

Book Review: The Writer

By James Patterson and J.D. Barker

I won't lie. When I saw the title of James Patterson's latest crime novel, "The Writer," I was immediately intrigued, having been a writer my entire career.

This is only the third or fourth Patterson book I've read, but I promise I'll be going back and reading a few that I've missed.

Why?

Because "The Writer" is an incredible, twisted, murder-mystery that moves at breakneck speed from page one and doesn't let up, even at the end. Five words on the book's cover predict, "You'll never forget the end ..."

And you won't.

But don't you dare peek.

The book opens with a "Then" chapter of a murder that took place five years ago, then quickly fast-forwards to present time, but periodically inserts "Then" chapters like breadcrumbs scattered along a path.

Five years ago, NYPD Detective Declan Shaw investigated the murder of a 14-year-old girl whose body was found in Central Park. Through the "Then" chapters we learn what transpired from that investigation, but more importantly, how it links to current events.

The "Now" chapters open with Shaw balancing on the edge of a deserted subway platform; a platform notoriously known for its history of officer-related suicides. Shaw's attempt is interrupted by a phone call summoning him to a prominent address on Central Park West. When he gets there his partner tells him the woman inside, Denise Morrow, a famous crime author, phoned to report a break-in, and the murder of her husband.

In fact, the woman specifically asked for Shaw by name, and won't let anyone else in.

Shaw arrives to find the woman covered in blood, in apparent shock, and a bloody knife on the floor between her and her deceased husband, a well-respected cardiologist.

A simple conclusion can be drawn, right?

Wrong. Lab analyses reveal the blood on the knife doesn't belong to Morrow, or her husband.

Huh? How is that possible?

The well-written narrative continues in high gear from there. There are more twists and turns than a runaway rollercoaster. I soon gave up trying to figure it all out and just let the story take me away.

And I guarantee, you won't figure it out either.

"The Writer" is a top-of-the-line murder-mystery that, in my opinion, has no flaws. If you give it a shot and don't like it, then you just don't like crime stories. Because this one is superb.

A full five stars (I'd give it six if I could) for Patterson's latest novel. I highly recommend it.