



1st to Die

James Patterson

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James Patterson, bestselling author of the Alex Cross novels *Along Came a Spider*, *Kiss the Girls*, and *Pop Goes the Weasel*, offers the first of a new series dubbed *The Women's Murder Club*, featuring a four-woman team that occasionally works outside the system. None of the gritty darkness or frenzied action is lost in *1st to Die*, although the female protagonists offer an even deeper emotional context to this suspense thriller.

Inspector Lindsay Boxer of the San Francisco Police Department suddenly finds herself in the middle of two horrifying situations: The first is that she's just learned she has an often-fatal blood disease. The second is a double homicide case she is now heading up that involves the murder of newlyweds on their wedding night. Burdened with Chris Raleigh, a new partner reassigned from the mayor's office, Lindsay finds that she has too much to deal with and turns to her best friend, Claire, the head ME on the case. Claire offers helpful advice and human, friendly contact amid a job filled with violence, cruelty, and fear.

Soon a fledgling newspaper reporter, Cindy, makes contact with Lindsay looking for a career-making story. Although Lindsay can't officially comment on the case, the two women form a rapport, and Cindy joins Lindsay and Claire for their weekly meeting. When a second pair of newlyweds is murdered, and later a third, the investigation leads to a prominent crime writer, Nicholas Jenks, who has a history of spousal abuse and a predilection for kinky, dangerous sex games. With the help of an understanding assistant D.A., Jill Bernhardt, Lindsay tries to make a case against Jenks, who even had an affair with one of the slain women. Eventually Jill joins the Murder Club, and the four ladies share private interdepartmental information in an effort to track and stop the killer before he strikes again.

The major subplot -- Lindsay's facing up to her illness even while she learns to fall in love again -- carefully compensates for the novel's coarse scenes of brutality. Lindsay Boxer isn't merely an obsessed cop trailing a maniac; she's also a terrified woman confronting the onslaught of disease. The story lines balance out to show us the true mettle of someone who puts the safety of others before her own.

Again, Patterson's skill for producing furiously paced fiction are evident as the novel breezes by rapidly. The short chapters keep the narrative leaping with increasingly taut plot elements, but there's an emotional commitment that makes our protagonist even more amiable and involving. *1st to Die* is a novel that works as an intense series of character portraits that will leave the reader touched and delighted.

--Tom Piccirilli

1st to Die Details

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From Reader Review 1st to Die for online ebook

Tea Jovanovi? says

Slabo je poznata ?injenica da sam prva dovela Patersonove knjige u Srbiju... i bila sam godinama urednik njegovih knjiga za razli?ite izdava?e... i da verovatno najbolje poznajem njegov bogati opus... :) Od svih raznovrsnih njegovih knjiga i serijala ovaj mi je najdraži, koji sam uporno "gurala" godinama... Ovde ne možemo pri?ati o "velikoj" književnosti ali zato možemo govoriti o pravom kvalitetnom komercijalnom autoru, koji vas uhvati i ne pušta od po?etka do kraja svake knjige... ?ak i one koju biste ocenili sa samo dve ili tri zvezdice... :) I možete pro?itati i po tri knjige zaredom i tražiti još... Zato on piše i po 8 naslova godišnje... po jedan iz svakog serijala plus poneki stand alone naslov... :)

Celia says

Oh god - I really *hated* the first book I read of Patterson's, but I'd read about the Women's Murder Club TV series, and thought it sounded kind of cool, so I wanted to try the books. I'm about half way through, and this is pretty awful so far, in the same way as the previous book I read. Clumsy, cliched writing, ridiculous characters, a *really* ridiculous killer... bah. Why are these popular? At least it's a quick read.

Skimmed my way frantically through the second half of the book in order to finish it. Awful, awful stuff - Patterson is an incredibly bad writer. And that "twist" at the end? Jesus christ. I felt embarrassed to be reading this on the train, in case someone was reading over my shoulder. Ergh.

Marwan says

The first James Patterson book I ever read, and one of the best I read this year. It has exceeded my expectations. Honestly I didn't know serial killer novels could be this fun. It's filled with suspense and thrill, and Just when you thought you've seen the last of the twists, another one jumps at you in the final pages. The plot revolves around a serial killer who targets newlyweds at their wedding night, and it's up to the homicide inspector, Lindsay Boxer to track him down. However, in order to do that she needs the help of her friends in the women's murder club (Claire Washburn, Cindy Thomas, and Jill Bernhardt). Together they work hard in order to bring the killer to justice before he strikes again.

The Book Maven says

Am I the only one that thinks that "Women's Murder Club" sounds not only hokey but juvenile and begging mockery?

The story: a psycho serial killer begins murdering newly married couples. 4 women, each with their own stake in cracking the case, are determined to nail the killer, and so band together outside of official channels to pool their resources and figure it all out. There is a red herring (if one could call it that) and a vaguely surprising twist at the end, but I read this with an unusual level of detachment and disinterest, and so was not

impressed by anything.

I just wasn't hugely impressed with this book. Patterson's handling of the female characters and their relationships with each other were stilted, forced, and lacked nuance from beginning to end. I get the impression that Patterson does not truly grasp how women operate, and how their relationships develop.

As for the plot itself, well, it was vaguely diverting, but not much more.

The only halfway compelling facet of this mystery was the main character's struggle with an illness of which she has just learned; an illness that is potentially fatal, can advance rapidly (and in fact does), and that begins to make her realize her own sense of mortality, and how time might be running out.

I love books in which the female characters are young, put-together, strong, successful...I think what is the most disappointing about this book is that there is SO MUCH unrealized potential. Grrrr.

Joyce says

There's nothing specifically GOOD about this book, but damned if the pages don't practically turn themselves. It's pure junk food, and I mean that as a compliment insofar as processed food is very highly engineered by very skilled workers to be universally appealing to the widest possible market.

Patterson -- a top advertising exec before his writing career -- seems to have decided that in addition to his bestselling Alex Cross novels and film adaptations, he needed a series that appealed to women and television. Four chicks with different skills -- ensemble cast! Alex Cross works on the East Coast, so we'll set this series on the West Coast! They have complicated love lives and health problems and career setbacks for background color!

It's a sign of Patterson's professionalism that he doesn't make you feel like a market segment while you're actually reading. He wants to tell a good story, and shows real interest in his characters' feelings no matter how banal. I doubt I'll be reading another entry in this series, but new writers could do a lot worse than following this craftsman's lead.

Wendy says

I believe this will be the last James Patterson novel that I read. It was another of his titles with cardboard characters, stilted dialogue, and a plot with unlikely but convenient and contrived coincidences, which all equal a very thin read.

In this book, the women's "friendship" came across as canned and forced. I think the characters were developed solely on a quota system for just the perfect mix that could solve murders. It was almost as if I could hear him thinking, "Hmmm...let's see...I need a homicide detective (check), a medical examiner (check), and oh, maybe a reporter (check again). What else? Yes, of course! A district attorney too! (final check). Let's also make sure I represent the independent tough woman working in a man's world, the ethnic woman, the up-and-comer with moxie, and the uber-professional careerist. Done and done."

Perhaps his use of ghostwriters who write stories about characters they didn't envision doing things that someone else has imagined and outlined is what causes this flatness. Whatever the reason, the end result just

isn't for me.

While I admire James Patterson's apparent marketing genius and entrepreneurial spirit in creating book outlines and farming out the actual storytelling and writing to other authors, he is now really just a brand cranking out books at breakneck speed. But at least he's honest about it. And he's right that his writing/outlines do appeal to a certain type of reader who wants a fast-paced read that doesn't require heavy lifting. Nothing wrong with that, but I'll be moving on.

Lorena says

I was curious about this series because it's obviously very popular, but I can't say I'm terribly impressed by it. First of all, the sappy "you go girl" female characters didn't seem very true to life to me. Patterson seems to think that name-checking Sarah McLachlan and Tori Amos, plus a lot of hugging and randomly saying "I love you, girl", means he has created believable female characters. Not so much.

Also, I thought the plot was melodramatic, and the continual twists were more tedious than shocking or surprising.

Erica Poole says

While I greatly enjoyed this and the next 2 books in the Women's Murder Club series, I was unable to continue reading the series with the same enjoyment due to comments that Patterson himself made in regards to it. He basically said that they were crap, that he just wrote them because he knew that they would sell, and he basically made me feel as if by reading them, and enjoying them, he was belittling me. I know it might be a bit extreme, but he ruined this series for me, as well as other series, such as those involving Alex Cross. Hard to enjoy work from an author who condescends to write for 'the masses'.

Diane says

My impulse as I read 1st to Die was to start editing. Overwriting, reduncancy, and sentimentality took the place of plot structure, character development, and freshness. Each of the four women was described in terms of her profession and ethnic background--sassy Black woman medical examiner with a faithful musician husband, sleek, sophisticated put-upon woman DA who gets no respect from her male superiors, perky newspaper reporter whose risk-taking allows her to get the scoops that more seasoned newspaper people are afraid to go after, and, of course, our depressed, troubled, obsessed main character who gets her life back just to lose everything and speaks in cliches throughout the narrative.

This book was a fast read, but I won't bother reading any of the other books in the series. I wonder if the TV show is any better? If so, it's only because some decent writers turned the script into something better than this book.

James Tivendale says

I tend to read Patterson's books when I don't want my brain to work that hard. 1st to Die fits that bill perfectly. I loved the concept of a group of extraordinary females - including a detective, a lawyer, and a journalist - working together to solve crimes. It was an easy to read, page-turning thriller featuring a complicated, gruesome killer of newly-weds, and more twists and turns than a twisty turny thing.

Lydia says

This is my first Patterson experience. The book was quite captivating and enthralling. There are half a million detective-serial killer novels out there... Patterson's are by far near if not at the top of the list! His chapters are so brisk you'll find your self half-way through the book before you know it. As well, the suspense is so well paced, and he also tosses in so many possibilities and clues to murderer's identity into the mix, there's no way you'll be able to set the book down until you have reached the finale. In addition to top-notch suspense, Patterson gives deep insight into the minds of our four heroine's, we know their dark secrets , and sympathize with them (especially Linday with the rare blood disorder, an original sub-plot) therefore we truly care about what happens to them. And as you approach the end of Patterson's 1st to Die, you breath of sigh of relief, only until the last page where Patterson chucks another twist at you, you nearly fall out of your seat in cardiac arrest! Never have I read a novel with a final twist so near the end of the book I can't help but applaud Patterson for being so clever. Reading it was like driving a car, through beautiful countryside relaxing and enjoying it- UNTIL you suddenly see the road sink below the horizon realizing your approaching a cliff at rapid speed! Kudos to Patterson, this book Thrills!

Jessica says

I love love love James Patterson, he's my new favorite author. His writing style is great, easy to read and fast. He explains things so you understand but without making you feel stupid. His characters are well developed in this series and are entertaining. Another thing I love, his chapters are very very short so you can always get to a good stopping place!

Zach says

How in the world is he a best-selling author? His characters are shallow, his writing is mediocre, and when he writes about romance it feels mechanical and formulaic. This book had a twist at the end, but it was the worst sort of twist - the kind that you can't really predict because he probably didn't think to add it until after the book was already written - leaving out any traces of foreshadowing. I haven't read any of his other books and don't plan to now. When you have as little time for leisure reading as I do, you waste as little time as possible reading crap.

Also, he uses too much vulgarity and too much sex. It isn't even romantic sex; it's cheap.

I recommend this book only to people who have already read every other book in the world and would rather read something they haven't read then reread a good book.

Heidi says

I've been having trouble concentrating enough to read anything involving thought and effort so mindless mysteries/thrillers are just what the doctor ordered. This one, though? No thanks.

By page 45 I decided I hated James Patterson writing women. The head of the homicide division and the chief medical examiner of San Francisco are disgusted, sickened, and "have to turn away" from a body. What atrocity can these two strong, experienced, professional women not handle? A body with a single stab wound. What?! Oh, but the male detective? He's just fine! He even steps in to offer our lead homicide investigator an arm to lean on! Seriously? You've got to be kidding me.

I found the interactions between the female friends not realistic in the slightest. I actually snorted with laughter a few times at how ridiculous and cliché they were.

Overall I found the writing to be stilted and not especially engaging. I can't say I enjoyed it much at all. And I don't normally notice these things but the man used the word, "chilling" so many times that, not only did I notice, but was really annoyed by it. Good writers don't need to tell their readers how to react to their writing. I should find your descriptions "chilling" without being told to over and over and over again.

And my most petty complaint: The Women's Murder Club. Four intelligent, urbane professionals and that's the name of their group? Couldn't he have come up with a name that wasn't so hackneyed and immature? It might as well be The Four Females Who Find Killers Club or The Four Awesome Chicks Hunting Bad Guys Club. Would a homicide investigator, coroner, prosecutor, and reporter who were male have to create a "club" and name it something so hokey? Again, I think it goes back to Patterson's inability to write women with any realism or truth. And his desire to create a series and characters that could easily be marketed and turned into a movie and/or TV show.

I enjoy gruesome, bloody thrillers but really doubt I can bring myself to skim through the rest of these books based solely on how poorly written I find the characters.

ETA: I just found out that James Patterson earned \$50 million from June 2007 to June 2008. No, that's not a typo. I'm equal parts horrified and inspired to write something that my biggest fans will excitedly describe as a "quick and easy read."

Li'l Owl says

This is an audio book that I listened to many, many years ago. It's narrated by Suzanne Toren who did an excellent job. I remember that I loved it so much that I listened to the entire series back to back, or at least up until the point where I had to wait for the next one to come out. Then I listened to it immediately. This was published in 2002 and I own all of them on Audible audio books. Now, the 16th one, 16th Seduction, is out so I've decided to start back to the beginning of the series for the second time. I didn't remember the intricate twists and turns it takes all the way up to the very end. I can definitely say that it was a great decision! I'm on to the second one, 2nd Chance.

Now about this book. I loved it!

What an incredible ending!! James Patterson and Maxine Paetro have coauthored an ingenious novel starring

Lindsey Boxer, slowly unfolding how the *Woman's Murder Club* gets started, all the way thru to dynamic ending that I guarantee you will NOT foresee!! You will have to read it to find out anything more.
