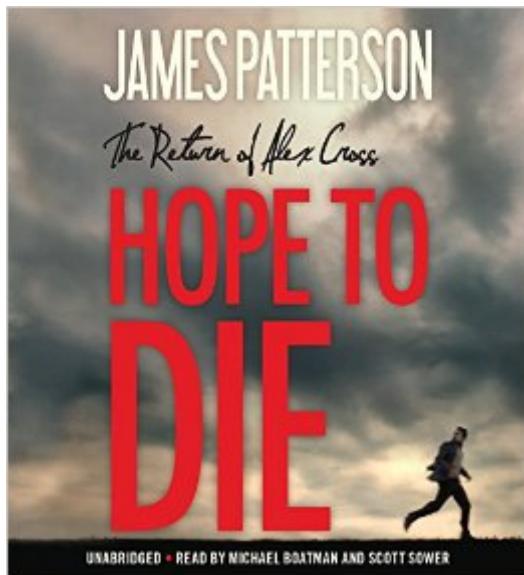


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Hope To Die (Alex Cross)



Synopsis

Detective Alex Cross is being stalked by a psychotic genius, forced to play the deadliest game of his career. Cross's family--his loving wife Bree, the wise and lively Nana Mama, and his precious children--have been ripped away. Terrified and desperate, Cross must give this mad man what he wants if he has any chance of saving the most important people in his life. The stakes have never been higher: What will Cross sacrifice to save the ones he loves? Widely praised by the greatest crime and thriller writers of our time, *Hope to Die* sets a jaw-dropping story in motion. *Hope to Die* propels Alex Cross's greatest challenge to its astonishing finish, proving why Jeffery Deaver says "nobody does it better" than James Patterson.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (4,192 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This is the 22nd Alex Cross novel by James Patterson and I must say it is an absolute joy to read. The first part of the story forms a well-written rehash of the traumatic but gripping events from book one that transpired concerning the Cross Family as well as simultaneously revealing new information concerning the killer/s. The reader will find that every new drop adds tension and depth to the story. As is by now almost trademarked by Mr Patterson, every chapter ends with a clever hook which makes it virtually impossible to stop reading. But why would you anyway? Just about half of the world's population are Alex Cross fans and of course they want to find out what has happened to the fictional family the world have grown to love like no other. So read on, and learn the truth. None of the book is pretty. The victims are horrifically maimed and abused and the serial killer

is leading our hero a merry little psychological dance as he leads him toward madness, depravity and a search for vengeance. The world knows Alex Cross much better than the bad guy does so we know without turning a single page that the forces of good will overcome this particular personification of evil. But the "fun" is in the reading, just like every worthwhile book you pick up. And HOPE TO DIE is no different from that perspective. From an entertainment factor, however, it stands head and shoulders above most of its specific genre. And, dare I say it, head and shoulders with the best of the Alex Cross novels themselves.

So how many books does an author get to write before editors ignore their work and just put it out there? Obviously, James Patterson hit that number a long time ago. I have read all of the Alex Cross books. I used to read the Women's Murder Club books until they became writing by formula. I refuse to read the books co-authored by him after the first one, they are terrible. Now I ask myself, am I going to give up on Alex Cross? Hope to Die is the continuation of Cross My Heart, which was atrocious. There are so many holes in this story that it should have been called, No Hope, Dead. Besides the flaws in police procedure, the under-played reaction of Cross to his situation and the total predictability of the story, there are too many facts that are just wrong. An example, Patterson describes Cross as "six feet two inches with a thirty inch reach". I am only five feet eleven inches and I have a thirty five inch reach without stepping up on my toes. So as not to reveal anything that might spoil the book for anyone who has not read it, I am going to stick to the flaws in the editing that make this a terrible read. Patterson begins one chapter by describing "three birches that grew close together". Hello, that is how birches are, planted three together, which everyone already knows. In that same chapter he says, "the dog went to the stove and lay down by the stove". I didn't think he went to the stove and lay down by the TV! In one chapter he tells us the alias used by the antagonist has shown up seven times in a internet search, a few chapters later he tells us this again. The worst part of bad writing/non-editing is the chapter dealing with Alex Cross having to kill someone at the direction of Marcus Sunday (the antagonist).

Lawrence Block and Robert Parker are two of my favorite mystery authors, and share many similarities. Their detectives, Matt Scudder and Spenser are 'fixers', rather than pure detectives or simple toughs. They share a taste for wise-cracks and dry wit, have similar relationships with women, and are men of action. Between the two authors, a whole genre exists that no one else has successfully invaded. I sometimes think of it as the tough guy noir cozy. Although that is a bit of an overstatement. I do like Block's work a little better, though. Primarily because Matt Scudder is the

stronger, more finely developed character. I find his progression from alcoholism to sobriety and his attitude about himself refreshing. He does not preach, but he tries his best to live according to his ethics, and succeeds for the most part. The characters that surround him also seem to be a bit more attractive because they reflect the same basic integrity. Block's stories also often have a darker more chilling coloration than Parker's, who sometimes puts more energy into caustic humor than into the plot itself. And sometimes Block's plots take unexpected and satisfying turns into new directions.'Hope to Die' is such a case in point. When a married couple who happened to attend the same society event as Matt and Elaine Scudder are brutally murdered in a theft, Matt is intrigued. But the case is quickly solved when the thieves are found dead. One killed by the other, and the other a suicide, with the evidence in hand. But the couple's niece and daughter are not completely comfortable with the resolution, and so Scudder finds himself, and his sidekick T.J., drawn into an investigation into an apparently closed case.

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