face. From James Patterson, the sensational author of the bestsellers *Kiss the Girls* and *Along Came a Spider*, comes *Jack Jill*, the #1 thriller that breaks all the rules - and shatters every nerve.

A child killer is stalking the inner city of Washington, D.C., his latest victim Shanelle Green, an adorable first grader from Sojourner Truth School. This killing is especially unsettling to Detective Alex Cross. Sojourner Truth is the school his son Damon attends, just four blocks from his home.

While the death of an inner-city black child doesn't garner much media attention, another murder is making big headlines. The same day that Shanelle was beaten to death, Senator Daniel Fitzpatrick was found handcuffed to a bed and shot execution style. The only clue the police have to go on is a bizarre rhyme, signed "Jack and Jill," promising more high-profile executions, ultimately targeting the president of the United States. When Cross is called in to help protect the president, he begins to suspect that the two cases are somehow related. As he races to put all the pieces together, the killers continue their bloody rampage, paralyzing the city.

Like *Along Came a Spider* and *Cat & Mouse*, *Jack & Jill* is a rapid-fire thriller from start to finish, with enough plot twists to satisfy even the most jaded mystery fan.

Patterson's most recent thriller, *Hide and Seek*, lacked his customary hero, Alex Cross, and didn't catch fire with readers. Here, Patterson brings back the black psychiatrist and Washington, D.C., homicide cop (from *Kiss the Girls*, etc.) for a gripping game of death that will have fans flocking. Two simultaneous investigations bear down on Cross: the first concerns the killings perpetrated by a duo known as "Jack and Jill," who are murdering famous people (beginning with a U.S. senator) in Washington, taunting the police and "practicing for the big one"; the second involves the brutal slayings of young black children in Cross's own Southeast D.C. neighborhood. The Washington P.D. makes Cross its liaison with a frantic Secret Service, FBI and CIA while he sets up his own off-duty team to track the child-killer. Through crisp cross-cutting of multiple points of view, first-person and third, Patterson grabs readers right from the beginning and sweeps them along toward riveting dual climaxes. He adds texture by devoting space to Cross's concern about his own motherless son and daughter (the first murdered child attended the same grammar school as Alex's boy), his growing interest in the school's attractive principal, his dealings with his octogenarian grandmother, Nana Mama (think of an acerbic Dilsey from *The Sound and the Fury*) and life in the largely black Southeast district. It's fine, full-blooded entertainment from start to finish, with a last-page surprise from an earlier Cross nemesis promising at least one more Cross installment to come. Literary Guild main selection; simultaneous Time Warner AudioBook.

Patterson is back with another winner featuring black Washington, D.C. detective/psychologist Alex Cross, who is hot on the trail of yet another serial killer. This time out, however, he's faced with double trouble in the form of a killing duo calling themselves Jack and Jill, who threaten to kill politicians and celebrities until they finally reach the president. After several spectacular murders, the police and the White House start to take them seriously. At the same time, yet another psychopath is brutally murdering black schoolchildren. Whew! All of this mayhem keeps Alex jumping and the pages turning. This entry follows Patterson's usual formula of very short chapters, breakneck pacing, and grisly murders followed by a truly surprising ending, complete with an appearance of Gary Soneji, the serial killer from *Along Came a Spider* (LJ 12/92). Highly recommended for all public libraries.

-?Rebecca House Stankowski, Purdue

Univ. Calumet Lib., Hammond, Ind.

Patterson once again keeps the reader's stomach queasy in his latest graphic "nursery rhyme." Returning as protagonist is African American psychologist-turned-detective Alex Cross, who adores his two young kids and his wise, wisecracking grandmother--his source of stability since his wife died. Alex is troubled when a young child is murdered near the school his son attends and frightened when the murderer strikes again. On the other side of

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town, away from the scary inner-city D.C. streets, a pair of killers who call themselves Jack and Jill are terrorizing the movers and shakers by murdering a series of high-profile people. At each killing, Jack and Jill leave sick rhymes implying that a certain resident of Pennsylvania Avenue is the ultimate target. (It is no coincidence that the murdering duo's moniker is the Secret Service's code name for the president and the First Lady.) When Alex is summoned to help protect the president, who has made powerful enemies by rebuffing business-as-usual politics, Alex is torn between his duty to protect his deteriorating neighborhood and his duty to his country. He belongs with his family, he believes, but the "powers that be" know that he is a master at negotiating with serial killers. A fast-paced, electric story that is utterly believable.

Mary Frances Wilkens

Dual narrators and the clever use of sound effects such as gunshots and crowd noises contribute to this thriller featuring psychologist Alex Cross. Narrators John Rubenstein and Blair Underwood offer their own styles as the story unfolds through different points of view. Underwood perfects Alex Cross's deliberate nature with a steady performance and succeeds in building tension appropriately. Rubenstein's rendering of the killers is equally impressive, showing the aloofness of the almost inhuman sociopaths. Although the abridgment may cause listeners to feel they've missed some of the plot along the way, there is enough to tie everything together in the end. K.M.D. Can D.C. deputy chief Alex Cross (Hide & Seek, 1995, etc.) stop a demented duo thinning the ranks of the Washington elite en route to assassinating the President? You just might be surprised at the answer. A serial killer (who seems to have sat through the film Network one time too many) is at work. The killer, a self-anointed patriot code-named "Jack" has, together with his partner "Jill," organized a bloody vendetta that gives the phrase "bleeding-heart liberals" a more visceral meaning. The Secret Service, worried that the doggerel notes signed "Jack and Jill" left at each killing might refer to their own code names for President Thomas Byrnes and his First Lady, bring nonpareil cop Cross into the case to help protect the First Family. And you don't need Cross's experience to see that Jack and Jill are working their way up the liberal ladder to the Byrneses when a caller to the President identifies herself as Jill, that Jill, and asks if he's ready to die. But it may not be such a great idea to pull Cross off his present case, a series of child murders, since the killer, convinced that the cops don't care anything about a few dead black kids, begins to see himself in competition with Jack and Jill, and steps up his own campaign accordingly. Meanwhile, it's Cross, whose idea of sharp investigative work consists of flushing suspects into futile, cinematic chases, versus Jack and Jill, whose improbable identities will be swiftly, abundantly clear to most readers as they continue to run rings around the hapless FBI, the CIA, and the Secret Service, even from beyond the grave. Makes you wonder. The real surprise here, though, is the cavalier lack of closure to this paranoid fantasy, as if an Oliver Stone film ended without fingering the conspirators. Even Patterson's most ardent admirers should beware of this dog. (Literary Guild main selection; \$650,000 ad/promo for Jack and Jill and Miracle on the 17th Green, a Nov. title to come; author tour; radio satellite tour)

In the middle of the night, a controversial U.S. senator is found murdered in bed in his Georgetown pied-a-terre. The police turn up only one clue: a mysterious rhyme signed "Jack and Jill" promising that this is just the beginning. Jack and Jill are out to get the rich and famous, and they will stop at nothing until their fiendish plan is carried out. Meanwhile, Washington, D. C., homicide detective Alex Cross is called to a murder scene only blocks from his house, far from the corridors of power where he spends his days. The victim: a beautiful little girl, savagely beaten--and despoised in front of the elementary school Cross's son, Damon, attends. Could there be a connection between the two murders? As Cross tries to put the pieces together, the killer- or killers - strike again. And again. No one in Washington is safe - not children, not politicians, not even the President of the United States. Only Alex Cross has the skills and the courage to crack the case-but will he discover the truth in time?

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