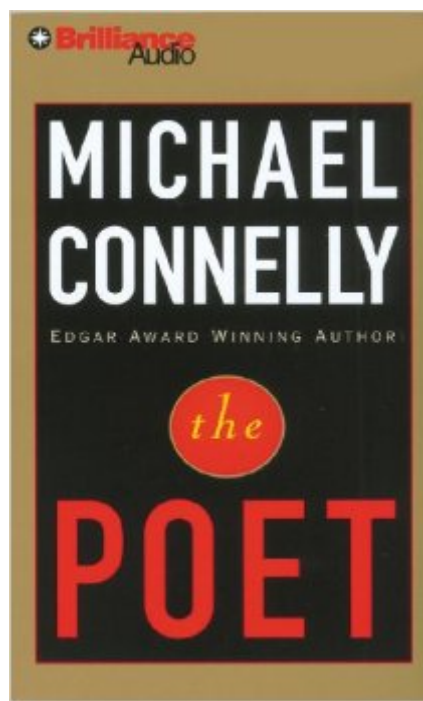


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The Poet



Synopsis

With his four Harry Bosch novels, Michael Connelly joined "the top rank of a new generation of crime writers" (Los Angeles Times). Now Connelly returns with his most searing thriller yet—a major new departure that recalls the best work of Thomas Harris (Red Dragon, Silence of the Lambs) and James Patterson (Along Came a Spider). Our hero is Jack McEvoy, a Rocky Mountain News crime-beat reporter. As the novel opens, Jack's twin brother, a Denver homicide detective, has just killed himself. Or so it seems. But when Jack begins to investigate the phenomenon of police suicides, a disturbing pattern emerges, and soon suspects that a serial murderer is at work—a devious cop killer who's left a coast-to-coast trail of "suicide notes" drawn from the poems of Edgar Allan Poe. It's the story of a lifetime—except that "the Poet" already seems to know that Jack is trailing him. Here is definitive proof that Michael Connelly is among the best suspense novelist working today.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have heard that a major key to writing well is to write what you know. In turn, as a murder-mystery writer you cannot write well about a crime scene unless you have actually stood outside the yellow tape and taken the situation in with all of your senses, or so the story would go. And that is the emphasis behind Michael Connelly's The Poet as I see it. Before becoming a best-selling author, Connelly wrote for newspapers, "primarily specializing in the crime beat" (MichaelConnelly.com). So before he wrote books, Connelly was a reporter. And instead of "typical" detective fiction, The Poet is about (what else?): a reporter. I was immediately drawn to main character Jack McEvoy. He was

sculpted with more precision. He was written with more passion. I may be way off base with this, but it seemed to me that McEvoy was a more natural character for Connelly to write. I have been to talks given by Michael Connelly where he shares experiences with police officers he was privileged to have, so you know there is truth in his detective fiction, but it was fun to read the same type of story wrapped in a different package. He had ridden along with the officers, but he had lived as a reporter. It was entertaining to get some insight into how reporters fight for information since they do not have the authority or the reputation with the police, and see just how competitive their world can be. Yes, there is a girl. And right away I was closed minded to the whole thing. "This story did not need romantic involvement," I pleaded to the book in my hands, "it is so good without it." But I was wrong. Too often the romance is built in to make the book more marketable to a wider audience. Not so in *The Poet*. I cannot remember the last time I came across a book that was so hard to put down.

In Michael Connelly's LA crime series (*Black Ice*, *Echo park*, *the Overlook*, and others) you have detective Harry Bosch. Bosch is a cop. He solves crimes. He's on the inside from the moment he gets the squeal. It's his job, his duty, his life, and he does it well. To our great pleasure and morbid fascination, we get to tag along as Bosch follows the trail and solves the crime. We love Harry, his back story, his girlfriends, his partners and bosses, the perps, the city of LA in all its smarm and all its style. We love the fascinating cast of walk-on characters that makes it true LA. The Harry Bosch books are among the best in the genre. Connelly himself cites Raymond Chandler as an inspiration, and the Bosch books are worthy companions to Chandler's best. By contrast, in Connelly's newspaperman-amateur detective series (*The Poet*, *the Scarecrow*) we get Jack McEvoy. McEvoy is a journalist on the crime beat, a man looking for a story that will sell newsprint. As a reporter, he's on the outside trying to get in. He doesn't care about the victim or the criminal, he wants a story that will sell. He wants "the scoop". As a result, the character of Jack McEvoy does not work as a believable crime story protagonist. In an attempt to tie his newspaperman to the crimes he is reporting, Connelly must invent family members and co-workers to kill off. In place of well crafted dialog, we are served dry monologues that force-march the plot along. Journalist McEvoy, his back story, and the whole cast of characters in the newsroom are weak, poorly drawn, one-dimensional cardboard props. To maintain our flagging interest, Connelly whips up a froth of sensational crimes of pedophilia, murder by bondage and discipline, and sexual mutilation of female corpses.

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